

DAVE FLETT WATCHES THE HATTERS' YOUNG GUNS AND OL



● **SPRING-HEELER:** Hatters promising midfielder jumps the highest in an aerial clash on Saturday.



● **ONE HAND ON THE TILL:** Hatters sub Andrew Fotiadis holds off Bristol Rovers' skipper Andy Tillson during his side's 2-0 victory.

Lennie's Rovers

LENNIE LAWRENCE watched his young guns claim another notable scalp on Saturday and then included them as part of the "strongest squad" he has ever had at Kenilworth Road.

Bristol Rovers were the latest victims of a Hatters performance full of vigour, enthusiasm and running which left their happy manager gushing with praise.

"These players are showing a great commitment to the club," Lawrence said after Saturday's 2-0 victory. "Half of the players have been raised here and this is the strongest squad I have had at Luton thus far."

Alongside the youngsters, the old heads are also playing their part with top marksman Steve Davis and Graham Alexander scoring the goals and Ray McKinnon turning in a performance that suggested he is ready to fulfil his pre-season promise.

The Scotsman enjoyed an outstanding first half full of vision and, as he tired before eventually leaving the field with a sprained ankle, 18-year-old pair Michael McIndoe and Matthew Spring ensured the Hatters' midfield didn't flag too badly.

Spring continues to grow in confidence by the game and, on Saturday's evidence, McIndoe deserves to keep his place in the side after displaying left-wing skills Ken Livingstone would have been proud of.

Some of the Hatters high-profile names of recent times such as Tony Thorpe, David Oldfield, Ceri Hughes and Ian Feuer might all have gone but there can be no doubt that this current crop of youngsters want to play for Luton Town and Lennie Lawrence.

It was the willingness of another youth team graduate Stuart Douglas that got the home team off to a flying start on seven minutes. The hard-working striker tricked French right back Stephane Leoni to make the space for a cross that Phil Gray left at the near post for skipper Steve Davis to coolly stroke home from six yards.

Clashes between these two sides have often been billed as Hayles v Davis, the division's best striker against the division's best centre half, but few people could have imagined that this season the Hatters' captain would be challenging the ex-Stevenage striker at the top of the goalscoring charts. Davis, in fact, left Barry Hayles on the half-way line to join in the Hatters' attack and grab his fourth goal of the season.

Two minutes later the home side's other defender turned goalscoring phenomenon Alexander doubled the Hatters' lead with his third of the campaign.

The peroxide-headed full back stormed out of defence fed Gray just outside the visitors' penalty box and continued his determined run.

Gray returned the ball slightly behind his target but, not to be denied, Alexander managed to drag it into his path and fire an unstoppable effort past a bemused Andy Collett.

Champagne football then followed in an enthralling first half as the Hatters indulged in back heels and step overs a plenty.

An almost telepathic understanding between players was on show and led to chance after chance at the visitors' end.

Gray was the instigator in several fine moves, leading the line well during another intelligent game.

Rampant

The Northern Ireland international's cross gave fellow striker Douglas an excellent chance to make it three on 15 minutes but his close range drive was turned around the post by the relieved Collett.

Gray then went close himself with a shot from near the corner flag that crashed into the side netting and, although the Hatters might be missing a prolific striker, players from all positions looked capable of getting on the scoresheet in a rampant first-half display with Spring dragging a shot



wide and Alexander blazing another goal.

Whatever their dominance they brought a two-goal cushion after nine minutes and a corresponding fixture last week, with the best form of defence was attack to the other end.

In the second minute, Hayles played over and fed a well-placed Jamie Carragher over and, moments after the Hatters' Jason Roberts did the same from the front of goal themselves.

On 21 minutes, Robert Trees had superbly beaten away by Kevin Davies. Steve was on hand to turn the rebound.

The tempo inevitably slowed a little. Hayles was still playing away from goal and shot on the turn saved by Davis who presented him with the chance to score.

Steve Foster was then denied by Davis and McKinnon in a 70th minute, was thwarted again by Kevin Davies. The ex-England Under-21 international, after another vicious attack, Rovers' midfielder's 80th-minute goal through his fingers.

A goal seemed inevitable as the coolest man in the ground, Gray, stepped behind his head and protected his goal. At the other end, Gray was the penitent for flicks with the visitors' reduced his best of the afternoon as Hatters' forward a clear cut on goal.

Sadly, Gray's finishing is still a work in progress and his weak shot was turned around the post by the relieved Collett.

