# Pleat rings the changes for TV

## THE SEASON SO FAR

Chart shows Luton Town score first, Town scorers, attendance and league position.

**ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE DIV 1**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | August | |
| 13 | West Brom | (H) | 1-1 (Oakes) | 8,640 |
| 20 | Derby Co | (A) | 0-2 | 13,060 |
| 27 | Southend | (A) | 2-2 (Harbon, Hughes) | 5,318 |
| 30 | Tranmere | (H) | 2-4 (Hughes, Harbon) | 5,460 |
| | | | September | |
| 3 | Port Vale | (A) | 1-0 (Marshall) | 8,541 |
| 10 | Burnley | (H) | 0-1 | 7,518 |
| 13 | Bolton | (H) | 0-3 | 5,784 |
| 17 | Watford | (A) | 4-2 (Teller 2, Dixon, Oakes) | 8,860 |
| 24 | Millwall | (A) | 0-0 | 7,150 |
| | | | October | |
| 1 | Bristol City | (H) | 3-1 | 6,633 |
| 8 | Stoke City | (A) | 2-1 (Marshall, Preece) | 11,712 |
| | | | November | |
| 16 | Fulham | (H) | 1-1 (Oakes) | 3,287 |
| 23 | Fulham | (A) | 1-1 (Marshall) | 5,134 |

Luton lost on penalties

**APPEARANCES:** Two each by Sommer, James, Greene, Peake, Johnson, Teller, Preece, Hughes and Dixon; Houghton 1, Oakes 1 (1), Linton 1 (1) Marshall 1 (1), Skelton (1).

**GOALS:** Harbison, Hughes, Oakes and Teller two each, Dixon and Marshall two. **ASSISTS:** Teller and Preece 3, Marshall, Harbison, Oakes and Johnson 2.

**APPEARANCES (as sub in brackets):** Ever-present: 11 each, Sommer, James, Peake, Johnson, Teller and Preece; Hughes 10 (1), Marshall 8 (3), Dixon 4 (1), Greene 6, Waddock 5, Harbison 3 (2), Thomas 3 (2), Hughes 4 (1), Skelton 3, Antoni 1, Gill, Woodstock (1). **Before transfer:** Houghton 1. **Number of players used:** 17. **Last season:** 20.

**COCA COLA CUP**

| | | | (First round) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | August | |
| 16 | Fulham | (H) | 1-1 (Oakes) | 3,287 |
| 23 | Fulham | (A) | 1-1 (Marshall) | 5,134 |

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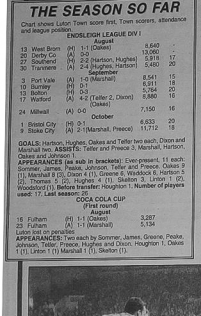


DOWN THEY GO: Dreyer and Marshall are both grounded as the Town attacker's run is brought to a premature end by the "professional foul" for which Dreyer was sent off.

GETTING TO GRIPS: John Dreyer, struggling to catch Dwight Marshall, starts the wrestling match which was the beginning of the end of the game for the former Luton defender.

**TWO CHANGES in the team paid handsome dividends for Luton Town boss David Pleat at Bolton, as his men turned on the style in front of TV cameras. Their third away win of the season makes them the top team in the First Division for awayday results.**

And on a day when so many played so well, even the home club's sponsors agreed that the man of the match cup had to go to a Town player.

But it was a day of disaster for John Dreyer, making his first appearance against the club he had served so well for six years before the Town decided that they could not afford his wages.

On Sunday the wages of sin were a goal against, a penalty conceded, and finally a red card as Dreyer, normally nimble and alert, was destroyed by the pace of Dwight Marshall.

Stoke's planning for the game had been thrown off balance because the Town changed their formation. The use of five at the back, or in midfield, was amended to a 4-4-2 line-up, to allow Cen Hughes to return to the side, after he was unexpectedly rested vs central midfield.

And he was almost effective than Scott Oakes, the man he replaced, had been in recent games, although he was doing a different job.

### STOKE CITY 1 LUTON TOWN 2

Skipper Trevor Peake snatched the ball out of the match cup for his imperious centrepiece of the Town penalty area, particularly in the second half when Stoke were reduced to barging in a succession of opposing full backs towards the Town penalty area.

You could hardly argue with the scoreline to the 37-year-old skipper, but Marshall to him very close for top honours.

His scoring pace and the extra little bit of space he can find on away games, rather caused Dreyer time and time again.

And Gary Waddock did a vital job, containing the danger of Icelandic international Toddy Orlygsson.

Add to all that the recall of John Hartson, full of battle, spirit and aggression, and you had a team that much more well defended to win.

To be critical, the Town should have found a more ruthless attack, with Kevin Preece, the most consistent midfielder on view, missing a penalty which should have made it 2-0, and Paul Telfer, recapturing something of his old sparkle, fading with a close range chance early in the second half.

