Big match facts

● TOWN: Sommer; James, Peake, Johnson, Thomas, Marshall, Waddock, Oakes, Preece; Dixon (Woodstead 62 mins), Higgins (Teller 74 mins). Unused goalkeeper sub Davis.

● GRIMSBY: Crichton; McDermott, Handyside, Lever (Lawe 55 mins), Lee, Jobling; Watson, Dobbin, Groves, Gilbert, Childs (Fear 81 mins), Woods, Mandronia. Unused goalkeeper sub Pearcey.

● THE GOALS: 1-0 eight minutes: Jim Dobbin, lep-in after Neil Woods beat the offside trap and drew Juergen Sommer to lay on an open goal; 2-0 27 minutes: Dave Gilbert lep-in after Sc-0 73 mins: Neil header by immaterial Paul Groves; 3-0 73 mins: Woods, complete flatter as cross by Gilbert hit him on the knee and the ball looped over Sommer; 4-0 75 mins: Tommy Watson, cool finish and the end of the best passing move of the game; 5-0 86 mins: Watson again from a pass by player-manager Brian Wilson.

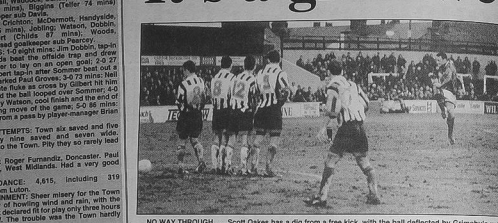
● OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town six saved and five wide. Grimsby nine saved and seven wide. Corners: 11-5 to the Town. Pity they so rarely lead to goals.

● REFEREE: Roger Furnandiz, Doncaster. Paul Vanes, Warley, West Midlands. Had a very good game.

● ATTENDANCE: 4,615, including 319 masochists from Luton.

● ENTERTAINMENT: Sheer misery for the Town fans, on a day of howling wind and rain, with the pitch a pluggy mass and fit for play only three hours before kick-off. The trouble was the Town hardly played.

It's a grim week for Luton's players



NO WAY THROUGH . . . Scott Oakes has a dig from a free kick, with the ball deflected by Grimsby's wall for a corner.

IN SAFE HANDS . . . Paul Crichton, named man of the match by the sponsors, shows a safe pair of hands as Jamie Woodsford tumbles and Dwight Marshall hopes for a rebound.

GROUNDED . . . Luton full back Julian James, also picture inset, tries to add a bit of bite to the Town' attacking.

DREAMS of Luton Town sneaking into a play-off place in the First Division were put into perspective by a second successive nightmare at Blundell Park.

Three days after riddling Premiership club Southampton knocked Luton for six in the FA Cup, homeless Grimsby, a team without stars, hit five without reply.

And only briefly, in the early stages of the second half, did the Town look anything like capable of getting any reward on a ground where they have not won in 45 years.

Playing their third game in eight days, in driving wind and rain, and on a glutted pitch, the Town looked lethargic and unconfortable.

It was no time or place for pretty football, and Grimsby were wound up by an angry manager to show a bit of spirit and determination after a failure the previous week.

They were quick, direct and full of rumbaugh and the duo of former ines Neil Woods and Clive Mendonca always threatened much more than the Town offered in attack through Kerry Dixon and Wayne Biggins.

Dwight Marshall looked capable of sparking something better, and Scott Oakes went close to breaking the Town's duck.

But David Preece was frustrated, and Paul Telfer was on the bench for the first time this season, and the defence was under too much pressure to survive.

Manager David Pleat was able to point out that the Town totally got back in game in their brightest spell, and that Crichton, the Grimsby goalkeeper, was named man of the match by the sponsors were very good saves.

But against that Grimsby had the luck of winners throughout and Juergen Sommer too often exposed by the new in front of him, played a part in keeping the unt down.

The first half was parallel to watch, oth the Town looking bedraggled and weldrone, despite playing with the elements ind their favour. Their display here the marks of a hangover from 6-0 thrashing at The Dell.

They tried to defend ell upfield, and the offside pat halted six promising Grimsby attacks in the first 45 minutes.

But it failed when the fox goal went in, after eight ute ites. Mendonca split the Town defence with a pass to the left wing. Woods made ogre progress in a wide open gallop behind Julian James, and drew Sommer, forced the ball to pass into the centre of the penalty area.

Jim Dobbin, a midfielder breaking forward, headed ho self to a simple goal, with nob ing but mud between him and the target.

The second goal was another ta-in, with the Town defence once more away grse wide boot.

