

Sports News



● **HANDY:** Swindon goalkeeper Fraser Digby gets there first, beating a challenge by Phil Gray.



● **EAR-BASHING:** Kerry Dixon the target of a choice word or two from Swindon defender Colin Calderwood.

The season so far

● **CHART SHOWS** Town score first, goalscorers, gates and league position after Saturday's game.

BARCLAYS LEAGUE DIV I	
1992	
AUGUST	
15 Leicester (a) 1-2 (Campbell).....	17,428
22 Bristol City (h) 0-3.....	7,926
29 Charlton (a) 0-0.....	6,302
SEPTEMBER	
2 Newcastle (a) 0-2.....	27,054
5 Tranmere (h) 3-3 (Claridge, Linton, Oakes).....	6,901
13 Brentford (a) 2-1 (James, Gray).....	7,310
19 Birmingham (h) 1-1 (Claridge pen).....	8,481
26 Notts Co (a) 0-0.....	5,992
OCTOBER	
3 Portsmouth (h) 1-4 (Dreyer).....	7,954
10 Barnsley (a) 0-3.....	5,261
17 Derby (h) 1-3 (Johnson).....	8,848
25 Peterborough (a) 3-2 (Gray 2, Telfer).....	7,125
31 Southend (h) 2-2 (James, Gray).....	7,256
NOVEMBER	
3 Cambridge (a) 3-3 (Oakes, Gray 2).....	5,715
7 Grimsby (h) 1-4 (Gray).....	6,928
14 Oxford (a) 0-4.....	5,760
21 Millwall (h) 1-1 (Gray).....	8,371
29 Watford (h) 2-0 (Benjamin, Oakes).....	8,341
DECEMBER	
5 Bristol Rovers (a) 0-2.....	6,245
12 Wolves (a) 2-1 (Gray 2).....	13,932
19 Sunderland (h) 0-0.....	8,286
26 West Ham (a) 2-2 (Hughes, Dreyer).....	18,786
1993	
JANUARY	
9 Birmingham (a) 1-2 (Hughes).....	9,601
16 Notts Co (h) 0-0.....	6,729
27 Newcastle (h) 0-0.....	10,237
30 Bristol City (a) 0-0.....	8,877
FEBRUARY	
6 Leicester (h) 2-0 (Johnson, Gray).....	9,140
9 Brentford (h) 0-0.....	6,248
13 Tranmere Rovers (a) 2-0 (Gray, Johnson).....	7,723
20 Charlton (h) 1-0 (Gray).....	8,443
27 Barnsley (h) 2-2 (Dixon, Gray pen).....	7,595
MARCH	
6 Portsmouth (a) 1-2 (Gray).....	10,457
9 Oxford (h) 3-1 (Prece, Gray, Oakes).....	6,687
13 Grimsby (a) 1-3 (Gray).....	5,163
17 Swindon (h) 0-0.....	8,902
20 Bristol Rovers (h) 1-1 (OG Maddison).....	7,717

TOWN MATCH VERDICT

Swindon.....1
Luton Town.....0
(Half-time.....0-0)

Brian Swain reports

Action pictures: Josh Levy

Promising display flatters to deceive

Match details

Swindon 1 Luton Town 0

LUTON TOWN: Chamberlain; James, Peake, Dreyer, Johnson; Telfer, Kamara, Preece, Hughes (Oakes 72 mins); Dixon, Gray. Other sub: Williams.

SWINDON: Digby; Summerbee, Hoddle, Calderwood, Taylor, Bodin; Marwood (Hazard 62 mins), MacLaren (Hamon 81 mins), Ling; Maskell, Close.

THE GOAL: Crisp drive into the far corner from overlapping left back Paul Bodin after Nicky Summerbee, the right back, had got down his flank and crossed hard and deep. A flicked header by sub Chris Hamon sending the ball beyond Julian James, the last defender.

OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town three saved and five wide; Swindon four saved and four wide. Corners: 5-3 to the Town.

REFEREE: Paul Vanes, Warley, West Midlands; played very well, with both sides helping by getting on with the game.

BOOKED: No-one.

ATTENDANCE: 10,934. Bettered only five times at the County Ground this season — and well shouted the 400 from Luton.

