

DAVE FLETT REPORTS: ALEXANDER DOUBLE HELPS SECURE A VITAL WIN IN ROOTS HALL RELEGATION BATTLE



● ROB-A-DUB: David Offield muscled in to snatch possession from the Shrimpers Keith Dublin.

● ALEXANDER THE GREAT: Two goal hero Graham Alexander takes aim before cracking home his second against Southend on Saturday.



● FRENCH CHRIS: Hatters wing wizard Chris Allen sends past Southend's intransigent import Gusa N'Daye during Saturday's relegation battle.

DAYLIGHT is steadily beginning to show between Luton Town and the bottom four teams in Division 2 after Lennie Lawrence's men emerged from the gloom of Roots Hall to claim three hard-earned points.

The Hatters, seemingly unstoppable on their travels, added Southend to their growing list of away-day conquests and subsequently long-legged Alvin Martin's struggles in the scrum for Second Division survival.

Skipper Gary Waddock was in his element after first-half moonshot conversions turned the pitch into something resembling a World War 2 battlefield and he was joined by fellow soldiers Darren Patterson and Alan White who both put in dogged performances in the Hatters defence.

Patterson is beginning to find his feet at right back after his long injury lay off while White's never-say-die attitude was best illustrated by his excellent goal-saving block that denied Shrimpers' French import Regis Coulibaly from snatching a certain 70th minute equaliser.

Following a recent run of uncertainty from, Graham Alexander was back to his best, grabbing both goals with two cool and clinical finishes past Neville Southall, playing his third game on loan from Everton.

Lawrence admitted afterwards that it was refreshing to see somebody else's name on the scoresheet other than Tony Thorpe and the manner in which he converted his first goal is just the game's second minute was almost "Thorpe-gate".

Ex-Weald Hants stalwart and English international Martin must have been alarmed at the time and space his defender afforded David Offield and equally at the ease Alexander bore through to fire past a besotted Southall after the Hatters' strike's through ball, the goal serving as an immediate explanation as to why the home team have conceded more goals than any other team in the division.

Alexander's second came just past the hour when Offield played exactly the ball into winger Chris Allen drives on and, if the Hatters are to enjoy a prosperous start to the New Year, should receive more frequently.

An effective lack of man at allset, the Nottingham Forest was to demonstrate his blistering pace with a well-weighted pass over the head of Shrimpers full-back Mark Simon.

SOUTHERN
Thomson 20
HATTERS
Alexander 2, 30
A.S. 056

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2

From that moment, there was only going to be one winner and, although Allen went on to miss his shot, Thorpe did excellently to retrieve the ball on the byline and pull it back to Alexander who sidefooted accurately past Southall.

The double strike might have cost the Hatters midfielder as an unlikely goal hero but with six to his name this campaign there can be nobody at the club that possesses a better goals to chances ratio.

In between the goals and afterwards Southall had scant opportunity to demonstrate the skills that have made him a goalkeeping hero to thousands including his opposite number on Saturday, Hatters favourite Ian Foster.

Only a 22nd-minute score just after his team's equaliser provided any respite for the Welshman's pedigree.

Good work from Thorpe rebounded Offield's first run on the veteran's goal but Southall stood his ground to deny the hard-working front man.

At the other end Foster got the opportunity to impress his mentor with a top-class save just five minutes after Alexander's second goal.

The tall American reared across his goalpost virtually to palm a close-range Keith Dublin header and equally at the ease Alexander bore through to fire past a besotted Southall after the Hatters' strike's through ball, the goal serving as an immediate explanation as to why the home team have conceded more goals than any other team in the division.

The goal precipitated the home team's best period of the game as the Hatters struggled initially to adapt to the exigent conditions.

Dublin went close on two occasions with headers from set pieces before the internal and the impressive Clarke saw his viciously-curved 30-yard effort rebound off the crossbar with Foster well beaten.

On 41 minutes, ex-Hatter Nathan Jones shot just off target from the edge of the area before the set assist, Simon Davies, Andrew...

Thorpe should have put the winning goal from front after Waddock's free-kick but he was denied by a last-ditch save from Foster.

Despite being forced to leave the game after an aggressive action against defender Andy Martin, Thorpe's goalkeeping heroics blocked his return to the pitch with a last-ditch save.

From the resulting corner, Alexander fired first that was well guarded by the midfielder with a growing production of scoring wasn't going to be so easy this time.

