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Sports News

TOWN MATCH VERDICT

Luton Town.....1
Derby County..3
(Half-time....0-1)

★★★

Brian Swain reports. Action pictures: Josh Levy

HARD WORK IS WRECKED BY QUICK BREAKS

● HANDY: Phil Gray needs arms as well as legs in a scrap for the ball.

THE result hurt at Kenilworth Road on Saturday.

But Luton Town were not as bad as the cruel scoreline might suggest.

They played some good football, but a team that was very quick on the break left them still looking for their first home win of the season.

Derby County have spent £10million on their squad, but would have gone home losers if the Town had been able to turn promise into end product.

A back four that cost next to nothing was always going to find it difficult to cope with Derby's expensive stars, and the Town lost because their attack was again lightweight in the penalty area.

But at least there was a big improvement in commitment and effort after the shambles at Barnsley a week earlier.

Changes

And once more it was a case of 'if only' as the team showed itself well capable of piercing a good defence and creating chances.

Manager **David Pleat** made changes. **John Dreyer** and **Jason Rees** were out and in came **Damien Matthew** and **Scott Oakes,** with **Julian James** dropping back to central defence, and given the captaincy.

I made James and **David Preece** the leading Town contenders for man of the match honours which were eventually snaffled by Derby's two-goal striker Paul Kitson.

There was hard work and application all round, and for half an hour or so the Town looked winners as they seized the initiative.

Mark Pembridge had a mixed day on his return. His first impact was made when he was robbed by **Chris Kamara** in midfield.

The veteran, lively and involved throughout, set up **Steve Claridge** for a drive from the edge of the box which **Steve Sutton** could only parry.

Let-off

The keeper was let off the hook as **Darren** Wassall cleared off the line from **Phil Gray's** follow-up shot.

That fourth-minute flurry turned out to be the day's norm.

A drive by **Darren Salton** rose just too high after Derby failed to clear a corner by Preece, and with the little midfielder busy on both flanks the Town were buzzing nicely.

Preece and Gray worked well together down the right, but from Gray's pull-back Oakes mishit his shot badly and put it wide.

Preece hit a 25-yarder over the bar as the Town poured forward, and it was 24 minutes before Derby showed any real threat.

The first of a lot of quick breaks saw Paul Simpson hare down the left. **Andy Petterson** could not deal with the cross and Tommy Johnson, roaring in at the far post, hit a piledriver which looked a goal all the way until **Marvin Johnson** made an astonishing headed clearance off the line.

Warning

It was a warning shot. After the Town had looked comfortable and the better side for 39 minutes Pembridge hurled a long throw into the box, Craig Short knocked on, and Kitson threw himself at the ball to score with a diving header.

The Town were shaken for a time, and went through a spell when no final pass would go right.

The teamwork and support was there,but not the finish.

Gray took stick from some sections of the crowd, but he and Claridge never stopped trying, and home hopes soared again with a 53rd-minute equaliser.

Matthew had gone close with an overhead kick a minute earlier.

The Town were pushing forward with some purpose when Pembridge fouled Kamara on the 18-yard line.

He was punished twice: first with a yellow card, and secondly with a Town goal.

Scramble

Preece played the free kick short for Oakes to lob the ball into the box. Aerial power so often lacking in attack was provided at the set piece by Salton, and his header was blocked to spark a scramble which was finished by **Marvin Johnson** knocking in his first Town goal.

But Derby were not to be flustered.

Four minutes later a corner by Tommy Johnson, knocked on by Short's head, allowed Kitson to net his second goal of the game, and the Town's discomfort was complete after four minutes more, with Martin Kuhl and Kitson playing swift passes on the break for Tommy Johnson to complete the scoring.

Derby were too experienced to throw away their advantage, and the Town's substitution made little difference.