ENTERTAINMENT: A little dour, with the Town doing very well at holding a top team, but not doing enough to beat them.

sound, and the midfield carried an encouraging mix of toughness and creativity.

Back at one of his former homes, Chris Kamara was a towering influence, with biting tackles and regular runs in support of the attack. Particularly in the first half Ceri Hughes threatened to destroy Swindon's sweeper system, working the flank like a left winger.

With David Preece in the groove again, it was a shame that Paul Telfer found that his job had to be more about stopping the opposition rather than attacking them.

On the run of play Swindon were lucky to win. But the vital goal was a cracker, whipped in eight minutes from time when the Town seemed to be worth their 18th draw of the season.

The Town defence had looked rock solid until then.

Goalkeeper Alec Chamberlain hardly had a save to make and the home side and their fans were showing far more

tension than the Town.

The best chances before the goal had all been created at the other end. Swindon were without the main strike forces, with Dave Mitchell and Steve White both suspended, and the deputies, Craig Maskell and Martin Ling, had to play second fiddle as the middle was bottled up by Trevor Peake and a slightly more nervous John Dreyer.

Swindon were kept at bay for almost the whole of the first half as the Town settled into a good containing game.

Fullbacks Julian James and Marvin Johnson were both on top of their game, and quick to go forward when Swindon attacks broke down, often through over-anxious misplaced passes.

There was only one scare for the Town in their first 45 minutes, when Ling's pass set Maskell on an angled run in the penalty area. For once the offside flag did not wave, but although

Maskell got past the goalkeeper, he had been driven very wide, and put his shot into the side netting.

The solid holding game needed a touch of attacking inspiration to turn it to good effect, but hard though they tried, Phil Gray and Kerry Dixon could not find it.

Gray put an early drive inches over the bar, and a glorious chance went to waste in the 25th minute.

Hughes cracked in a blistering cross which was too hot for Fraser Digby. He dropped the ball, and Kamara, racing through from midfield, was set for a simple goal until Dixon also tried to shoot, and the two got tangled up and the chance was gone.

"Kerry didn't hear me shout, and took the ball off my toes," said Kamara.

Long before the end it looked like the tenth 0-0 draw of the season was a certainty.

Dixon had a shot deflected but from the

corner Dreyer's header was saved.

Ling wasted a chance with a header over the bar from a far post cross by Brian Marwood, and it took Swindon 61 minutes to get a shot on target. Maskell hit it straight at Chamberlain.

The Town were bright on the counter-attack, and Kamara ran through the offside trap superbly, only to hit a very poor cross.

The Town sent on Scott Oakes in place of Hughes for the last 20 minutes, but when Kamara set him up for a shot he sent it into Digby's arms.

In the closing stages Swindon raised their game, and sent on a 19-year-old sub who turned out to be a match-winner on his league debut.

Good save

Chamberlain had made a very good save to flick a shot by Maskell over the bar before the home side found the finish their front men lacked.

Nicky Summerbee roared down the right wing and crossed to the back of the penalty area. Chris Hamon, the sub, made a very faint contact with a header which sent the ball over James, and left back Paul Bodin, running up on the left side, cashed in with a cracking first-time drive low into the far corner of the net.

As the Town went to broke, Swindon should have scored again in the last minute.

Micky Hazard beat Peake on the half way line, and set up a three against one attack, with Dreyer the lone defender. Hamon was put clear, but shot wide.

Cruel result — 'We were mugged again'

MANAGER David Pleat summed up the defeat simply: "They got a break and we didn't."

Coach and former manager John Moore was more blunt: "We played like mugs," he said. "We kept getting mugged, so there must be something the matter with us."

The manager was able to find something positive despite the deep disappointment he felt over the result.

"We certainly thought that in general play we coped with a side at the top end of the table," he said, on a day when Swindon held on to fourth place in the First

Division.

Chris Kamara, given a warm welcome back at one of his former clubs, agreed with that, and added that disappointed though he was at the result he wished Swindon well.

They deserved promotion three years ago, he recalled, when they won it on the field and lost it in a committee room of the Football League through failings of the pitch.

Mr Pleat said: "We dominated most of the play, but the game is all about goals."

