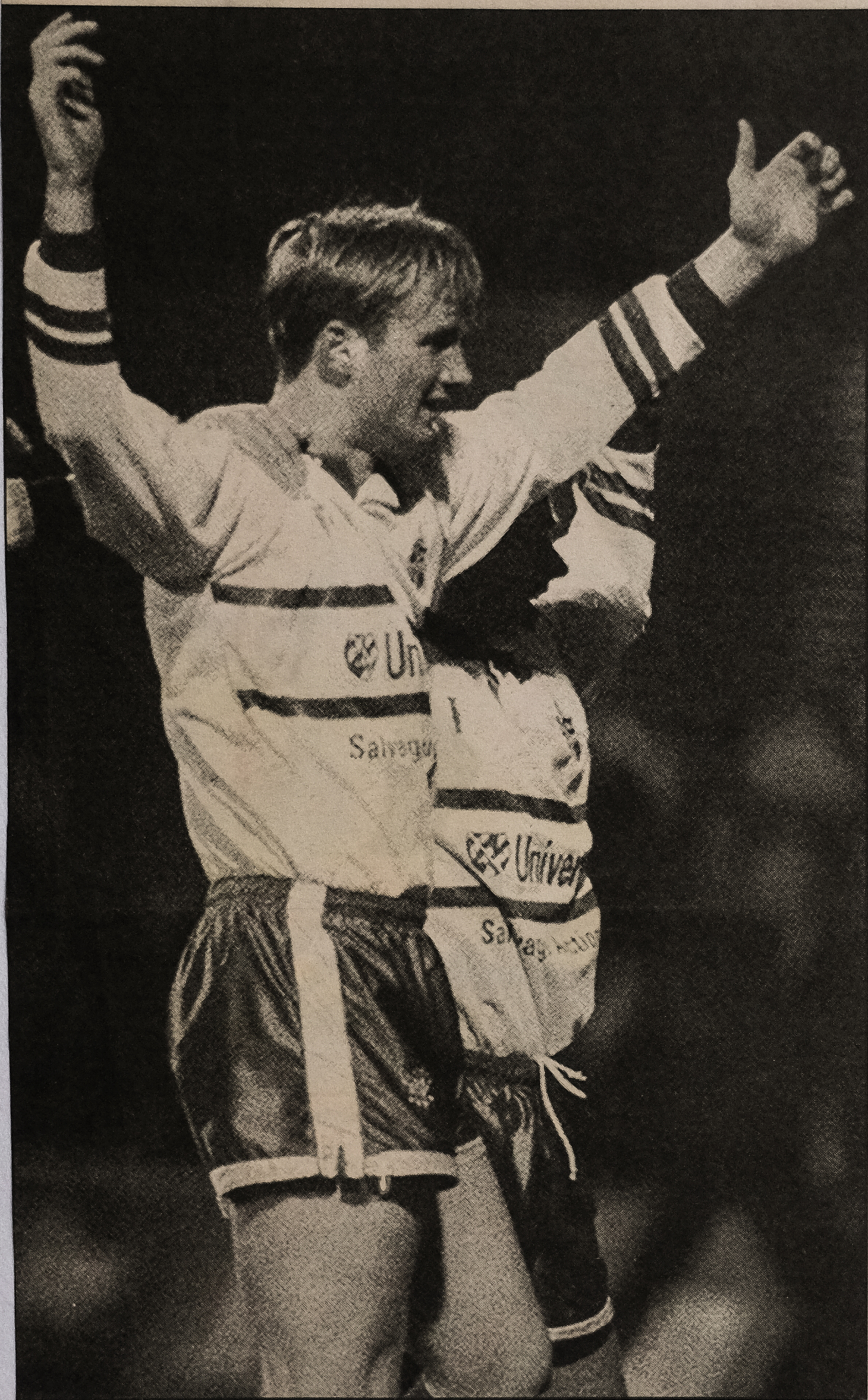


HARTS OF OAKES



HARTS COMES UP TRUMPS . . . hero John Hartson celebrates Luton's opener

Wor blimey! Luton superkids stick boot into King Kev

Luton 2 Newcastle 0

93/94 (FAC)

DAVID PLEAT'S brave and brilliant Luton side beat the king of the passers at his own game last night.

Kevin Keegan, his Toon Army and some of the finest players in British football, went out of the FA Cup to two golden strikes from Luton superkids John Hartson and Scott Oakes.

But the Newcastle boss acknowledged his Premiership high-fliers went out to a team who also matched and outplayed them in every department.

The first goal was scored by Hartson, a teenager who was not born when Keegan's two goals gave Liverpool an FA Cup triumph at Wembley in 1974.

The second came from Oakes, a youngster who is just 21 and whose ball skill and mastery would not have looked out of place in Newcastle's own side.

But it would be unfair to set them aside from the other nine heroes who played such a vital part in Luton's greatest night for almost five years.

Talented

It was 1989 when Luton pulled off one of the great cup shocks, landing the League Cup for the Hatters with a magnificent 3-2 win over Arsenal.

But, if David Pleat's current team play like this, there is no reason why he could not take them to greater achievements.

From the kick-off there was a suspicion that this could be the setting for a great upset.

Luton did not look at all fazed by the big names lining up against them — Premiership top scorer Andy Cole, a footballer of the year candidate in Peter Beardsley and one of England's most talented youngsters in Lee Clark.

Pleat's own team is an exciting blend of youth and experience provided by the likes of David Preece, captain Trevor Peake and former Everton championship winner Alan Harper.

But when the old legs tired, it was the inspiration of Luton's

By MARTIN SAMUEL

youngsters that carried them through.

And there was no greater hero on the night than Oakes.

He had to wait until late in the second half to get the goal his performance deserved, but he was most people's man of the match long before that.

His pace and enterprising play ripped Newcastle's defence to shreds and he linked up with the Hatters' midfield with intelligence.

But, ironically, it was the long ball that gave Luton their breakthrough — a goal that almost jarred alongside the neat one-touch football on show for much of the game.

There were 17 minutes on the clock when Peake hit a 40-yard through pass from well within Luton's own half.

Injury

Hartson, just 18, has played just 12 games for the club and was only in the team because of injury to former Chelsea star Kerry Dixon.

But the Welshman took his opportunity as if he had a lifetime of Cup encounters under his belt.

Magpies goalkeeper Mike Hooper ran from his box, Hartson slipped the ball past him and then ran round to finish into an empty net.

Luton would have added a second before half-time but for the intervention of skipper Barry Venison.

Once again it was Hartson who beat Hooper to a loose ball, provided by the outstanding Oakes.

But this time his goal-bound header was met on the line by Venison who cleared with a spectacular overhead kick.

Just ten minutes into the second half Luton had their third clear goal-scoring opportunity, when a ball from Preece found Oakes striding through only for Hooper to save.

But Newcastle could not hold out indefinitely and in the 79th minute Oakes got the clincher his performance merited.

He was clear on goal and when his shot hit the advancing Hooper, Des Linton slipped an intelligent pass for Oakes to tap the ball into the net.

LUTON: Sommer, James, Peake, Dreyer, Telfer, Oakes, Preece, Hartson, Campbell, Linton, Harper.

NEWCASTLE: Hooper, Venison, Beresford, Howey, Lee, Beardsley, Cole, Clark, Sellars, Watson, Elliott.