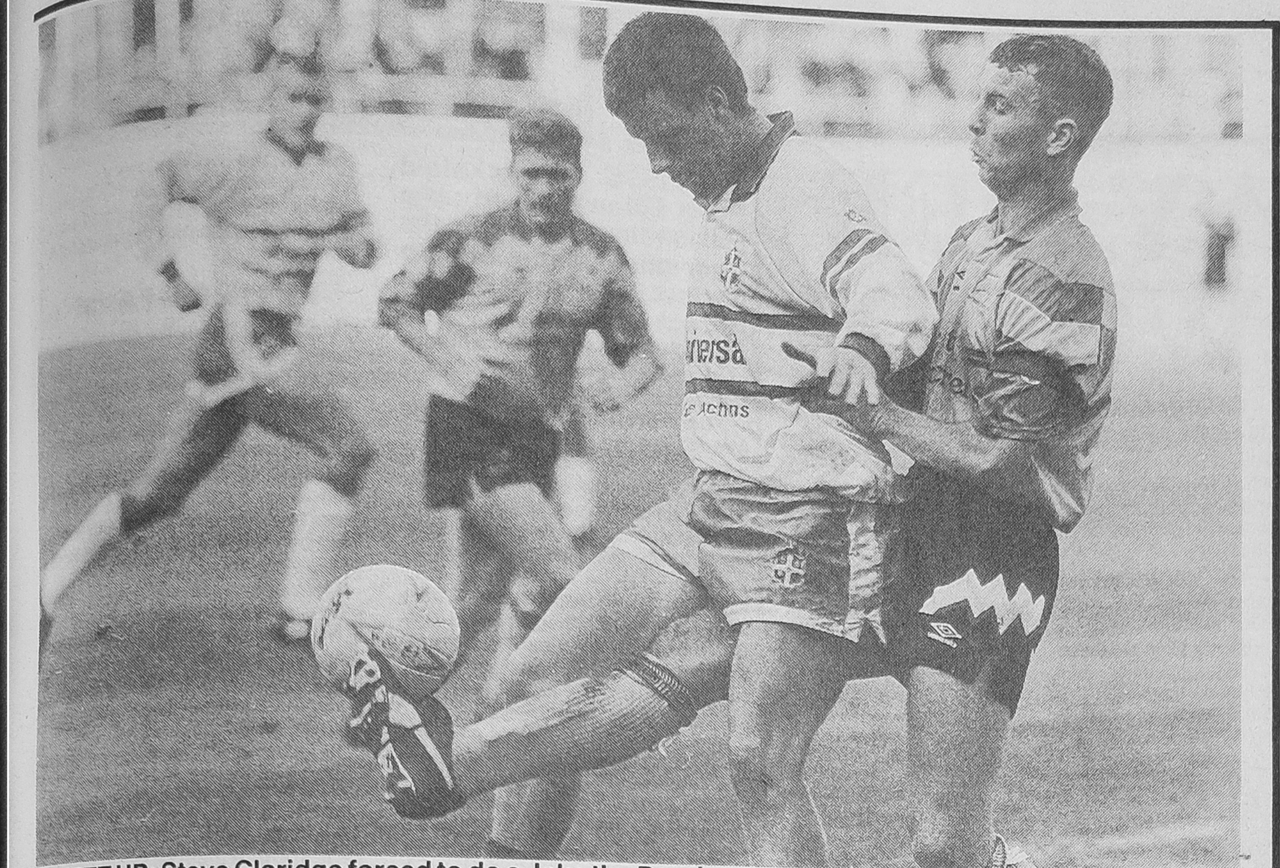
Oakes, who had not been able to make a telling impact, was replaced by **Jamie Campbell,** with some of us wondering why the lanky sub was used on the flank and not thrown into the middle to give Claridge and Gray more support.

In the end, it was a day when the Town put a lot of effort into the game, and got nothing for it.

Be patient and we will be all right was the plea of the manager.

Fair comment: except that we are all having to be too patient waiting for the boardroom changes that might give Mr. Pleat the chance to show that, like his team, he is a better manager than results suggest.

● OLD PAL'S ACT: Steve Sutton, who played for the Town last season, wins the ball as Jamie Campbell slides in.