Jones and Coulibaly had a few minutes of other, but heavies from front and back, and Thorpe is forward to assist the Hatters hang on to maintain despite being tipped up on the heavy pack.

Several vital individual contributions to an excellent team performance were made by both Lawrence and the top scorers whose optimistic chants of "We're going to win" were heard throughout the match.

"We're going to win" was the slogan of the day, and the Hatters' goalkeeping heroics blocked his return to the pitch with a last-ditch save.

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LUTON TOWN FC 1997-98 THE STORY SO FAR ...

August	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pts
Aug 8	Blackpool	0-1	Thorpe 87	5,547	0
Aug 15	Luton Town (D)	1-1	Thorpe 87	2,365	1
Aug 18	SOUTHEND	1-0	Offield 24	5,140	3
Aug 19	Sheff Wed	1-0	Thorpe 87	5,168	6
Aug 26	DOUGHERTY (D)	1-1	Thorpe 87	5,815	3
Aug 27	OLINGHAM	1-1	Thorpe 87	4,654	3
September					
Sept 5	MILLWALL	0-2		5,737	0
Sept 9	Weymouth	0-1	Martin 59	4,861	3
Sept 13	Weymouth	0-1	Martin 59	4,861	3
Sept 16	WEST HAM (D)	1-1	Offield 24	5,241	3
Sept 17	WYTHAM	0-0	Offield 24, 31, Gray 30	5,241	3
Sept 24	West Ham (D)	2-2	Offield 24, Thorpe 73	5,556	2
Sept 27	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,556	2
October					
Oct 4	WATFORD	0-0	Thorpe 87, 88, Davies 82	5,541	3
Oct 11	PLYMOUTH ARG	0-0	Offield 24	4,996	3
Oct 13	Sheff Wed	1-1	Thorpe 87	4,996	3
Oct 21	BRENTFORD	2-0	Alexander 20, Thorpe 59	5,072	18
November					
Nov 6	Weymouth	2-0	Offield 24, Thorpe 74	6,219	18
Nov 13	PLYMOUTH ARG	0-0	Offield 24	5,219	18
Nov 17	PLYMOUTH ARG	0-0	Offield 24	5,219	18
Nov 18	PLYMOUTH ARG	0-0	Offield 24	5,219	18
Nov 19	PLYMOUTH ARG	0-0	Offield 24	5,219	18
Nov 20	PLYMOUTH ARG	0-0	Offield 24	5,219	18
December					
Dec 6	GALWORTHY	0-0	Davies 26, Thorpe 77	4,800	21
Dec 13	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 14	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 15	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 16	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 17	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 18	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 19	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 20	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 21	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 22	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 23	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 24	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 25	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 26	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 27	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 28	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 29	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Dec 30	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
January					
Jan 6	Sheff Wed	0-0		4,800	21
Jan 13	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 14	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 15	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 16	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 17	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 18	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 19	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 20	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 21	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 22	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 23	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 24	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 25	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 26	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 27	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 28	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 29	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 30	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Jan 31	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
February					
Feb 7	Weymouth	0-0		5,068	19
Feb 14	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 15	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 16	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 17	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 18	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 19	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 20	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 21	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 22	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 23	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 24	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 25	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 26	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 27	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 28	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 29	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
Feb 30	BRENTFORD (A)	1-0		5,068	19
March					
Mar 3	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
Mar 10	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
Mar 17	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
Mar 24	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
Mar 31	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
April					
Apr 7	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
Apr 14	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
Apr 21	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
Apr 28	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
May					
May 5	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
May 12	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
May 19	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
May 26	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19
May 31	Sheff Wed	0-0		5,068	19

APPEARANCES & GOALS	Appearances	Goals
Player	Appearances	Goals
Alvin Martin	100	0
Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
Keith Dublin	100	0
David Offield	100	0
Alan White	100	0
Regis Coulibaly	100	0
Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
Keith Dublin	100	0
David Offield	100	0
Alan White	100	0
Regis Coulibaly	100	0
Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
Keith Dublin	100	0
David Offield	100	0
Alan White	100	0
Regis Coulibaly	100	0
Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
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Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
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David Offield	100	0
Alan White	100	0
Regis Coulibaly	100	0
Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
Keith Dublin	100	0
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Alan White	100	0
Regis Coulibaly	100	0
Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
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Alan White	100	0
Regis Coulibaly	100	0
Chris Allen	100	0
Simon Davies	100	0
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David Offield	100	0
Alan White	100	0
Regis Coulibaly	100	0
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