## Big match facts





• FALSE DAWN: Richard Harvey, wearing the light No. 11 shirt, sees Andy Melville head his 21st-minute effort off the line, with goalkeeper Alec Chamberlain beaten.



 DEBUT DANE: Johnny Vilstrup, making his first Kenilworth Road appearance."H started to do a little, but not enough," was manager Terry Westley's verdict.

SECOND from bottom of the First Division. No home win since last April. Five defeats on the trot. Just five goals scored in eight league games so far this season. That was the sad combination of facts that came to a head at Kenilworth Road

on Saturday night after a dreadful Luton Town performance ended with parts of

the crowd calling for Terry Westley to be sacked. And on his 36th birthday

Sunderland had held the Town fairly easily in the first half, then destroyed them in the second.

It could have been even more humiliating, with the visitors calm and methodical against a team that did not seem to know what it was trying to do Sunderland even passed up a penalty.

There was no recognisable pattern in a Town team which has already used 24 players in the first eight matches, including three

Formations change match by match, and

**LUTON TOWN 0** SUNDERLAND 2 (Half-time 0-0)

during games. Three at the back become four, then none at times, and players seems be as confused as spectators about what is supposed to be happening.

For the second consecutive match, as

injury forced another change to the line-up. At Millwall Marvin Johnson was carried off, but the replacement, Julian James, slotted in comfortably.

Against Sunderland Des Linton battled Against Sunderland Des Linion bands against injury until half-time, then had to be replaced by Bontcho Guentchev. The Bulgarian has a nice touch, ba

chipped Ian Feuer expertly.

Between the goals, the on-loan West Ham keeper pulled down Mullin to end a not a lot of bravery, and the best scoring effort the Town managed was by Richard. Harvey, a midfielder. threatening run, and was a little lucky to escape without even a vellow card. But he atoned by diving to his right to make a good save from Richard Ord's penalty.

Ceri Hughes returned to add but got diverted by a personal confrontation with Michael Gray. They both got a ticking handbagging, and Hughes was later lucky that the ref failed to spot his studs-in approach that left the Sunderland man fla-tened. Otherwise his contribution was as minimal as that of

tion was as mintoo many others.

No need to panic, there are a lot more points to play for was the message from the insersanctum of Kenilworth Road anctum of Kenilworth Road. after the chants of disgrunted supporters drifted through the dressing rooms towards the

dressing toboardroom.

Pardon me if I disagree. A rot is setting in, and it's not just about results. The team is looking a disjointed bunch, with confidence ebbing and if

it does not get back to basics relegation is a very real threat Johnny Vilstrup was less impressive on his home deba than he had been at Millwall is funderland match midweek. In Denmark he was noted for his attacking powfrom midfield, but again Sunderland the need, especially by in a dreadful second half.

force, but the defence looked rock solid, and

an impression where it mattered, and David

straight at Keller in the one-on-one confronta-

That was galling, but even more devastating was the late winner. Having kept their concentration so well for almost 89 minutes, the Town were caught on the break by Maurice Doyle's long ball down the middle,

just as was to happen to them against Sunderland, If James and Trevor Peake were

trying to play Chris Malkin offside, they were

used by Millwall, went on unchallenged and

and just dreadful!

a FUMBLE: John Taylor, sent on as a sub to try to turn the second-half tide, forces for

mer Town keeper Alec Chamberlain into a mistake. But nothing came of it.

REPORTS BY BRIAN SWAIN

PICTURES BY GARETH OWEN

ease was a blistering 30-yarder by Vilstrup which Alec Chamberlain held

with some slight difficulty.

The shot probably stung his hands. But

the wretched sense of letdown felt by the

home fans was about a Town team that did

not seem to have the bottle to stand a little

When your football doesn't flow, the

next priority is to dig in, and scrap for sur-vival. The team did it at Millwall, and will

have to do it again at Molineux on

showed the right commitment, but some-thing similar has got to come from nine

Luton crowds are not too demanding: they have grown used to the occasional defeat, but appreciate the entertainment when they can see what the team is trying

to achieve. Against Sunderland they did

not even have that consolation. The team

hardly looked as though it was trying, and

fans will not pay money to see much more

Goalkeeper Feuer and Steve Davis

pain of its own for the good of the side.

half-chance before the break, failed to make Oldfield wasted the best opportunity the Town created. He had forced Kasey Keller from created, the had forced Kasey Keller, into a finger-up save with a good header from, a corner, but should have left the keeper for dead when Dwight Marshall played him through. But the shot was weak, and almost

Johnny Vilstrup The Dane oozed class, with several brilliant

sion on Steve Davis and co. In a much-changed side, Julian James was left on the bench, but sent on after only five

Millwall huffed and puffed, relied on kick and run, and got nowhere, with lanky Yank

her to turn aside a sharp drive by Keith

But Bontcho Guentchev, who had missed a

TOWN: Feuer; Peake, Steve Davis, Marvin-Johnson (James 5 mins); Linton, Waddock, Vilstrup, Harvey; Oldfield, Guentchev, Marshall. Unused subs Gavin Johnson and

mins); Fuchs (Malkin 58 mins), Dixon.