● FEET UP: Steve Claridge forced to do a Jake the Peg impression.

Julian James: skipper for the first time.

● MARVIN JOHNSON. Equaliser was his first senior goal, in his 58th full league game.

MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Petterson; Linton, Salton, James, Johnson; Oakes (Campbell 80 mins), Matthew, Kamara, Preece; Claridge, Gray. Other sub: Harvey.

DERBY COUNTY: Sutton; Comyn, Short, Wassall, Forsyth; Simpson (McMinn 89 mins), Kuhl, Tommy Johnson, Pembridge; Gabbiadini, Kitson. Other sub: Coleman.

THE GOALS: Paul Kitson for Derby, 39 minutes, diving header after Craig Short knocked on a long throw by Mark Pembridge; Marvin Johnson for the Town, 53 minutes, first league goal of his career (at the right end), converting rebound after header by Darren Salton was parried; Kitson for Derby, 57 minutes, after Short knocked on a corner by Tommy Johnson; Johnson for Derby, 61 minutes, Town caught stretched as Kitson played the pass through.

OTHER STRIKES: Town six saved and 11 wide; Derby seven saved and two wide. Corners: 11-4 to the Town.

REFEREE: Peter Alcock, Surrey. Kept everything well under control and let the game flow.

BOOKED: Martin Kuhl and Mark Pembridge, both for fouls, with Pembridge's offence on Chris Kamara conceding the free kick which led to the Town's goal.

ATTENDANCE: 8,848, the highest of the season so far.

ENTERTAINMENT: Value for money in terms of quality of football played, but the result put a cloud over it for Town fans.

Manager's viewpoint

'WE WORKED hard but didn't get the breaks,'' was **David Pleat's** summing up of the game.

Derby boss **Arthur Cox** declined to give his thoughts on a ground which has unhappy memories for him — he has never forgotten the day ten years ago when he brought Newcastle to Luton, saw them beaten 3-2 after being two up, and then discovered he and his team had been robbed again by a sneak thief who nipped into the away team's dressing room.

Smash and grab

He was doubtless well pleased at seeing the Town the victims of the smash and grab expertise this time.

The Town manager tries not to be drawn into comments on individuals, but agreed with Press questions about the part stand-in skipper **Julian James** played in a team performance which was good enough to win the game if it had included the extra final flourish.

''James was splendid, and playing in his fifth position of the season,'' said the Luton manager. 'We are discoverintg that he is a diamond.''

After his annoyance at the lack of commitment at Barnsley, the manager was much happier about the way the Town tackled this week's task.

''We worked hard to get into the box, but we had no-one there who could win it in the air,'' he said.

''But providing our players retain their heart they will be all right.''

Inexperience of the side — **Chris Kamara's** 702 games outnumber the rest put together — means that patience is a necessity when there is no money to buy reinforcements.

Derby have spent around £10million on their side.

Pace on the break

Mr. Pleat suggested that a major cause of their win was that they had five men with real pace on the counter-attack, probably more than any other club in the First Division.

The art of winning, he said, was to play well and get the breaks.

For Luton Town it had been a day when the first requirement was fulfilled, but not the second.

