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Sports News

TOWN MATCH VERDICT

Luton Town.....1
Derby County.....5
(Half-time:.....1-3)

★★

Brian Swain reports — Action pictures: Josh Levy

● BEATEN TO THE PUNCH: Steve Sutton, who might have become a Luton Town player last season, rises to clear from Phil Gray.

FA cup dream shattered by a striking return

FOR nearly half an hour at Kenilworth Road the dreams of FA Cup glory giving Luton Town a lift on and off the field looked possible.

They took the lead against Derby County, looked well in the game, but then fell apart, ripped open by sheer pace as the visitors settled into a match-winning groove.

And to add extra misery, the major damage in the heaviest home defeat for nearly a decade was inflicted by one of the young stars who have been sold off before the Town had their money's worth out of them.

Midfielder **Mark Pembridge,** still only 22, hit the first hat-trick of his career to make the £1.25m the Town got for him in the summer look a better bargain for Derby than it was at Kenilworth Road.

Manager **David Pleat** thinks the Town had taken too much out of themselves in winning the third round tie against Bristol City in midweek.

His men were beaten on two counts: physical power and seering pace, with the second the most telling ingredient.

Derby's three front men, Paul Kitson, Marco Gabbiadini and Tommy Johnson, must be the quickest trio in the First Division.

They made the Town look slow coaches.

Yet the scoreline was, as Arthur Cox admitted, flattering in terms of run of the game.

But the Town were pretty while Derby were effective.

A decent referee might have made a difference.

Paul Harrison of Heywood had one of those days when he would have improved the match if he had stayed in bed.

You can accept things like goal kicks instead of corners, but he failed to read the early signs as Derby set out to stamp their authority on matters.

In particular Richard Goulooze clattered **David Preece** and got away with no sign of a yellow card. The Town man needed treatment for three minutes, and after that early 'tackle' was not up to his usual standard.

Is it cynical to wonder if Derby had marked him out as the major midfield danger and decided to do a job on him?

Similarly Jason Kavanagh fouled **Phil Gray** rather than let him pass, but that brought poetic justice, with a goal from the free kick.

It was swung over beyond the far post by **Jason Rees** and **Paul Telfer** climbed superbly to loop his header over Steve Sutton and into the far corner of the net.

The lead was no less than the Town deserved at that stage, the 24th minute.

Johnson had made a good run for Derby to hit the first shot of the match, well wide from a good through-ball by Martin Kuhl, but the Town had then taken over.

Derby were backpedalling every time Ceri Hughes attacked on the Town's left, but they survived, with Rees having a shot charged down and Gray beating the offside trap and shooting over the bar.

The goal should have settled the Town. But it inspired Derby to equalise five minutes later.

They by-passed **Julian James** for the first goal, with Pembridge taking a throw-in to Mike Forsyth and getting the ball back to deliver a dangerous cross.

Kitson met it with a near-post header, and Craig Short, the £2.5m defender, scored from close range.

The Town tried hard to get back an attacking mode, but without much conviction, and they were caught on the break by a sweeping move in the 42nd minute.

Gabbiadini, Johnson and Kitson shifted the ball and themselves at high speed to carry the move 50 yards, and from one flank to the other.

It ended with Kitson driving the ball goalwards from the right, and Pembridge turned it into the net from close range.

Worse followed a minute into injury time. Steve Sutton punted a clearance downfield, and **Trevor Peake** fell over as Gabbiadini swept past him.

He veered to the left, picked the right time and place for the lay-back, and Pembridge stepped up to place a shot into the far corner.

At 3-1 down, we hoped for a quick Town reply early in the second half. But a miskick by Hughes after a move by James, Gray and Telfer, let Derby off the hook, as did a weak shot by Gray, from an opening made by Telfer and Hughes.

That effort, in the 50th minute, was the first that Sutton had to save.

The Town had to take risks to chase the game, and Derby were good enough to defend in depth and sting painfully on the break.

"We were mugged," was the phrase Andy King used.

Pembridge was the arch criminal in that context, racing clear to convert Gabbiadini's through ball to complete the first hat-trick of his career in the 55th minute.

The rest counted for little, with the final whistle the only respite.

