

DAVE FLETT WATCHES PHIL GRAY BOUNCE BACK FROM A BARRAGE WITH A MATCH WINNING DISPLAY



● **EVER READY:** Phil Gray was the right place at the right time once again to show his side's crucial ability to bounce back from a defeat at Springfield Park, which moves them back in the table. But the winger was also marred by a shock challenge on Liam George (left), which left the teenager with a broken leg.

PICTURES BY GARETH OWEN



A Gray day in Wigan

PHIL GRAY answered his Kenilworth Road critics by turning in a match winning performance to give the Hatters a happy bank holiday in Wigan.

The Irish front man was berated by boo boys against Colchester on Saturday but bounced back with a goal and an assist which will have, at least appeased the couple of hundred travelling fans who made the long trip up the M6.

Gray was the provider for Sean Evers' explosive 78th-minute goal that gave the Hatters a 2-1 lead and then he made the points safe himself moments later with his second goal of the season.

It was three minutes of magic that left manager Lennie Lawrence purring at the final whistle.

The Hatters boss said: "I chatted to him about Saturday and told him he had to respond by being 100 per cent focussed and totally professional."

"He did that by showing real character and by playing his best game in the year he has been with us."

"He led the line well and if ever a performance warranted a goal it was his. I'm well pleased for him but now he's got to do it at home."

Gray's ball to Evers was the pivotal moment in a game that the visitors looked in danger of letting slip from their grasp.

The Hatters appeared to be cruising to three points against a woeful Wigan side after another goal from skipper Steve Davis.

Graham Alexander hit an outswinging corner that the criminally unmarked Davis volleyed into the bottom corner to give his side a half-time advantage.

At the other end, the Hatters captain and his back four were rarely troubled by a home team who struggled to string two passes together.

Ex-Bolton winger David Lee, once famously undid Arsenal in a cup tie but, on Monday, he looked hardly capable of undoing his laces.

Equally, striker Stuart Barlow gained an unfortunate reputation for struggling to hit the proverbial barn door at previous clubs Everton and Oldham but he is faring better at Springfield Park days, Barlow flicked the ball past Kelvin Davis with the outside of his foot.

The visitors then suffered an uncertain five minutes as the goal finally provided Wigan with some inspiration.

● **GRAY OF SUNSHINE:** Goal hero Phil Gray celebrates scoring Luton's vital third goal with French teammate Hervé Bacqué.

LENNIE'S VERDICT

"We proved again that we are capable of moving up a gear to win games which is something that a Luton team hasn't really done while I've been here."

"I'm well pleased for Phil Gray. He led the line well and if ever a performance warranted a goal it was his. The only black spot, aside from Liam's injury, was their goal. But that was the only unprofessional thing we did all game."



Exuberance

It took Gray's experience and Evers' exuberance to settle the visitors' nerves.

The former threaded an exquisite pass into the latter's path and, without checking his stride, the young midfielder burst into the Wigan penalty box and unleashed a firm drive that arrowed into the top corner.

Gray joined Evers on the scoresheet shortly afterwards



when, having run on to a probing Ray Carroll pass, he exchanged passes with 18-year-old striker Stuart Barlow before squeezing the ball inside home keeper Roy Carroll. McIndoe joined the second-half action and George was stretched off after a corner of half time.

Having chased a lost cause, George Scott Green off the ball and set off for a defender Carroll.

A cynical foul by last man Green on the particular confrontation never materialised. Wigan man escaped with a yellow card but George suffered a broken foot.

After Marvin Johnson's dismissal, though official's decision could not have been lack of consistency still surrounding the game.

Earlier in the half, Gray had seen a stopper before Stuart Douglas won the corner that way between Gareth Griffiths and Carroll.

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● **EVERS SO CLOSE:** Sean Evers battles his way through the Wigan defence only to be thwarted by Roy Carroll in the home goal.

TOP HATTER

★ PHIL GRAY ★

Provided three minutes of magic that decided the final outcome. His precise pass for Sean Evers was followed by a crucial and well-taken third goal.



LUTON TOWN FC 1998-99 THE STORY SO FAR ...

August	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 8	Wycombe	1-0	Davis (S) 36	5,252	10
Tues 11	OXFORD UTD (WC1)	2-3	Alexander 59 (pen), 63 (pen)	3,165	-
Sat 15	PRESTON	1-1	Marshall 54	5,392	7
Tues 18	Oxford Utd (WC1)	3-1	Gray 37, Evers 48, McLaren 70	5,099	-
Sat 22	Reading	0-3		18,108	12
Sat 29	COLCHESTER	2-0	Douglas 62, Davis (S) 82	5,005	9
Mon 31	Wigan Athletic	3-1	Davis (S) 41, Evers 78, Gray 81	3,778	5

September	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 5	BURNLEY	H	3		
Tues 8	Wrexham	A	7.45		
Sat 12	BRISTOL ROVERS	H	3		
Tues 15	Ipswich (WC 2)	A	7.45		
Sat 19	Blackpool	A	3		
Tues 22	IPSWICH (WC 2)	H	7.45		
Sat 26	WALSALL	H	3		