The First Division

	HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	P
Newcastle	11	6	0	0	16	3	5	0	0	9	4	33
West Ham	11	2	1	1	9	3	5	1	1	14	4	23
Wolves	12	2	4	0	12	8	3	3	0	8	1	22
Charlton	12	3	3	1	10	5	3	1	1	5	2	22
Swindon	12	5	2	0	18	7	1	1	2	8	12	21
Tranmere	11	5	2	0	15	3	1	1	2	5	6	21
Leicester	12	4	2	1	8	6	2	1	2	7	7	21
Millwall	11	3	2	0	13	4	1	3	2	4	6	17
Peterboro	11	1	2	3	3	7	4	0	1	11	6	17
Watford	12	3	1	2	10	10	1	2	3	9	12	15
Portsmouth	11	3	0	1	8	2	1	3	3	10	13	15
Birmingham	11	3	0	2	5	7	1	3	2	4	9	15
Bristol City	11	2	2	2	8	11	2	0	3	8	13	14
Oxford Utd	11	2	3	2	6	4	1	2	1	5	6	14
Derby	11	1	0	3	6	7	2	3	2	10	8	12
Notts County	12	1	2	2	4	6	2	1	4	11	20	12
Grimsby	11	2	2	1	7	7	1	1	4	6	8	12
Cambridge	12	3	0	3	6	9	0	3	3	4	12	12
Sunderland	11	2	1	2	5	5	1	1	4	3	11	11
Brentford	11	2	2	3	10	10	0	2	2	1	3	10
Barnsley	11	1	2	3	5	5	1	1	3	5	6	9
Southend	11	1	2	1	4	3	1	1	5	5	11	9
Luton Town	11	0	2	3	6	14	1	2	3	3	8	7
Bristol Rovers	12	1	1	4	9	17	0	2	4	8	15	6

The season so far

● **RESULTS showing Town score first, Town goalscorers, attendances and league position:**

BARCLAYS LEAGUE DIV I

AUGUST

15 Leicester (a) 1-2 (Campbell) .... 17,428 -
22 Bristol City (h) 0-3 .... 7,926 22
29 Charlton (a) 0-0 .... 6,302 21

SEPTEMBER

2 Newcastle (a) 0-2 .... 27,054 21
5 Tranmere (h) 3-3 (Claridge, Linton, Oakes) 6,801 23
13 Brentford (a) 2-1 (James, Gray) 7,310 19
19 Birmingham (h) 1-1 (Claridge pen) 8,481 21
26 Notts Co (a) 0-0 .... 5,992 21

OCTOBER

3 Portsmouth (h) 1-4(Dreyer) 7,954 22
10 Barnsley (a) 0-3 .... 5,261 23
17 Derby (h) 1-3 (Johnson) 8,848 23

APPEARANCES (as sub in brackets): Ever-presents, 11 each: Petterson, Linton, James, Gray and Preece; Claridge 10(1), Salton 9, Dreyer 8, Rees 8, Kamara 8, Peake 7, Oakes 5(5), Johnson 4(1), Hughes 3, Campbell 2(6), Matthew 2(2).

Number of players used: 16 (32 last season).

GOALS: Claridge 2 (1 pen) and one each by Campbell, Linton, Oakes, James, Gray, Dreyer and Johnson.

ASSISTS: Gray 2, Claridge 1, Kamara 1, Linton 1, Hughes 1, Salton 1.

THE COCA-COLA CUP

Round 2, first leg:
Sep 23 Plymouth (h) 2-2 (Claridge 2) 3,702
Second leg:
Oct 6 Plymouth (a) 2-3 (Claridge, Preece) 8,946

APPEARANCES: Two each by Petterson, Linton, Salton, Peake, Johnson, James, Kamara, Preece, Gray and Claridge. Oakes 1(1), Rees 1(1). One each as sub by Campbell and Dreyer.

GOALS: Claridge 3, Preece 1.

ANGLO-ITALIAN CUP

Sep 15 Watford (a) 0-0 5,197
29 Bristol City (h) 1-1 (Claridge) 2,538

APPEARANCES: Two each by Petterson, Linton, Salton, Rees, James, Kamara, Claridge and Gray. Preece 1(1), Campbell 1(1), Peake 1, Johnson 1, Dreyer 1, Matthew 1, Oakes (2).