But everything else was positive and highly satisfying for Town fans, with Jurgen Sommer capping a good display with an incredible first-in-one save to bury memories of an earlier mistake when he went up for a high ball, dropped the ball, and was rescued by the defence.

Above all, it was the performance that carried Town through with the delightful, if unexpected bonus, of the winner on coming 83 seconds after Stoke had sicked an equalizer.

Afterwards there was some debate on two questions: if the Town had got the second goal they deserved before Stoke scored, would it have lifted the game? Perhaps. Except that, because of the such a slender lead, the Town wished that match better to protect it.

And the sending-off of Dreyer was not the only blow it may have been for Stoke. He was giving a reprieve to Jason Marshall, and for weeks afterwards, as it office, the Stoke chairman Gordon Hill was trying in vain for very good reasons, to find out the underlying one ot the reasons for every results are in serious trouble for Dreyer with Stoke driving forward on attack for an equalizer, it gave the Town opportunity to find space for counting counter-attacks.

Marshall profited ut it, and was unlucky not only once.

All three of his goals this season have come in away games, and the quality of the finish blew for the Town ahead in the final minute made his £150,000 transfer fee look a steal.

The construction of the goal could hardly have been simpler. Sommer passed the ball towards Hartson but a defender to get a flick-on, and the hapless Dreyer, slipped badly, and was left trailing as Marshall went on and drove a shot into the top corner past Carl Muggleton's left hand.

Dreyer was embarrassed again five minutes later when he tried a crafty hand clearance at Hartson, and was lucky not to be sent off by Julian James. The penalty, the Town's first this season except for the shootout at Fulham, was entrusted to Preece. He hit it accurately, but Carl Muggleton guessed correctly and dived to his right to save at the foot of the post. It was as bad luck Preece's wide out of five his last faced this season.

Teller's main cause six minutes after the break Mitchell Thomas sent over a cross-ball 1 yd full from the left. Hartson headed it down, and from about eight hards, and in fact of the centre of the goal, Teller hit his shot straight at the goalkeeper.

Dreyer's final contribution to the game came three minutes later. Marshall was running clear in pursuit of a through ball from Waddock, with Dreyer caught a yard due left wounded by a attacker to the Dreyer, a yard outside the penalty area, and Terry Sidbrot decided that it was a dangerous foul as a man going through into a scoring position.

He was right, because Dreyer's challenge took a little time to get from the ground back to defend the free kick, Stoke evaded further trouble, and with Dreyer drive defeated for a corner.

Sommer's most important contribution came on the hour, when Orlygsson, almost unopposed in his confrontation with Waddock, slipped the defender with his pass of the game to put Martin Carruthers in Sommer round off his line to face the Stoke man on the edge of the box, and parried the shot, The rebound fell to Jason Beckford, and magically the giant American regained his feet in time to block his effort as well. Carruthers had the third bite from that rebound, and was once more foiled, and the attack was eventually cleared by Sommer chasing Carruthers almost off by his line and diving to scoop the ball away as Carruthers tried to connect again.

Stoke looked desperate after that, but snatched an equalizer out of their desperation with ten minutes to go. The Town failed to clear a free kick properly, and as bodies went flying in from both sides a scramble saw Lee Sandford and Beckford force the ball clear of Peake and Marvin Johnson, and Carruthers tripped in to score.

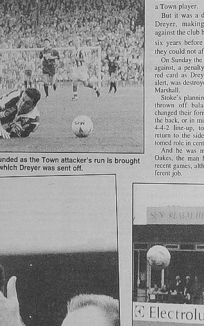
Suddenly Stoke and their fans – but not their manager – thought a great revival could be completed with a winner. Some of us feared it might happen.

But little more than a minute after the equalizer, the ball was in the other net for a winner that turned out to be the last touch by the determined Preece.

Hartson got the ball to Telfer on the right. From his low cross Marshall cleverly dummied his marker, and Preece escaped the cover to get in at close range for his first goal of the season.

He had given his all, and was immediately subbed. Kevin Dixon, lifted so high by nine minutes. But Stoke, lifted to high by the equalizer, were demoralised by the Town's swift reply, and had nothing more to offer.

**REPORTS By BRIAN SWAIN**
**PICTURES By GARETH OWEN**



John Dreyer in happier days at Luton last season.

YOU BEAUTY: Carl Hughes, left, and David Preece show their appreciation of Dwight Marshall after he fired the Town into the lead.