October	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 3	Fulham	A	3		
Sat 10	York City	A	3		
Sat 17	OLDHAM	H	3		
Tues 20	NORTHAMPTON	H	7.45		
Sat 24	Gillingham	A	3		
Sat 31	CHESTERFIELD	H	3		

November	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 7	Stoke City	A	3		
Tues 10	NOTTS COUNTY	H	7.45		
Sat 21	Lincoln City	A	3		
Sat 28	MANCHESTER CITY	H	3		

December	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 12	Macclesfield	A	3		
Sat 19	MILLWALL	H	3		
Sat 26	READING	H	12 noon		
Mon 28	Bournemouth	A	3		

January	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 2	Colchester	A	3		
Sat 9	WYCOMBE	H	3		
Sat 16	Preston	A	3		
Sat 23	WIGAN ATHLETIC	H	3		
Sat 30	BOURNEMOUTH	H	3		

February	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 6	Burnley	A	3		
Sat 13	WREXHAM	H	3		
Sat 20	Bristol Rovers	A	3		
Sat 27	BLACKPOOL	H	3		

March	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 6	Walsall	A	3		
Tues 9	FULHAM	H	7.45		
Sat 13	STOKE CITY	H	3		
Sat 20	Chesterfield	A	3		
Sat 27	GILLINGHAM	H	3		

April	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 3	Oldham Athletic	A	3		
Tues 6	YORK CITY	H	7.45		
Sat 10	Northampton	A	3		
Wed 14	Manchester City	A	3		
Sat 17	LINCOLN CITY	H	3		
Sat 24	Notts County	A	3		

May	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 1	MACCLESFIELD	H	3		
SAT 8	Millwall	A	3		

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NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

Up to August 31 1998	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stoke City	5	5	0	0	12	4	15
Fulham	5	3	2	0	6	1	11
Preston	5	3	1	1	13	8	10
Bournemouth	4	3	1	0	7	1	10
Luton Town	5	3	1	1	7	5	10
Walsall	4	3	1	0	6	2	10
Bristol Rovers	5	2	2	1	9	6	8
Notts County	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Wrexham	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
York City	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Millwall	4	2	1	1	3	4	7
Colchester United	5	2	0	3	5	6	6
Chesterfield	5	2	0	3	2	5	6
Manchester City	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Lincoln City	4	1	2	1	4	5	5
Blackpool	4	1	1	2	5	8	4
Oldham	5	1	1	3	4	9	4
Wigan Athletic	5	1	0	4	6	8	3
Reading	4	1	0	3	4	8	3
Gillingham	4	0	3	1	3	4	3
Burnley	4	1	0	3	3	6	3
Northampton	5	0	3	2	2	5	3
Macclesfield Town	5	0	2	3	0	4	2
Wycombe Wndrs	5	0	1	4	3	9	1

APPEARANCES AND GOALS

Player	Apps	Lge	Cup	Goals	Lge	Cup
Graham Alexander	5(0)	2(0)	0	0	2	0
Hervé Bacqué	2(2)	1(0)	0	0	0	0
Kelvin Davis	5(0)	2(0)	0	0	0	0
Steve Davis	5(0)	2(0)	3	0	0	0
Stuart Douglas	3(0)	1(0)	1	0	0	0
Sean Evers	5(0)	2(0)	1	1	0	0
Andrew Fotiadis	0(1)	0(0)	0	0	0	0
Liam George	2(3)	0(2)	0	0	0	0
Phil Gray	5(0)	2(0)	1	1	0	0
Marvin Johnson	4(0)	2(0)	0	0	0	0
Dwight Marshall	3(0)	2(0)	1	0	0	0
Gavin McGowan	4(1)	2(0)	0	0	0	0
Michael McIndoe	0(1)	0(1)	0	0	0	0
Ray McKinnon	4(1)	0(1)	0	0	0	0
Paul McLaren	2(1)	1(1)	0	0	1	0
Matthew Spring	5(0)	2(0)	0	0	0	0
Mitchell Thomas	1(2)	1(0)	0	0	0	0
Alan White	1(1)	0(0)	0	0	0	0
Nathan Abbey	0(0)	0(0)	0	0	0	0
Simon Davies	0(0)	0(0)	0	0	0	0
Gary Doherty	0(0)	0(0)	0	0	0	0
Stuart Fraser	0(0)	0(0)	0	0	0	0
Paul Showler	0(0)	0(0)	0	0	0	0

HATTERS BAD BOYS

Player	Y	R
Marvin Johnson	2	1
Gavin McGowan	3	0
Liam George	2	0
Steve Davis	1	0
Sean Evers	1	0
Phil Gray	1	0
Ray McKinnon	1	0
Paul McLaren	1	0
Total	12	1

LUTON NEWS PLAYER OF THE YEAR STANDINGS

(number of Top Hatter awards won)	Player	Standings
2	Graham Alexander	2
2	Steve Davis	2
1	Sean Evers	1
1	Phil Gray	1
1	Matthew Spring	1



● MCGOWAN



● DAVIS