John Dreyer came closest to reducing the arrears with a cracking volley from a diagonal cross by Telfer, but that was balanced by Tommy Johnson hitting the outside of a post after going round Chamberlain.

But nine minutes from time Gabbiadini completed our misery and Derby's happiness by bundling in their fifth goal. It came from a cross by Forsyth, who had been put clear by Pembridge on a day when the lad who grew up at Luton showed what a man he has become at Derby.

Third round a false dawn

Luton Town 2
Bristol City 0

THE TOWN earned a place in the fourth rouund by dishing out a defeat which cost City manager Denis Smith his job.

But as things turned out on Saturday, the effort put into a very good victory may have been costly when the team was asked to do something similar against Derby.

Smith was sacked 48 hours after the Town's win took City's current run to one victory in 15 league and cup games.

His last match left him very annoyed at his players, particularly left back Martin Scott, who was sent off with 20 minutes to go, when the Town were ahead and looking on top of 11 men, let alone ten.

Scott was red-carded for retaliation. **Phil Gray** hit him with a late tackle, for which he was booked, and Scott picked himself up, threw mud at the striker, and then shoved a hand into his face.

The City manager did not argue about the decision. His complaint was that his team had not played as well as it had done in its two previous visits, for a victory in the league and a draw in the Anglo-Italian Cup.

Town boss **David Pleat** made the point that since then his team had been improving steadily, and he was sure the Town deserved their victory.

"We saw two fine goals and a very solid second-half performance," he said. "We were the better footballing side, and I am delighted for the players."

Gray, man of the match with his strength and commitment, shot the first goal in the 30th minute from a low left-wing pull-back by **David Preece.** His chance to cross low came after **Marvin Johnson,** who had a storming attacking game, got forward and put over a centre which Matt Bryant headed weakly to Preece.

Ceri Hughes hit the clincher against ten men. He was left unmarked long enough to bring the ball under control and lash it into the roof of the net after a deep cross from the right by **Paul Telfer.**

An all-action cup-tie saw three other bookings, Andy Cole and **Trevor Peake** for an ungainly clash, and Russell Osman, now caretaker manager at Ashton Gate, for a foul on **Ian Benjamin.**

Manager Pleat thought the good team display would give his men the confidence to carry on the good work against Derby, but by Saturday night he was concerned that two hard games in five days had been too much. Derby had enjoyed a full week's preparation for their visit to Kenilworth Road.

MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Chamberlain; James, Peake, Dreyer, Johnson (Harvey, 81 mins); Telfer, Rees, Preece, Hughes; Gray, Benjamin (Oakes 81 mins).

BRISTOL CITY: Welch; Llewellyn, Osman, Bryant, Scott; Mellon (Rosenior 55 mins), Shelton, Harrison, Gavin (Aizelwood 87 mins); Allison, Cole.

GOALS: 1-0, 30 mins: Phil Gray, sharp shot on the turn from low pass by David Preece. 2-0, 81 mins: Ceri Hughes, angled drive from deep cross by Paul Telfer.

OTHER ASTEMPTS: Town four saved, seven wide and late header by John Dreyer hit the bar; City four saved and two wide. Corners: 11-3 to the Town.

REFEREE: Gary Willard, Worthing. Did very well — pity he wasn't in charge of the game against Derby.

BOOKED: Phil Gray and Trevor Peake of the Town, Andy Cole and Russell Osman of City, all for fouls.

SENT OFF: Martin Scott for violent conduct in retaliating after a bad late tackle by Gray.

ATTENDANCE: 6,094, lowest of the season at Kenilworth Road except for the Anglo-Italian Cup visit by City in September.

ENTERTAINMENT: A good night's football for Town fans, with the team well deserving to win. It made Saturday's thrashing by Derby so much harder to stomach.

The full match details

LUTON TOWN: Chamberlain; James, Peake, Dreyer, Johnson; Telfer, Rees (Oakes 62 mins), Preece, Hughes; Benjamin (Harvey 72 mins), Gray.

DERBY COUNTY: Sutton; Kavanagh, Short, Wassall, Forsyth; Goulooze (Micklewhite, 81 mins), Kuhl, Pembridge; Kitson, Gabbiadini, Johnson. Other sub: Coleman.

