

OLDFIELD'S STRIKE

KEEPS HATTERS HAPPY

ALTHOUGH they had to survive a couple of early shocks, Luton Town footballled their way into the second round of the Coca Cola Cup last night.

Bristol Rovers threatened to embarrass them in the first half but were finally overcome on aggregate, although not on the night, when David Oldfield netted his second goal of the season.

It is the first time for six years that the Hatters, winners of the Cup in 1988, have managed to get over the first hurdle but there was no doubting that they deserved their success after responding to some sharp words at half-time from manager Lennie Lawrence.

The Town had the worst possible start, with the defence caught over-

**BRISTOL
ROVERS 2
LUTON TOWN 1**
(Luton win 4-2 on aggregate)

stretched and outpaced as Rovers launched the inevitable early assault on a night when they were desperate to impress their fans.

It was the first-ever soccer cup tie on the Bristol Memorial rugby ground and the home side knew they had to go hell for leather after their 3-0 defeat at Kenilworth Road a fortnight ago. Luton manager Lennie Lawrence dropped out-of-touch striker Kim Grant and recalled Bontcho Guentchev to partner Oldfield in attack.

But it was the defence which was found wanting as Rovers opened at breakneck pace.

The Town offered the first attacking threat but it cost them dear. Centre half Steve Davis went upfield to meet a freekick from Mitchell Thomas but his header carried no power and was easily saved.

And from the clearance right back Julian James was taken to the cleaners by Lee Archer down Rovers' left wing and his cross was allowed to bounce into the danger area for Andy Gurney to tap in a simple close-range goal after only six minutes.

It lifted Rovers and their fans and the Luton defence went through a jittery period.

A mistake by Davis gave Gurney a shooting chance which he wasted but there was no reprieve a few minutes later.

Archer's pace embarrassed James again and it cost him a booking for the foul which upended the flying winger. Almost immediately Archer took on his man again and

this time the tormented James was frightened to tackle on the edge of the box and Archer scored with a cracking drive into the far corner.

Little was seen of the attack but Guentchev wasted half a chance with a mistimed shot while the Town were lucky at the other end when James seemed to use his hands to keep out a cross by Archer. The referee unaccountably gave a corner and not a penalty.

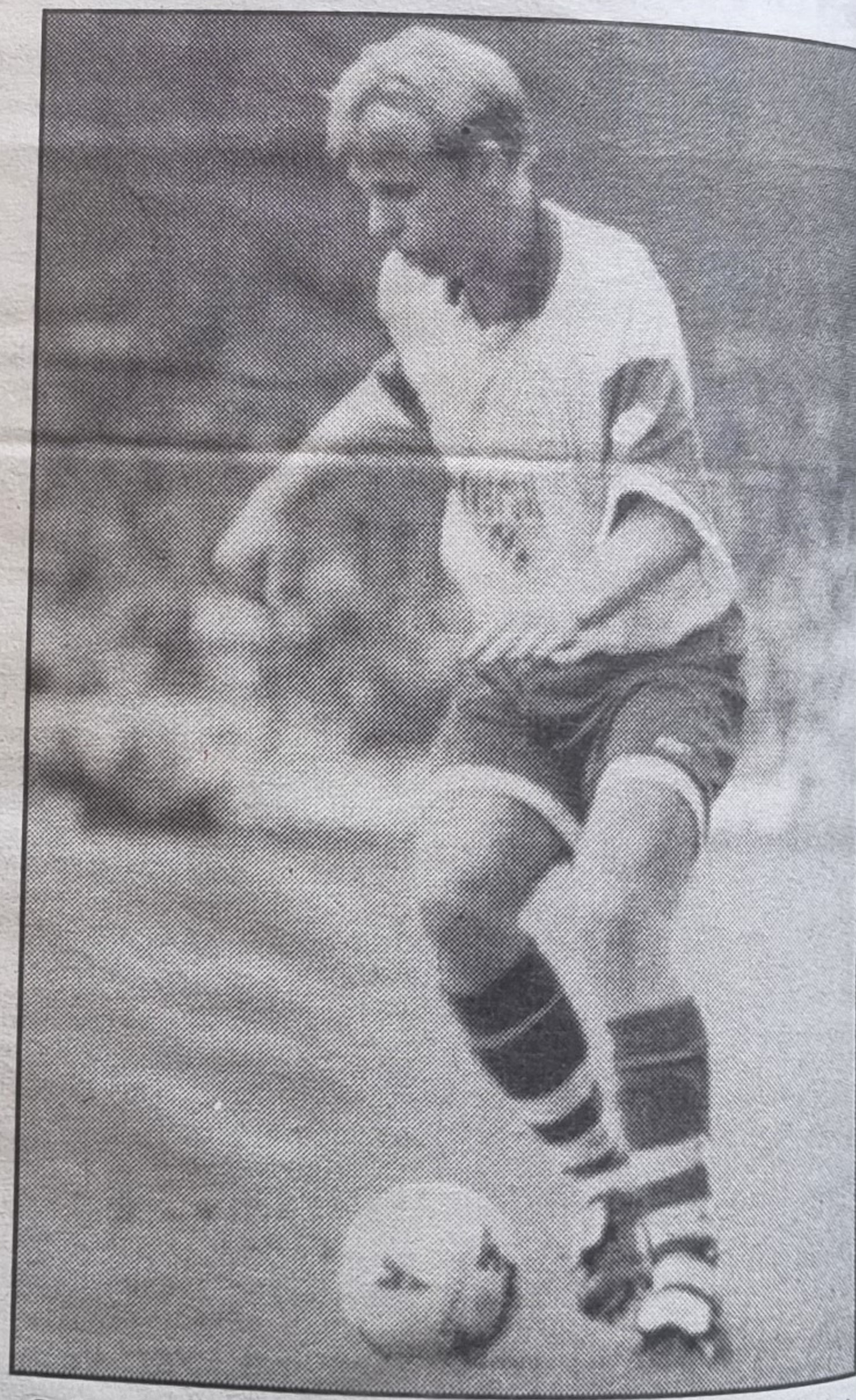
Lawrence reshaped his team for the second half, sending on England schoolboy and youth international Andrew Fotiadis to play in attack, with Paul Showler going off and Guentchev dropping back into midfield.