"We are defending well as a team, and although we can have no complaints about the goal

they scored, it was a bit of a cruel result."

"If the first half Chris Kamara and David Preece ran the game."

"But this has been a summary of our season; we always look good enough to hold teams higher up the league. But we have not got enough goals to make possession and our good football count."

Glenn Hoddle, the manager who admires the Pleat brand of football, played sweeper for Swindon. He said: "For the first time this season I have to admit that we didn't play well. But at half time, when I looked at the Luton players, I still had the feeling that we would win."



● **OLD MASTERS:** Glenn Hoddle and Chris Kamara, both 35, proving they are still on the ball.

'No foul' ref under fire

THE Town thought they had earned half the six points needed for safety against Wolves, until a debatable equaliser robbed them.

Most people in the ground — and neutrals in the Pressbox were unanimous — were sure that Steve Bull fouled John Dreyer to get clear and drive in an 81st-minute goal. Unfortunately referee Kelvin Morton was the odd man out.

"Debatable, to say the least," said manager David Pleat, who had jumped out of the dug-out to remonstrate with the linesman who allowed Bull to go on and deprive the Town of the extra two points they just about deserved.

They had put Wolves under the cosh for 50 minutes before goalkeeper Mike Stowell, the man of the match, was finally beaten by Phil Gray.

Until then Wolves, in with a slim chance of a play-off place, had strolled through the game, content to defend in depth and rely on Stowell.

He made a series of fine saves, notably from Gray, Kerry Dixon and David Preece.

The worry at half-time was that having done so much attacking and got nothing, the

Luton Town 1 Wolves 1

Town might have to pay for it.

But they returned to the attacking routine, and Stowell made another brilliant save to deal with a right foot volley by Gray, after Jason Rees had created the opening.

The goal that was overdue arrived in the 50th minute, with Rees, Scott Oakes and Chris Kamara setting up Gray for a shot low into the corner of the net from about 15 yards.

But it galvanised Wolves into being more positive. Alec Chamberlain had to make a top class save to a free kick by Paul Cook, and a drive by Paul Blades hit the bar.

The storm seemed to have been weathered until Mr Morton failed to penalise Bull for knocking Dreyer down as he chased after a headed pass by Andy Mutch.

The former England striker, kept well under control by Dreyer except for that one moment, took the chance well, but it was less than justice for a Town side that had done remarkably well to bury nerves and tension.

But the result was a bitter blow to a team that was to regret those two dropped home points even more three days later after the narrow defeat at Swindon.

Match details

LUTON TOWN: Chamberlain; James, Peake, Dreyer, Johnson; Rees (Telfer 85 mins), Kamara, Preece (Williams 87 mins), Oakes, Dixon, Gray.

WOLVES: Stowell; Simkin, Mountfield, Blades, Venus, Rankine, Downing, Cook, Denison; Mutch, Bull (Thompson, 86 mins). Other sub: Madden.

GOALS: 1-0, 50mins: Phil Gray, low drive from opening made by Scot Oakes, Jason Rees and Chris Kamara; 1-1 81 mins: Steve Bull, after holding off a challenge by John Dreyer, with the Town sure that Bull fouled the defender to get clear from Andy Mutch's flick.

OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town seven saved and three wide; Wolves three saved, five wide and one hit the bar. Corners: 8-4 to the Town.

REFEREE: Kelvin Morton, Bury St. Edmunds. Had a good game except for the crucial decision to allow Bull's shove on Dreyer to go unpunished in the run-up to the equaliser.

BOOKED: No-one.

ATTENDANCE: 7,948, with only a few hundred from Wolverhampton.

ENTERTAINMENT: Mixed, but overall pretty good. The Town played very well and had almost all the game in the first 50 minutes, in which Wolves goalkeeper Mike Stowell was outstanding. His team didn't open up until the Town scored.



● **FOILED AGAIN:** Wolves goalkeeper Mike Stowell makes a clean catch to deny Phil Gray at Kenilworth Road.