7-4 to the Town.

and Gary Waddock of the Town, all for fouls.
ATTENDANCE: 7,076, which made for very little atmosphere in a stadium holding

but looking the better attacking side after the interval until the last-minute disaster wrecked a promising performance.



FOOTBALL CLUB

### Managers live or die by results

PHIL GRAY, the last 20-goals-a-season man to wear a Luton shirt, has little doubt that today's team compares badly with the one he left two years

After scoring the killer goal against his old mates he said: "I loved it when I was here with David Pleat. But this Luton team is not as good as it was then. Since I was here

they have lost good players, like Mick Harford, David Preece, and Paul Telfer.

"Luton gave us a tough time until we got our first goal, but we were on top after that and controlled all the second half. We could have scored three or four goals."

Sunderland manager Peter Reid gets credit from Gray for improving their style, concentrating on simple pass-

Reid said: "We played some good football, and thoroughly deserved the win.

"I told our players they had to be positive in the final third of the field, and they were.

"The goals were great finishes, although the first looked a close call for offside, But John Mullin pulled away well, and finished brilliantly.

"It was a thoroughly professional team performance. All I need now is some-one who can take

penalties - Phil Gray missed one in midweek too. I'm thinking of buying Rob Andrew!" Town boss Terry Westley hid the anger he felt on

Saturday night, but for him it was a miserable 36th birthday. He was committed to a night out with his and his wife's family, and went through with it because he felt he could not let down relatives who had travelled over from Ipswich.

He heard the calls for him to be sacked, and said: "Some birthday present, ch?"

He added that he and Mick McGiven felt just as badly about the team's performance as the fans did. "It was a big disappointment, especially after the first half, when we did get the ball down and play a

"We created one or two opportunities, but we didn't pass enough, or create enough."

When Des Linton was injured he switched to 4-4-3 to try to be more penetrative. "But instead, we passed less and less, and by the end we had gone to

a 2-4-4, which is unrealistic. "Paul Bracewell showed you don't have to be an 18-year-old and run around to get the ball. He

found space, and passed well - he was too bright for us, and a credit to his team. "I expected the crowd's reaction, and I can

understand it. I don't feel under personal pressure, but when you become a manager you know the rules. You live or die by results."



• ESCAPE: Sunderland scramble the ball away as David Oldfield tries a near post flick, with Dwight

Marshall and Des Linton hoping in vain for a lucky break

#### uton Town's season at a glance Who's who

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# Hughes James Waddock Marshall M Johnson S Davis League goals

Anglo Italian Cup K Guentchy Assists Hughes FA Cup dates Coca Cola Cui

Cup goals

Assists

© Football League

was for a backs to the wa approach.
When you're struggling.
luck usually goes against you.

### Costly last-minute MILLWALL 1 LUTON TOWN 0 the Town got their passing game going in the

Firstly, Harvey's header from a cross by

Hughes in the 21st minute was goalbound until Andy Melville cleared off the line,

Then, six minutes after the break, John

Mullin, at £40,000 bargain from Burnley in the summer, looked offside when he marked his second Sunderland appearance

marked his second Sunderland appearance with his first goal for them. Kevin Ball played a pass over the top of the Town's midfield, and the defensive cover was sowhere as Mullin raced through and

showed admirable composure in shooting past Ian Feuer, to the embarrassment of

Mullin's old mate at Burnley, Steve

Phil Gray, the last striker to look like a

regular 20-goals-a-season man in a Luton shirt, completed the misery for his old pals

when the Town were chasing the game

without any real conviction. Another through ball, by Dariusz Kubicki, caught

the Town spreadcagled again, and Gray

with his keeper beaten.

DISBELIEF was the overwhelming feeling at the New Den after the Town did more than snough to draw, might easily have snatched a win, but then lost to a goal 90 seconds from time as the defence made its first real mistake

The bright spots were two debut performances, by goalkeepoer Ian Feuer, who is on loan from West Ham, and by midfielder

through passes which sliced open a Millwall rearguard that got more and more anxious as he home forwards failed to make an impres-

minutes when Marvin Johnson had to go off with the knee injury that put him out of the

Peuer producing a brilliant first-half save, stretching his 6ft 7ins frame to the bottom cor-

a bit of a shambles, while Ferry Westley was left to bemoan what might have been. Told in the Pressroom that the Town had played very well, he took little consolation from that The Town rarely threatened as an attacking as frustration grew for Millwall and their fans

another defeat.
THE MATCH DETAILS

How they stand

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION

West Brom

Barnsley Huddersfield

Luton Town

MILLWALL: Keller; Newman, Witter, Stevens, Thatcher, Savage (Forbes 70 mins), Doyle, Bowry, Van Blerk (McRobert 51 THE GOAL: Chris Malkin, 90 seconds from

time, put clear by a through-ball with the Town defence going AWOL. OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town four saved and four wide; Millwall four saved and three wide.

REFEREE: Roger Gifford, Glamorgan.
BOOKED: Thatcher and Doyle of Millwall

doomed, because Davis chose to attack the ball. He missed and Malkin, one of three subs shot through Feuer's legs.

Even Millwall manager Mick McCarthy admitted that his team had been made to look a bit of a shambles, while Terry Westley was ENTERTAINMENT: Not too pretty, with the Town concentrating hard on staying tight,