

# No let up for physio

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Luton 1 WBA 1

HATTERS physio Clive Goodyear is fast becoming the busiest man at Kenilworth Road.

Marvin Johnson is the latest addition to his already over-subscribed treatment room, after being stretchered off during Tuesday night's 1-1 Coca Cola Cup draw with Division One high-flyers West Brom.

He now faces at least three weeks on the sidelines after being forced out of the action with knee ligament damage.

To underline the extent of the crisis, when manager Lennie Lawrence threw promising youngster Liam George into the action for his Luton Town debut on 77 minutes, the 18-year-old became the 24th player to be used in a campaign which is just 10 games old.

Only Steve Davis and Gary Waddock are ever-presents.

Lawrence said: "The likes of Sean Evers, Liam George and Gary Doherty will all be players and they can all play their parts, but not week in week out."

But stand-in striker Stuart Douglas, still only 19, was singled out by his manager for special praise after firing Hatters into a 24th minute lead and picking up the man-of-the-match award.

"Stuart is looking like a man, not like the little boy he did last year," said Lawrence.

Even so, Douglas faces life back on the fringes of the first team with the £400,000 signing of Phil Gray, and the return to fitness of Tony Thorpe after a three match absence.

Gray, who left Kenilworth Road for Sunderland for £800,000 in 1994, re-signed for his old club on Monday, but needed to return to Amsterdam on Tuesday to sort out his pre-move personal affairs.

In 59 appearances for Luton between 1992 and 1994, the 28-year-old netted 22 times, and Lawrence will be looking to the experienced target man to form an instant partnership with Tony Thorpe.

Another former Hatter back at Kenilworth Road, keeper Andy Dibble, suffered a nightmare start to his second spell at the club.

He failed to come for a swirling cross into the six yard box, and as he and Marvin Johnson waited for each other to clear, Bob Taylor stole in to level a tie which until then Luton had threatened to run away with.

But the penalty-save hero of Hatters 1988 Littlewoods Cup Final triumph was more decisive eight minutes from time - racing off his line to smother as Kevin Kilbane charged through on goal. Gary Waddock and Bob Taylor both hit the woodwork, but after a bright start Hatters faded badly, and were lucky to cling on for a draw.

Luton: Dibble, Alexander, Harvey, Waddock, Davis, Johnson (Davies, 67), McLaren, Evers, (George, 77), Oldfield, Douglas, Marshall. Sub not used: Doherty. Attendance: 3,437.