

Crewe Alexandra 0
Luton Town 0

DAVID Oldfield hit the bar and squandered an injury time sitter as Hatters failed to cash in.

Yesterday's draw against high-flying Crewe stopped the rot after two successive defeats – but the pack are closing in.

By the time Crewe mustered their first real chance two minutes after the break Hatters should have been in front.

But a draw was just about fair and a win for Luton against table-topping Brentford on Friday night will perch Hatters on top of the league.

Not bad when you consider Luton's appalling recent run of just two wins from their last 11 games.

Oldfield caught Jason Kearton napping on 19 minutes but his volleyed lob from 20 yards hit the top of the bar with the goalkeeper in no man's land.

Just after the half hour Tony Thorpe dispossessed Rob Savage outside the Railwaymen's own box but then drilled a right foot shot inches wide.

And just before the break Ceri Hughes, who was subjected to constant booing from the moment he

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Missed 'sitter' stuns Hatters

earned a yellow card for a high lunge on Savage, failed by inches to get on the end of a delicate Graham Alexander chip-through.

But in spite of the chances there was to be no repeat of December's 6-0 drubbing at Kenilworth Road.

Crewe were ready for Thorpe this time and both sides cancelled each other out in this six pointer.

Gareth Whaley missed the best chance of the match two minutes after the break – missing an open net from three yards after a perfect cross from man of the match Steve Garvey. That miss served to

emphasise the home side's desperate need for a striker.

Time and again Luton's backline caught Mark Rivers straying offside, and when his second half replacement, Francis Tierney, finally sprung the trap he hesitated in anticipation of a flag which never came.

Oldfield glanced a header just wide on the hour, but Crewe hit back almost immediately – Garvey forcing a smart save from Ian Feuer.

Darren Patterson surged upfield on a 50-yard run, with Julian James unlucky not to get to the cross.

But right at the death Luton could have snatched the points.

Graham Alexander's half volley into the six-yard box caught Crewe short at the back but an unmarked Oldfield fluffed the chance from point blank range.

After the match Hatters boss Lenny Lawrence said: "I am pleased with a point against a Crewe side with the best home form in the league.

"I sensed in the players a renewed determination to get us out of this indifferent spell.

"It is staggering we are still second, with a chance to go top on Friday.

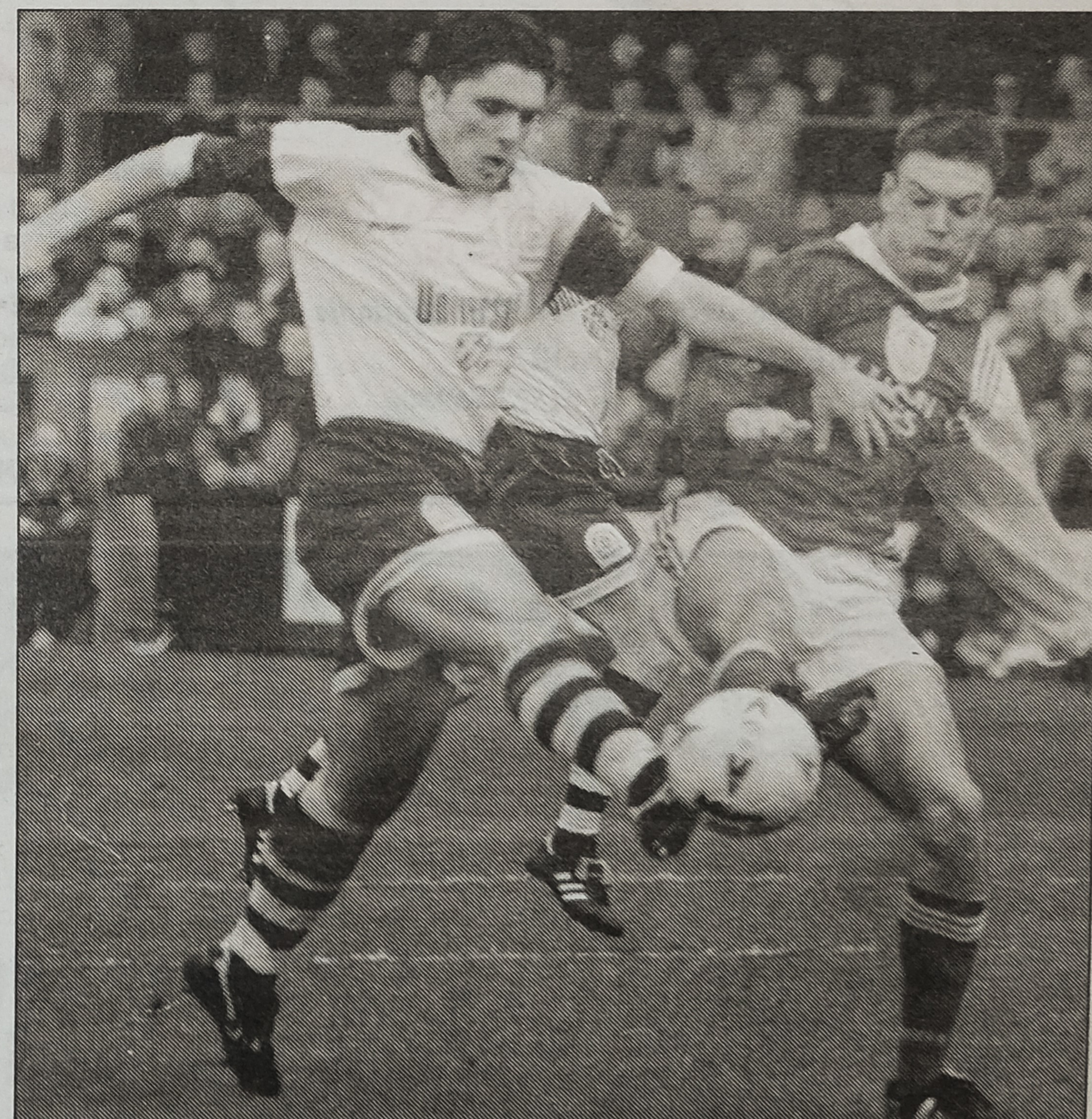
"We are two thirds of the way from the end of one of the hardest months I have known in football. If we are still in second at the end of that it will be a bonus.

"I have been concerned recently for all sorts of reasons. We have not been convincing and we have not been looking like scoring but today our strength and determination pulled us through."

Team: Feuer, James, Patterson, Waddock, Davis, Johnson, Hughes, Alexander, Oldfield, Thorpe, McLaren. Subs not used: Grant, Showler, Guentchev.



● Luton striker David Oldfield's late effort flashes just wide of Crewe's far post



● Tony Thorpe bursts through to shoot