GRIMSBY 5
LUTON TOWN 0
(Half-time 2-0)

Tommy Watson crossed from the right and Paul Groves, another midfielder with an eye for goal, was unmarked near the penalty spot. He powered in a good header which Sommer, partial, but could not hold, and Dave Gilbert gobbled up the rebound to make it 2-0 in 27 minutes.

Grimsby had to make two good saves before the interval, and the Town's best effort was a well-struck curling drive by Oakes, from a pass by Preece. Crichton did well to tip it around the post.

Just before the break Preece ploughed through the mud and into the penalty area and fell beneath a challenge by two defenders. The Town were convinced it should have been a penalty, but the ref disagreed.

The Town gained themselves a little early in the second half but Sommer had made three more good saves before Crichton was troubled again, once more by Oakes.

The goal that was desperately needed to give the Town a ray of hope should have fitted in the field minutes.

Trevor Peake threaded a pass down the middle on the pitch of Marshall, who was in on goal, but Crichton turned his advance and a thrilling save to perfection and the chance was gone.

And after that the Town all but melted away in the mud, despite the introduction of Paul Telfer.

Grimsby: Crichton; McDermott, Handyside, Lever, Lee, Jobling; Watson, Dobbin, Groves, Gilbert, Childs (Fear, 81 mins), Woods, Mendonca. Unused goalkeeper sub Pearcey.

Referee: Roger Furnandiz, Doncaster.

Attendance: 4,615, including 319 masochists from Luton.

Bookings: None.

Corners: Luton 11, Grimsby 5.

Luton: Sommer; James, Peake, Johnson, Thomas, Marshall, Waddock, Oakes, Preece; Dixon (Woodstead 62 mins), Higgins (Teller 74 mins). Unused goalkeeper sub Davis.

How they stand

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolton	30	11	3	1	33	10	3	5	6	17	22	51
Wolves	30	11	2	2	31	13	4	3	7	21	28	50
Tranmere	30	12	2	1	37	16	2	6	7	11	19	50
Reading	30	6	6	3	16	11	5	2	8	19	15	50
Middlesbro	28	9	3	2	24	11	3	5	5	17	15	49
Watford	30	8	6	1	21	8	3	4	8	13	17	47
Bristol City	30	8	4	3	22	12	4	3	6	23	22	46
Grimsby	30	9	4	2	30	14	2	4	9	17	26	44
Barnsley	30	9	3	3	24	12	2	4	9	10	22	42
Luton Town	**29**	**4**	**3**	**7**	**19**	**20**	**7**	**4**	**4**	**19**	**20**	**40**
Millwall	28	7	3	2	20	9	2	4	8	12	18	40
Charlton	29	6	6	5	24	20	4	5	5	19	22	39
Derby Co	30	7	4	4	23	17	3	3	9	14	19	39
Oldham	29	7	5	2	23	13	3	3	9	16	27	38
Southend	30	8	3	4	27	17	2	3	10	14	39	36
Stoke	28	5	4	4	21	13	3	5	6	8	21	36
Port Vale	30	6	3	6	20	18	3	5	7	14	23	35
West Brom	30	8	3	4	18	10	1	4	9	10	11	26	34
Portsmouth	29	4	5	5	15	14	3	4	7	11	18	26	33
Swindon	27	6	5	3	21	15	2	3	8	15	25	32	32
Sunderland	29	4	3	7	14	21	3	2	9	14	31	32	32
Bristol City	30	6	4	5	17	19	2	2	11	8	22	30	30
Barnsley	30	4	5	6	19	19	3	2	9	21	27	29	29
Notts Co	31	4	6	6	19	20	2	2	11	14	25	26	26

Luton Town's season at a glance

DATE... OPPONENTS... RESULT... TOWN SCORERS... ATTENDANCE... LEAGUE POSITION

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE DIV 1

August 1994

13 West Brom (H) 1-1 (Oakes) 8,640
20 Derby Co (A) 0-0 13,060
27 Southend (H) 2-2 (Harlton, Hughes) 5,818 20
30 Tranmere (A) 2-4 (Hughes, Harlton) 5,480 20

September

3 Port Vale (A) 1-0 (Marshall) 8,541 15
10 Swindon (H) 1-1 (Telfer) 5,911 15
13 Bolton (H) 0-3 5,764 20
17 Millwall (A) 4-2 (Telfer 2, Dixon) (Oakes) 8,860 16
24 Millwall (A) 0-0 7,150 16