## How they stand

**ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION**

| | | | | | HOME | | | | AWAY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
| Walsall | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 23 |
| Middlesbro | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 23 |
| Reading | 11 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 21 |
| Tranmere | 11 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 20 |
| Swindon | 11 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 20 |
| Charlton | 11 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 16 |
| Stoke | 11 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 12 | 16 |
| Millwall | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 15 |
| Bolton | 11 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 15 |
| Sheff Utd | 10 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 15 |
| Derby Co | 11 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 15 |
| Portsmouth | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 15 |
| Bristol City | 11 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 15 |
| Grimsby | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 15 |
| Port Vale | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 14 |
| Southend | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 13 |
| Burnley | 11 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 14 |
| Tranmere | 11 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 13 |
| Luton Town | 11 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 13 |
| Bolton | 11 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 13 |
| Watford | 11 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 12 |
| Millwall | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 10 |
| Stoke | 11 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 9 |
| Bristol C | 11 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 9 |
| West Brom | 11 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 6 |

I'VE DONE IT: David Preece hits the deck between goalkeeper Carl Muggleton and Stoke midfielder John Butler, but is already signalling his delight at knocking in the Town's winner.

## The big match facts

**TOWN:** Sommer; James, Peake, Johnson, Thomas; Teller, Hughes, Waddock, Preece (Oakes 82 mins); Marshall, Hartson. Other subs Williams and goalkeeper Bogdan.

**STOKE CITY:** Muggleton; Butler, Cranson, Dreyer, Sandford; Walsh, Beckford 82 mins), Orlygsson, Downing, Gallagher; Carruthers, Peschisolido (Iverson 55 mins), Cranson, Goalkeeper sub Sinclair.

**THE GOALS:** 0-1 22 mins: Dwight Marshall, carried away from the top corner after his pace took him out drove John Dreyer from John Hartson's flick-on, clear of John Martin Carruthers, scrambled effort after Scott Oakes and Trevor Peake were more alert than the way; 2-1 81 mins: David Preece, from close range, after Marshall sold a clever dummy to the right wing cross by Paul Telfer.

**OTHER ATTEMPTS:** Town fine saved, including a penalty by Preece, and seven wide; City eight saved and five wide. Corners: 7-6 to Stoke.

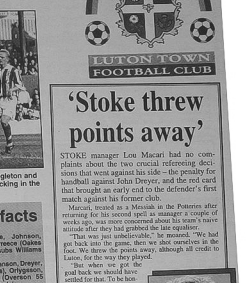
**REFEREE:** Terry Heilbron; Newton Aycliffe; must have had a good game because even Stoke were not complaining about the two most difficult decisions he made, to award the Town a penalty and to send off John Dreyer.

**BOOKED:** Gary Waddock and Mitchell Thomas, both for fouls on Toddy Orlygsson.

**SENT OFF:** John Dreyer, to complete a miserable reunion with his old mates; for wrestling Dwight Marshall to the deck just outside the penalty area in the 54th minute.

**ATTENDANCE:** 11,712, including 385 real Luton supporters, who chose to be there even though the game was televised live.

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Top quality for Town fans, and the neutrals watching on TV should have enjoyed it as well. And the third away victory of the season was well deserved.



DAVID PLEAT

## 'Stoke threw points away'

STOKE manager Lou Macari had no complaints about the two crucial refereeing decisions that went against his side – the penalty for handball against John Dreyer, and the red card that brought an end to the defender's first match against his former club.

Macari, treated as a Messiah at the Potteries after returning for his second spell as manager a couple of weeks ago, was more concerned about his team's mental attitude after they had grabbed the late equalizer.

"That was very unbelievable," he moaned. "We had got back into the game, then we shot ourselves in the foot. We threw the points away, although all credit to Luton, for the way they played.

"But when you get the goal back we should have settled for that. To be honest I was surprised that we got an equalizer, but I felt we deserved a 1-1 result. We should have kept cool and settled for what we had after the equalizer. But we didn't, and our heads We thought we could go on and win, instead of settling for the draw."

He added that he had no complaints over the penalty, nor over Dreyer's dismissal, and he also admitted that Dwight Marshall's pace had been a problem for the defence. The whole team was on the field. "He caused us a lot of problems," he said.

For Town boss David Pleat the result was a double delight. His team now were more every game the first quarter of this season that it did through the whole of last.

And the win at Stoke relaxed pressure. The Town had dropped to 21st place in the league on Saturday, but moved up to 18th with their third away victory of the season.

"There is a pressure on you in away games if you are not winning at home," he said.

He admitted that he had thought hard and long about his team selection and formation. Having decided to recall Carl Hughes, and ask him to play central midfield, he was pleased with the job the transfer-listed Welsh international did.

The choice had been to drop Scott Oakes or Dwight Marshall. "That was a very difficult decision," said Mr Pleat. "But I had the feeling Marshall might find more space in an away game. He took his goal very well, and did well for the second goal with the dummy he left in Preece."

The boss turned out to be just as surprised when he made his substitution. Preece and Gary Waddock were both tiring, after getting through a tremendous amount of work in midfield, and the substitution was being debated in the dug-out just before Preece shot the winner.

"I wanted to get more width into our play against ten men," said the manager. "We decided to put on Oakes, and I was thinking about taking off Waddock. But he was doing so well in keeping Toddy Orlygsson quiet, and Preece had also given his all."