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Local soccer tables

Campri South Midlands League

PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Oxford City	12	9	2	1	34	13	29
Wingate	11	8	2	1	31	11	26
Hatfield Town	14	7	4	3	43	24	25
Arlesey Town	12	8	1	3	32	16	25
Brache Sparta	12	8	1	3	24	13	25
Potters Bar Town	13	7	4	2	28	20	25
Hoddesdon Town	12	7	3	2	26	15	24
MK Borough	12	7	1	4	25	14	22
Welwyn GC	13	6	4	3	14	12	22
Biggleswade Town	13	6	2	5	26	16	20
Harpenden Town	13	6	1	6	15	15	19
Letchworth GC	11	5	2	4	15	11	17
Totternhoe	12	4	3	5	17	16	15
Luton Old Boys	13	4	1	8	14	26	13
Shillington	12	3	3	6	12	20	12
Leverstock Green	11	3	2	6	13	17	11
Langford	11	2	4	5	16	25	10
Buckingham Athletic	13	3	1	9	16	30	10
61FC Luton	11	2	3	6	15	32	9
Pitstone	13	3	0	10	10	39	9
Pirton	12	1	2	9	12	31	5
New Bradwell	10	0	2	8	7	29	2

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Bedford Town	14	12	2	0	45	13	38
London Colney	11	9	1	1	35	9	28
Risborough Rangers	13	8	4	1	25	11	28
Bedford United	13	8	3	2	41	19	27
Shenley & Loughton	13	8	2	3	37	19	26
P. Bar Crusaders	15	8	1	6	36	29	25
Shefford Town	15	6	3	6	30	17	21
Caddington	11	7	0	4	28	18	21
Winslow United	12	6	2	4	34	25	20
Tring Ath	15	5	5	5	24	29	20
Toddington Rovers	13	5	4	4	29	22	19
Ampthill Town	14	5	4	5	23	23	19
Ashcroft	15	5	3	7	30	33	18
Flamstead	13	3	5	5	20	35	14
Cranfield United	13	3	3	7	20	25	12
Stony Stratford	12	3	3	6	18	24	12
Sandy Albion	13	3	3	7	19	28	12
Delco	11	3	2	6	17	31	11
Emberton	14	3	1	10	17	43	10
*De Havilland	13	3	3	7	19	30	9
Walden Rangers	12	2	1	9	13	45	7
Ickleford	11	0	1	10	7	39	1

*Three points deducted.

RESERVE DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Arlesey Town	12	8	3	2	35	11	27
London Colney	12	7	4	1	40	17	25
Barton Rovers	11	7	3	1	18	7	24
Potters Bar Town	12	6	3	3	24	17	21
Toddington Rovers	12	6	2	4	24	21	20
Leverstock Green	11	4	6	1	24	16	18
MK Borough	10	4	4	2	25	16	16
Leighton Town	9	4	3	2	18	13	15
Welwyn GC	12	4	3	5	17	22	15
Brache Sparta	8	4	2	2	15	9	14
Letchworth GC	7	4	2	1	10	7	14
Pitstone	11	4	1	6	15	25	13
61FC Luton	12	3	3	6	20	23	12
*Hatfield Town	10	4	2	4	21	21	11
Langford	8	3	2	3	14	15	11
Biggleswade Town	9	2	4	3	9	19	10
Shefford Town	10	3	1	6	16	29	10
Shillington	11	1	4	6	14	23	7
Pirton	9	2	1	6	13	33	7
Buckingham Ath	10	0	5	5	14	21	5
Totternhoe	9	1	2	6	11	23	5
Harpenden Town	9	0	4	5	13	19	4

*Three points deducted.

RESERVE DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
*Oxford City	8	7	1	0	27	9	19
Shenley	7	6	1	0	21	9	19
Cranfield	6	5	0	1	13	4	15
Flamstead	8	5	0	3	18	14	15
Risborough	10	4	1	5	23	15	13
Bedford United	7	4	1	2	22	14	13
Stony Stratford	6	4	0	2	13	9	12
Tring Ath	8	3	2	3	11	11	11
Delco	8	2	3	3	18	19	9
Ampthill Town	9	3	0	6	13	26	9
Caddington	5	2	2	1	13	6	8
Ashcroft	6	2	2	2	9	10	8
*De Havilland	8	3	1	4	17	17	7
Winslow United	5	2	1	2	9	10	7
Sandy Alb	8	0	4	4	10	17	4
P. Bar Crusaders	9	1	1	7	12	30	4
Walden Rgrs	7	1	0	6	8	21	3
Ickleford	5	1	0	4	4	20	3

*Three points deducted.