GOALS: 1-0, 24 mins: Paul Telfer, towering far post header from deep free kick by Jason Rees; 1-1: Craig Short after Paul Kitson headed on a cross by Mark Pembridge; 1-2, 42 mins: Pembridge, close-range tap-in from low cross by Tommy Johnson; 1-3 in first-half injury time: Pembridge again, low drive from pulled back pass by Marco Gabbiadini; 1-4, 55 mins: Pembridge with a careful shot from Gabbiadini's through-ball; 1-5 81 mins: Gabbiadini bundling over a low cross by Mick Forsyth.

OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town two saved and nine wide; County two saved and six wide. Corners: 9-5 to the Town.

REFEREE: Paul Harrison, Lancashire. Had even more of an offday than the Town did. Woefully weak on interpreting early tackles that intimidated, especially one by Goulooze on David Preece, and inconsistent throughout.

BOOKED: No-one — for which Derby should be truly grateful.

ATTENDANCE: 9,170, highest of the season so far, with 2,000 from Derby swelling it.

ENTERTAINMENT: Too painful for Town fans to appreciate how good Derby were. Their finishing and pace on the break was ruthless.

● DERBY were the first visitors to score five goals at Kenilworth Road since Manchester United did it in February 1984 in the old First Division. The time before that was in May, 1983, when Everton won 5-1.

Last season five were put past the Town at Coventry, Manchester United and Oldham, with one at Boundary Park the only reply.

Saturday was the sixth time in the last three seasons that the Town had conceded five goals or more, but the other occasions were all in away matches, starting with a 6-1 hammering at QPR. The next disaster was 5-0 at West Ham in an FA Cup replay the following January. Last season Coventry, Manchester United and Oldham all put five goals past the Town, with one at Boundary Park the only reply.

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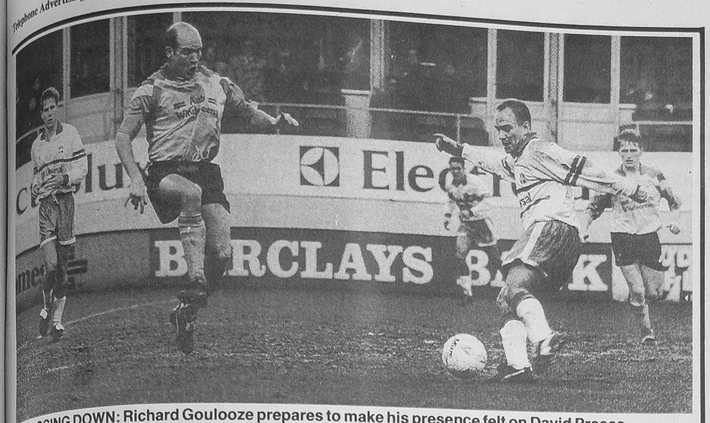

● CLOSING DOWN: Richard Goulooze prepares to make his presence felt on David Preece.

Managers' viewpoints

THERE WAS a mixture of bewilderment and shock in the Town camp after they had played reasonably well at times before going down to their worst home defeat in nine years.

Derby County manager Arthur Cox was a little sympathetic, saying that the Town probably had more play territorially than his side.

But, he added, what good is that if you don't put the ball in the net?

Town manager David Pleat said: "I am very disappointed. Deep down we thought we had a fighting chance, and looking at the first 30 minutes we were going quite well.

"But Derby proved stronger physically. They had a lot of pace, with their front three and Mark Pembridge all very quick.

"I don't think some of our younger players can cope easily with two games at that standard in five days.

"We had a hard game against Bristol City and today I thought Derby looked stronger and fitter than we did."

He still looks on Mark Pembridge as 'our boy' and added: "He is a good professional and works hard, and if he steers clear of injuries he will have a glorious career."

Pembridge admitted that he felt for Luton, because he has happy memories of the club where he learned his trade.

But he added that he was now very much a Derby County player, and was pleased for the team as well as for himself that it had been such a happy return.

The Town are due to go to the Baseball Ground in the league in late April, and Pembridge thinks that by then Derby may have sorted out their home form. If they can improve that, he said, County might just be in with the chance of a double: promotion and the FA Cup.

He won't remember it, but Derby have only once before met the Town in an FA cup-tie, in a two-leg third round in 1946. They won 6-0 at Luton, 3-0 at Derby, and went on to win the cup for the only time in their 106-year history.