TEAMS

Luton Town: Feuer; James, Davis, Johnson, Thomas; Linton, Alexander, Hughes, Showler (Fotiadis ht); Oldfield, Guentchev.
Subs: Thorpe, McLaren.

Bristol Rovers: Collett; Martin, Clark, Tillson, Lockwood; Gurney, Holloway, Browning, Archer; Miller, Parmenter.
Subs: French, Bowey and Low.

Referee: Andy D'Urso of Billericay.
Attendance 2,320.



● David Oldfield's 63rd-minute goal stunned Rovers

And the changes produced a much better and more committed performance with Luton at long last taking the game to the opposition.

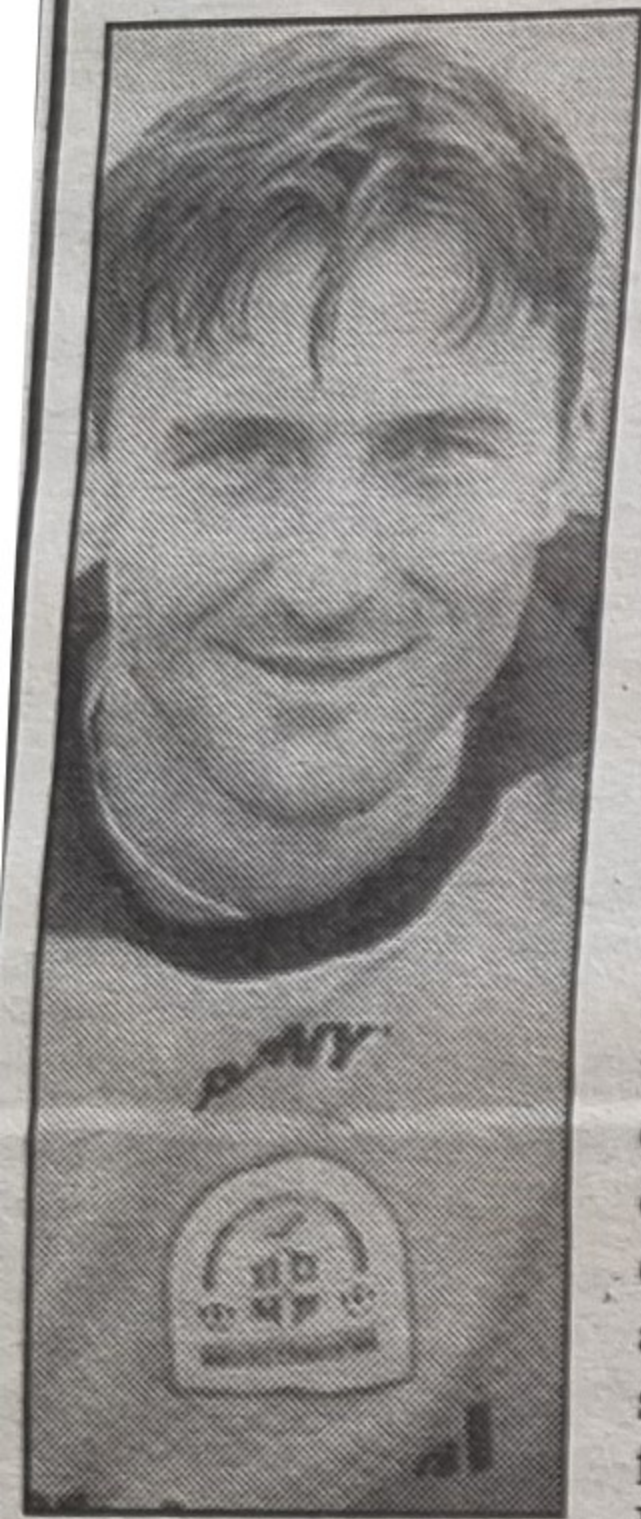
Graham Alexander made a surging solo run and although his cross was half cleared Ceri Hughes was first to reach the ball and his powerful 20-yarder was only inches wide.

But in the 63rd minute the hard-working Oldfield was all calm composure to net the goal that effectively settled the tie. He was not clear by an

inch-perfect pass by Fotiadis, picked his way around a defender and the goalkeeper and then shot into an empty net.

James came out of his nightmare as the Town defence regained control, forcing Rovers to get more and more desperate and at long last the Town's quality football proved more than a match for kick and rush.

But even so Ian Feuer had to make the save of the match seven minutes from time to keep out a pile driver by Andy Tillson.



● Ian Feuer - Save of the match



BY BRIAN
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