NHC Sunday League

PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
St. Joseph's	4	3	0	1	9	2	6
Brache Green Man	4	3	0	1	12	7	6
AFC Heron	4	3	0	1	9	5	6
Sacred Heart	4	2	2	0	5	2	6
Enterprise	5	2	1	2	14	13	5
Crawley Sports	4	2	1	1	5	7	5
LW Totternhoe	3	1	1	1	5	4	3
FC Coral	3	1	1	1	7	7	3
TRWSS	4	1	1	2	11	15	3
Celtic Supporters	5	0	2	3	3	6	2
Stag Sports	2	0	1	1	4	7	1
Limbury Black Swan	4	0	0	4	7	16	0

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Sacred Heart Res	6	3	3	0	16	6	9
Horseshoe Saints	5	2	2	1	9	6	6
Stopsley Harriers	4	2	1	1	23	7	5
St. Joseph's Res	3	2	1	0	10	4	5
GIS Leagrave	4	2	1	1	8	8	5
Crawley Sports Res	3	1	2	0	8	7	4
Celtic Res	3	1	1	1	6	6	3
Stopsley WMC	3	1	1	1	3	3	3
Hexton	3	0	1	2	3	11	1
Vauxhall Hightown	4	0	1	3	3	21	1
Lewsey	4	0	0	4	4	14	0

DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Lilley Rangers	4	3	1	0	12	6	7
Caddington	4	2	2	0	12	9	6
AFC Heron Res	4	2	1	1	9	4	5
Boater	3	2	0	1	4	2	4
The Swan	3	2	0	1	5	4	4
LW Totternhoe Res	2	1	1	0	6	3	3
Valley Sports	2	1	0	1	4	3	2
AFC Wigmore	3	1	0	2	6	8	2
Lea Sports	4	0	2	2	7	11	2
Brewery	4	0	1	3	5	11	1
Borough Arms	3	0	0	3	3	12	0

DIVISION THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Stopsley Harriers R	6	4	1	1	24	14	9
Renault Dodge	5	3	0	2	19	10	6
Old Moat House	4	3	0	1	18	10	6
Parkside	5	3	0	2	16	8	6
FC Houghton	4	3	0	1	10	3	6
NT Sugar Loaf	4	3	0	1	11	6	6
FC Coral Res	3	2	0	1	7	4	4
Dog and Duck	5	2	0	3	11	14	4
Coulter	4	2	0	2	10	14	4
Stopsley WMC Res	6	2	0	4	10	22	4
Red Star	1	1	0	0	3	2	2
GIS Leagrave Res	6	0	1	5	9	24	1
Strawplaiters	5	0	0	5	6	23	0

DIVISION FOUR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Caddington Res	4	2	2	0	11	6	6
Britannia Airways	4	2	2	0	8	4	6
Markyate	4	3	0	1	14	10	6
Black Swan	4	3	0	1	9	11	6
Silsoe Rangers	3	2	0	1	16	5	4
Checkout	4	2	0	2	11	8	4
Magnum	2	1	0	1	5	5	2
Cavalier	4	0	2	2	4	8	2
Laporte	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Lewsey Res	3	0	1	2	6	15	1
AFC Stopsley	4	0	0	4	4	15	0

DIVISION FIVE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Roman Legion	4	4	0	0	20	2	8
AFC Oakley	4	3	1	0	17	4	7
Flint United	3	3	0	0	21	1	6
Wells Star	5	2	2	1	7	12	6
Casa Bianca (61)	4	2	1	1	10	5	5
Barbarians	4	1	1	2	9	9	3
Crescent Social	3	1	1	1	3	3	3
Lea Sports Res	3	1	1	1	5	7	3
Borough Arms Res	3	1	0	2	3	8	2
Kenilworth Rangers	5	0	1	4	2	13	1
Streatley Chequers	5	0	1	4	3	19	1
Luton BR	3	0	1	2	3	20	1