THE SEASON SO FAR

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

BARCLAYS LEAGUE DIV I

1992

AUGUST

15 Leicester (a) 1-2 (Campbell) ..... 17,428 -
22 Bristol City (h) 0-3 ..... 7,926 22
25 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
12 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
24 Peterborough (a) 3-2 (Gray 2, Telfer) 7,125 22
31 Southend (h) 2-2 (James, Gray) 7,256 22

NOVEMBER

3 Cambridge (a) 3-3 (Oakes, Gray 2) 5,715 22
7 Tranmere (h) 1-4 (Gray) 6,928 22
14 Oxford (a) 0-4 ..... 5,760 22
21 Millwall (h) 1-1 (Gray) 8,371 23
28 Watford (h) 2-0 (Benjamin, Oakes) 8,341 21

DECEMBER

5 Bristol Rov (a) 0-2 ..... 6,245 22
12 Wolves (a) 2-1 (Gray 2) 13,932 19
19 Wimbledon (h) 0-0 ..... 8,286 20
26 West Ham (a) 2-2 (Hughes, Dreyer) 18,786 20

1993

JANUARY

2 Birmingham (a) 1-2 (Hughes) 9,601 22
9 Notts Co (h) 0-0 ..... 6,729 22

APPEARANCES, (as sub in brackets): Ever-presents with 24 each: James and Dreyer, Preece 23, Peake 19, Rees 18, Linton 16(3), Johnson 16(2), Harvey 16, Salton 15, Petterson 14, Kamara 12, Oakes 11(12), Hughes 11, Chamberlain 10, Telfer 9(1), Benjamin 5(2), Campbell 2(7), Williams 1(4).

BEFORE TRANSFERS: Claridge 15(1); Matthew (loan) 3(2).

Number of players used: 20 (32 last season).

GOALS: Gray 10, Oakes 3, James 2, Dreyer 2, Hughes 2, Claridge 2(1 pen) and one each by Campbell, Linton, Johnson, Telfer and Benjamin.

ASSISTS: Gray 4, Preece 3, Claridge, Rees, Hughes and Kamara two each. One each by James, Linton, Salton, Johnson and Dreyer.

THE FA CUP

Rd 3: Jan 19 Bristol City (h) 2-0 (Gray, Hughes) 6,094
Rd 4: Jan 23 Derby County (h) 1-5 (Telfer) 9,170

APPEARANCES: Two each by Chamberlain, James, Dreyer, Peake, Johnson, Telfer, Rees, Preece, Hughes, Gray and Benjamin. Two each as sub by Oakes and Harvey.

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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Send in your answers on the coupon to: Soccer quiz, The Leader, Grosvenor House, Alma Street, Luton LU1 2PL to arrive by noon on Monday.

Q1: What is Luton's home ground called?
A:.....
Q2: Who is the manager?
A:.....
Q3: Who is the captain?
A:.....
Q4: What Division do they play in?
A:.....
Q5: Who is the leading scorer?
A:.....
Q6: Which cup did they win at Wembley in 1988?
A:.....
Q7: Who captained that side?
A:.....
Q8: Who was the beaten team that day?
A:.....
Q9: Who won in Luton's only FA Cup final appearance?
A:.....
Q10: When was that?
A:.....

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PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Celtic Supporters	13	8	2	3	39	14	18
Enterprise	10	7	1	2	24	15	15
Sacred Heart	10	6	2	2	17	8	14
AFC Heron	12	5	2	5	27	25	12
FC Coral	9	4	3	2	23	18	11
St. Joseph's	6	5	0	1	18	5	10
Crawley Sports	10	4	2	4	15	18	10
LW Tottenhoe	7	4	1	2	16	14	9
Brache Green Man	10	4	1	5	22	23	9
TRWSS	13	3	1	9	30	43	7
Stag Sports	9	1	3	5	10	24	5
Limbury Black Swan	12	1	0	11	22	55	2