October

1 Bristol City (H) 0-1 6,633 20
8 Stoke City (A) 1-1 (Leonard, Preece) 11,712 18
15 Middlesbro (H) 5-1 (Marshall 2, Preece) (Harlton, Hughes) 13,317 7
22 Sheffield Utd (A) 3-1 (James, Dixon, Hughes) 7,212 10

November

2 Grimsby Tn (H) 1-2 (Oakes) 5,899 14
5 Wolves (A) 3-2 (Preece, Marshall) (Dixon) 26,749 8

December

12 Oldham Ath (A) 0-0 7,907 8
18 Portsmouth (H) 2-0 (Dixon, Preece) 5218 8
26 Swindon (A) 2-1 (Dixon, Oakes) 9,455 5

January 1995

3 Sheffield Utd (H) 3-6 (Harlston, Johnson, og) 8,516 8
11 Derby (A) 0-0 6,400 10
18 West Brom (A) 0-1 14,392 12
28 Reading (H) 0-0 5,218 12
27 Sunderland (H) 3-0 (Oakes 2, Harlston) 8,953 9
4 Notts County (A) 1-0 (Telfer) 7,141 9

February

2 Charlton Ath (H) 0-1 7,642 8
14 Barnsley (A) 1-3 (Dixon) 4,908 11

March

4 Oldham Ath (H) 2-1 (Marshall 2) 6,903 10
11 Grimsby (A) 0-5 4,615 13
18 Swindon (H)
21 Portsmouth (A)
25 Bristol City (A)

April

1 Bolton (A)
8 Wolves (H)
8 Notts County (H)
15 Sunderland (A)
17 Reading (A)
22 Charlton Ath (A)
29 Middlesboro (A)

May

6 Stoke City (H)

COCA-COLA CUP (First Round)

August 1994

16 Fulham (H) 1-1 (Oakes) 3,287
23 Fulham (A) 1-1 (Marshall) 4,134

Luton lost on penalties, 4-5

FA CUP (Third Round)

January 1995

7 Bristol Rov (H) 1-1 (Harlston) 7,571
18 Bristol Rov (A) 1-0 (Marshall) 8,218 Replay
(Fourth Round)
28 Southampton(H) 1-1 (Biggins) 9,938

February

8 Southampton (A) 0-6 15,075 Replay

Who's who

APPEARANCES... GOALS

League appearances (as sub in brackets)		Woodstead	(2)
Sommer	29	Telfer	1
James	29	**League goals**	
Peake	29	Marshall	6
Johnson	29	Oakes	6
Thomas	29	Dixon	4
Preece	26	Preece	4
Marshall	23 (5)	Telfer	2
Thomas	23 (2)	Hughes	2
Waddock	22	Harlton	2
Oakes	22 (6)	Johnson	1 pen
Dixon	19 (1)	Own goals -	1
Harlton	11 (9)	**Assists**	
Higgins	8 (1)	Telfer	6
Allen	7	Marshal	4
Allen	7	Harlton	4
Clarke	3 (2)	Preece	3
Skelton	3 (2)	Oakes	3
Biggins	3	Dixon	2
Houghton	2	Biggins	2
Harvey	2	James	1
Adcock	(2)	Hughes	1
Thorpe	(2)	Houghton	1

CUP APPEARANCES... GOALS

Cup appearances		Biggins	2
Sommer	6	Linton	1
Peake	6	Harlson	1
Johnson	6	Houghton	1
Telfer	6	Preece	1
Preece	6	Oakes	1
Oakes	5 (1)	Williams	(1)
Marshall	4 (1)	Adcock	(1)
Dixon	4 (1)	**Cup goals**	
James	4	Marshal	2
Thomas	4	Oakes	2
Waddock	4	Harlson	1
Allen	3	Telfer	1
Greene	2	Biggins	1

JUERGEN SOMMER

England ace Le Tiss runs the show for the Saints

SOUTHAMPTON 6 LUTON TOWN 0

THE BRILLIANCE of Matthew Le Tissier was the Premier League ace at home to Swindon in the Saints' opener on Saturday, and he not enjoying a trip to Kenilworth in the FA Cup.

A 40 minute hat-trick by the Town's Connect result left no other game where one team had such an astonishing influence. Le Tissier was unstoppable, despite a block of the before kick off, and the Town never coped with him, partic ularly his passing ability.

If the time he was subbed, after just over an hour, it was 5-0 to the Saints, with the Town substituting twice, and having a hard job to the other three.

The Town enjoyed a bright opening five minutes, and there were very few really good ones in footbal, and they would have been able to cope, I give the Saints credit — the whole club revolves around him.

The pass he played for the fourth goal was just incredible... brilliant. Our disappointment is that we knew we should have won the first game."