Local soccer tables

A & B Sports NHC Sunday League

PREMIER DIVISION					
	P	W	D	L	F A P
St. Joseph's.....	17	16	0	1	55 16 32
Enterprise.....	21	13	0	4	46 29 30
Celtic Supporters.....	20	12	5	3	48 15 29
Sacred Heart.....	19	12	3	4	33 14 27
FC Coral.....	18	8	4	7	44 38 20
AFC Heron.....	18	6	5	7	35 37 17
FC Coral.....	15	6	3	6	39 31 15
Brache Green Man.....	19	6	3	10	27 33 15
Crawley Sports.....	20	6	3	11	28 43 15
Stag Sports.....	18	2	6	10	17 43 10
TRWSS.....	22	4	2	16	46 81 10
Limbury Black Swan.....	20	3	2	15	30 68 8

DIVISION ONE					
	P	W	D	L	F A P
Sacred Heart Res.....	19	12	5	2	48 14 29
St. Joseph's Res.....	16	11	4	1	39 19 26
Enterprise Res.....	16	7	4	5	30 20 19
Horseshoe Saints.....	16	7	4	5	30 18 18
Celtic Res.....	18	7	4	7	38 36 18
St. Joseph's Res.....	19	6	6	7	30 29 18
St. Joseph's Res.....	16	7	4	5	30 29 18
St. Joseph's Res.....	18	6	4	8	54 41 16
Lewsey.....	17	7	2	8	33 34 16
Crawley Sports Res.....	17	3	11	24	48 9
Vauxhall Hightown.....	20	1	18	14	76 3

DIVISION TWO					
	P	W	D	L	F A P
Lilley Rangers.....	18	10	5	3	52 29 25
LW Tottenham Res.....	18	12	1	5	52 32 25
AFC Heron Res.....	20	8	7	5	47 36 23
Lea Sports.....	18	8	4	6	44 32 20
The Swan.....	19	8	2	8	36 34 20
Valley Sports.....	19	8	3	6	41 39 19
Caddington.....	18	8	3	7	36 40 19
Brewery.....	19	5	7	7	30 40 17
Booster.....	20	4	5	11	37 53 13
Borough Arms.....	20	4	5	11	28 58 13
AFC Wigmore.....	17	4	4	9	34 44 12

DIVISION THREE					
	P	W	D	L	F A P
FC Houghton.....	23	14	5	4	73 36 33
Stopsley Harriers R.....	21	14	5	2	66 38 33
MT Super Leaf.....	20	14	3	3	66 32 31
Stopsley Harriers.....	22	11	4	7	68 33 29
FC Coral Res.....	21	10	6	5	43 30 26
Dog and Duck.....	21	10	4	7	66 50 24
Old Mead House.....	21	6	7	8	52 61 19
Coulter.....	22	7	5	10	42 52 19
Strawplatters.....	22	6	4	12	42 57 16
Red Star.....	20	6	3	11	37 56 15
GIS Leagrave Res.....	23	5	5	13	36 71 15
Parkside.....	21	5	2	14	46 64 12
Stopsley WMC Res.....	21	3	0	18	28 85 6

A & B Sports SB Sunday League

PREMIER DIVISION					
	P	W	D	L	F A P
Moor Park.....	13	10	3	0	46 15 23
Coach & Horses.....	13	9	3	1	53 19 21
Sunder Park Soc.....	16	9	2	4	47 38 20
Wheathead.....	12	9	1	2	38 12 19
Chalton Striders.....	12	9	1	2	38 12 19
Green Man Clapham.....	16	5	10	1	23 47 11
RB Legion.....	15	4	2	9	19 42 10
Farley Eagles.....	16	4	1	11	18 30 9
Emeralds.....	17	4	1	12	38 57 8
Brickmakers.....	15	2	1	12	20 67 5

DIVISION ONE					
	P	W	D	L	F A P
Leicester Arms.....	17	14	1	2	82 13 29
Nuffield & Peasmarsh.....	18	13	3	2	69 29 28
Macom Eagles.....	17	13	3	1	67 23 27
Wheathead Res.....	18	10	3	5	69 24 23
Rose & Crown.....	18	8	3	7	59 43 19
Widmore Arms.....	17	8	3	7	46 19 28
EG Chiltern.....	18	7	3	8	49 52 17
Moor Park Res.....	20	4	5	11	50