DIVISION SIX

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Wigmore Ath	5	5	0	0	35	6	10
Thames United	5	5	0	0	24	5	10
Lewsey Park Soc	4	3	0	1	8	7	6
FC Houghton Res	3	2	1	0	8	4	5
White Swan	4	2	0	2	18	14	4
Toddington	4	2	0	2	7	7	4
HR Chequers	5	1	2	2	7	13	4
Luton YS	4	2	0	2	9	15	4
Red Star Res	3	1	0	2	5	7	2
Fidus	3	1	0	2	5	8	2
Rileys	5	1	0	4	9	28	2
Renault Dodge Res	3	0	1	2	2	9	1
Laporte Res	6	0	0	6	7	21	0

DIVISION SEVEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Old Moat House Res	4	4	0	0	14	2	8
Manor Rangers	4	3	1	0	13	5	7
Magnum Res	6	3	1	2	15	11	7
Royal Mail Luton	4	3	0	1	22	3	6
Markyate Res	6	3	0	3	19	16	6
Limbury United	4	2	1	1	13	10	5
Red Lion	4	2	0	2	11	13	4
The Harrow	4	2	0	2	8	13	4
Luton Thameslink	4	1	0	3	7	19	2
Postels	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Luton Rover	3	0	0	3	3	11	0
Kenilworth Rgrs Res	5	0	0	5	8	29	0

S. Beds Sunday League

PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Sundon Park Social	5	3	2	0	18	8	8
Wheatsheaf	3	2	0	1	11	3	4
RB Legion	2	2	0	0	6	3	4
Chalton Strollers	2	1	1	0	7	1	3
Coach and Horses	2	1	1	0	6	1	3
Moor Park	2	1	1	0	4	2	3
Green Man Clophill	4	1	1	2	5	14	3
Emeralds	4	1	0	3	11	11	2
Farley Eagles	4	1	0	3	2	8	2
Brickmakers	4	0	0	4	5	24	0

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Leicester Arms	4	4	0	0	29	1	8
Wheatsheaf Res	5	3	1	1	13	4	7
Macom Eagles	4	3	0	1	14	6	6
Rose & Crown	5	1	1	3	5	9	3
Moor Park Res	5	1	1	3	8	18	3
Nurdin & Peacock	1	1	0	0	5	2	2
Wigmore Arms	1	1	0	0	2	0	2
Ramridge Members	3	1	0	2	6	8	2
Slip End Utd	2	1	0	1	5	8	2
EG Chiltern	3	1	0	2	6	10	2
Tophill Utd	5	1	0	4	5	27	2
Sportsman	2	0	1	1	4	9	1
Britannia Airways	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Blackberry Jack	5	4	0	1	25	9	8
Inter-City	3	3	0	0	21	8	6
Queens Head	4	2	1	1	25	9	5
Suspension Systems	4	2	1	1	10	10	5
Winston Churchill	2	2	0	0	16	2	4
Beds Yeoman	2	2	0	0	5	2	4
Windsor Castle	3	2	0	1	10	9	4
Painters Arms	2	1	1	0	7	3	3
Crown & Keg	3	1	1	1	4	3	3
Ch. Strollers Res	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Sugar Loaf Leagrave	2	0	0	2	5	11	0
Centurion	2	0	0	2	0	20	0
Wanderers	4	0	0	4	3	31	0
The Engine	5	0	0	5	5	34	0

DIVISION THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
S. Park Soc Res	4	4	0	0	18	5	8
Vauxhall Griffin	2	2	0	0	20	5	4
NV Athletic	4	2	0	2	11	8	4
Mercury	2	1	1	0	5	0	3
Northside	4	1	1	2	6	11	3
Independent	1	1	0	0	4	3	2
Lea Bank	2	1	0	1	5	5	2
Robin Hood	3	1	0	2	9	9	2
Bromley Ath	2	1	0	1	9	11	2
Bedco	2	1	0	1	3	7	2
Air Express	4	0	2	2	3	14	2
Engine Res	4	0	0	4	5	21	0