Saints boss Alan Ball said: "Luton had a good start, in the first five minutes. But then they lostbrilliance. Le Tissier is back to the best 85. We had them by the throat and didn't let go."

"Even if we had had a very good man marker, it would have been very really good ones in footbal, and they would have been able to cope, I give the Saints credit — the whole club revolves around him.

The pass he played for the fourth goal was just incredible... brilliant. Our disappointment is that we knew we should have won the first game."

Saints boss Alan Ball said: "Luton had a good start, in the first five minutes. But then they lostbrilliance. Le Tissier is back to the best 85. We had them by the throat and didn't let go."

FA Cup match facts

● TOWN: Sommer; James (Dixon, H), Peake, Johnson, Thomas, Marshall, Waddock, Oakes; Marshall, Higgins (Thorpe 69 mins). Unused goalkeeper sub goalkeeper Davis.

● SOUTHAMPTON: Grobbelaar; Dodd, Monkou, Hall, Kenna; Widdrington, Maddison, Hiskett (79 mins), Magilton, Hughes 62 Heaney; Le Tissier, Hughes 62 Shipperley. Goalkeeper sub Beasley.

● GOALS: 1-0 6 mins: Le Tissier side-foot drive from edge of the box from a poor clearance by Julian James. 2-0 27 mins: Jim Magilton, 18-yard-shot after Le Tissier put Neil Heaney away down the left for the low cross; 3-0 36 mins: Le Tissier penalty, after Mitchell Thomas handled his cross; 5-0 50 mins: Ken his cross; 5-0 50 mins: Ken Monkou close range from Le Tissier pass, following a corner; 6-0 75 mins: Le Tissier saved by goalkeeper Juergen Sommer; 6-0 87 mins: David Hughes (sub for Le Tissier) from angle of penalty area.

● OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town three saved, three wide. Saints yarder by Kerry Dixon, diagonal the top of the bar when it was already 5-0; Southampton five saved and six wide. Corners: 7-5 to the Town.

● REFEREE: Gerald Ashby, Worcester. Had a very good game, compared to the Town's.

● BOOKED: Julian James of the Town and Paul Hiskett and Neil Heaney of Southampton's last minute.

● ATTENDANCE: A sell-out 15,075, including 2,000 from Luton, the largest following the Town have had this season.

● ENTERTAINMENT: Brilliant if you support Southampton. But if you have to suffer a stuffing for your side, it was slight consolation to know that it came from one of the finest individual performances you are ever likely to see on a football field. Matthew Le Tissier was simply out of this world.

Pleat is not s-hattered!

MANAGER David Pleat considered the week's unwanted double and blasted the pitch at Rilmsdell Park, and his players inability to carry out orders to change their style for the base humiliation.

In three days he had seen the Town suffer their heaviest First Division defeat and the worst cup result since he returned for his second spell as manager.

But he said neither he nor the team should be shattered by the Grimsby defeat, and added it was significant that the local match pressure had made Town keeper Paul Crichton their man of the match.

"We needed a good and could have got one," he said. "We thought we should have had a penalty when David Preece was pulled down, and Dwight Marshall could have scored, perhaps should have scored, in the second half.

"It was 2-0 at the time of those incidents, and if we could have got one back things might have been different.

"It was the heaviest pitch we have played on this season, and Grimsby were a good, strong side. We did not change the conditions as well as they did.

"Before the game I told my players to try to keep square balls. I think I saw the first in the first five minutes.

"We were trying to play through them when we should have been kicking the ball down the channels.

"But it is easy to change the way you play. I just hope we don't get too many glargoes. We were trying to play through the heavy pitch, but we couldn't play our normal passing game on that.

The manager said he had hoped in mind that it was our third game in a week, and it showed.

Grimsby manager Brian Laws disclosed he had read the rot act to his men after being upset by their performance when they were beaten 7-0 at the New Den by Millwall a week earlier.

DAVID PLEAT

"I told the players I wouldn't stand for another performance like that. They did.

"I told them I would change the team after 30 minutes if we were on the same rocky road.

"I was very pleased with them the first minute, and the way we could have scored a lot more goals. It could have ended up right, and I was pleased.

"I knew Luton came with a tremendous away record, but I did. I wish I had to worry more about that.

"I was more concerned with my own lads, and I give credit to them — I was the best performance over 90 minutes I have seen since I came here in November.

The last time the Town were thrashed 5-0 in the league was in the relegation season in which is now the Premiership, Leeds United, in the last second spell at Kenilworth Road. They went down 5-0 on visits to Coventry and Manchester United.