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Sacred Heart Res	12	6	4	2	31	10	16
St. Joseph's Res	7	5	2	0	19	8	12
Stopsley WMCJ	12	4	3	5	17	18	11
Horsesshoe Saints	8	4	2	2	13	9	10
Stopsley Harriers	8	3	3	2	36	13	9
GIS Leagrave	6	4	1	1	15	10	9
Celtic Res	8	3	2	3	18	17	8
Hexton	9	2	3	4	11	23	7
Crawley Sports Res	8	2	2	4	11	23	6
Lewsey	8	1	1	6	16	25	3
Vauxhall Hightown	8	1	1	6	13	44	3

DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Lilley Rangers	11	6	4	1	32	16	16
AFC Heron Res	12	4	5	3	23	23	13
The Swan	10	6	0	4	18	15	12
Caddington	10	4	3	3	26	25	11
Lea Sports	10	3	4	3	27	22	10
Valley Sports	12	4	2	6	25	26	10
LW Tottenhoe Res	6	4	1	1	16	9	9
Beater	10	3	2	5	17	17	8
Brewery	10	2	4	4	15	20	8
Borough Arms	10	2	1	7	12	32	5
AFC Wigmore	5	2	0	3	9	15	4

DIVISION THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Stopsley Harriers R	13	10	1	2	47	27	21
FC Houghton	12	9	1	2	40	14	19
Renault Dodge	13	8	1	4	45	20	17
Coulter	12	6	2	4	29	25	14
Red Star	11	5	3	3	24	21	13
NT Sugar Loaf	7	6	0	1	23	8	12
Dog and Duck	12	5	1	6	33	31	11
Old Moat House	12	4	3	5	31	40	11
GIS Leagrave Res	14	3	4	7	20	41	10
FC Coral Res	11	4	1	6	22	22	9
Parkside	10	4	0	6	24	29	8
Stopsley WMC Res	12	2	1	9	15	47	5
Strawplaiters	13	0	2	11	19	47	2

DIVISION FOUR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Caddington Res	7	5	2	0	25	8	12
Checkout	12	5	2	5	35	23	12
Black Swan	8	6	0	2	20	16	12
Silsoe Rangers	5	3	2	0	26	12	8
Markyate	6	4	0	2	19	13	8
Magnum	4	3	0	1	12	7	6
Britannia Airways	6	1	4	1	10	9	6
Cavalier	10	1	4	5	16	30	6
Lewsey Res	8	1	2	5	12	30	4
AFC Stopsley	9	2	0	7	14	35	4
Laporte	5	0	2	3	8	14	2

DIVISION FIVE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Crescent Social	13	8	2	3	34	21	18
Wells Star	12	7	3	2	24	20	17
Barbarians	12	6	2	4	27	20	14
Flint United	8	6	1	1	35	7	13
Roman Legion	6	6	0	0	36	3	12
AFC Oakley	7	5	2	0	27	12	12
Lea Sports Res	10	3	4	3	18	18	10
Streatley Chequers	11	4	2	5	18	30	10
Casa Bianca (61)	11	3	3	5	21	21	9
Borough Arms Res	9	2	1	6	16	25	5
Kenilworth Rangers	13	1	2	10	9	36	4
Luton BR	14	0	2	12	10	62	2

DIVISION SIX

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Wigmore Ath	8	8	0	0	54	8	16
HR Chequers	13	6	3	5	23	40	13
Thames United	6	6	0	0	28	5	12
Toddington	9	5	0	4	25	20	10
White Swan	8	5	0	3	31	26	10
Fidus	9	4	0	5	22	21	8
Lewsey Park Soc	7	4	0	3	17	21	8
FC Houghton Res	7	3	1	3	23	19	7
Luton YS	11	3	1	7	22	38	7
Renault Dodge Res	6	1	1	4	10	17	3
Red Star Res	7	1	0	6	10	24	2
Rileys	7	1	0	6	14	40	2

DIVISION SEVEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Old Moat House Res	11	9	2		46	12	20
Magnum Res	12	8	1		39	21	17
Manor Rangers	14	7	3		41	28	17
Limbury United	9	6	2		42	22	14
Kenilworth Rgrs Res	14	5	1		31	48	11
Royal Mail Luton	6	5	0		34	5	10
Markyate Res	12	4	2		29	34	10
Postels	10	2	3		19	31	7
Luton Rover	9	3	0		18	33	6
Red Lion	9	2	1		18	28	5
The Harrow	9	2	1		21	40	5
Luton Thameslink	11	2	0		20	58	4