Speaking afterwards, Gray was in a mood to dwell on missed chances. He said: "We were looking for a goal but we had a clear shot. I think we have been three up after 15 minutes."

"But credit to Bristol Rovers, they were attacking threat than in the last

had and they did.

"They had a lot of play which was no surprise but we did well in our box and were first to the ball.

"Bristol perhaps deserved a goal for their play but they didn't get one thanks to some steely defending and good goalkeeping."

HATTERS: Kelvin Davis, Graham Alexander, Gavin McGowan, Matthew Spring, Steve Davis, Alan White, Ray McKinnon (Mitchell Thomas, 90), Sean Evers, Stuart Douglas (Andrew Fotiadis, 63), Phil Gray, Michael McIndoe. Sub not used: Dwight Marshall.

EARN ANOTHER THREE POINTS



● **ALEXANDER THE GREAT:** Graham Alexander rifles home his side's second goal in a move he started from inside his own half.

Goal machine Steve Davis by Michael McIndoe.



● **EYES DOWN:** Phil Gray takes aim but hits his shot straight at Bristol Rovers' keeper Andy Collett after Michael McIndoe's defence splitting pass.

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BRISTOL ROVERS: Andy Collett, Stephane Leoni, Luke Basford, Robert Trees, Steve Foster, Andy Tillson, Ian Holloway (Jamie Shore, 84), Michael Meaker, Jason Roberts, Jamie Cureton, Barry Hayles. Subs not used: Josh Low, Mark Smith.

TOP HATTER

★ RAY MCKINNON ★

Beginning to produce the form that persuaded Lennie Lawrence to sign him from Dundee United in the summer. He faded slightly in the second half but his performance before the interval was first class.



PICTURES by Gareth Owen

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	Douglas 62, Davis (S) 82	18,108	12
Sat 29	COLCHESTER	2-0	Davis (S) 41, Evers 78, Gray 81	5,005	9
Mon 31	Wigan Athletic	3-1		3,778	5
September					
Sat 5	BURNLEY	1-0	Douglas 47	5,554	2
Tues 8	Wrexham	1-1	McKinnon 36	2,951	3
Sat 12	BRISTOL ROVERS	2-0	Davis (S) 7, Alexander 9	5,558	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					
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					
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					
Sat 12	Macclesfield	A	3		
Sat 19	MILLWALL	H	3		
Sat 26	READING	H	12 noon		
Mon 28	Bournemouth	A	3		
January					
Sat 2	Colchester	A	3		
Sat 9	WYCOMBE	H	3		
Sat 16	Preston	A	3		
Sat 23	WIGAN ATHLETIC	H	3		
Sat 30	BOURNMOUTH	H	3		
February					
Sat 6	Burnley	A	3		
Sat 13	WREXHAM	H	3		
Sat 20	Bristol Rovers	A	3		
Sat 27	BLACKPOOL	H	3		
March					
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					
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					
Sat 1	MACCLESFIELD	H	3		
Sat 8	MILLWALL	A	3		

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

Up to September 14 1998

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stoke City	8	7	0	1	15	5	21
Preston	8	5	2	1	20	10	17
Luton Town	8	5	2	1	11	6	17
Blackpool	8	4	2	2	11	11	14
Bournemouth	8	4	2	2	10	6	14
Man City	7	4	2	1	10	6	14
Fulham	7	4	2	1	7	2	14
Walsall	7	4	1	2	10	8	13
Wrexham	8	3	3	2	10	11	12
York City	7	3	2	2	10	9	11
Colchester United	8	3	2	3	9	9	11
Notts County	8	3	2	3	8	7	11
Bristol Rovers	8	2	4	2	11	10	10
Millwall	7	3	1	3	6	7	10
Chesterfield	8	3	1	4	3	6	10
Oldham	8	2	2	4	9	13	8
Burnley	8	2	2	4	7	10	8
Gillingham	8	1	4	3	10	9	7
Wigan Athletic	8	2	1	5	8	10	7
Northampton	8	1	4	3	7	10	7
Lincoln City	8	1	2	5	-6	13	5
Macclesfield Town	8	1	2	5	3	8	5
Reading	6	1	1	4	5	13	4
Wycombe Wndrs	7	0	2	5	4	11	2

APPEARANCES AND GOALS

Player	Apps	Lge	Cup	Goals
Graham Alexander	8(0)	2(0)	1	2
Hervé Bacqué	2(3)	1(0)	0	0
Kelvin Davis	8(0)	2(0)	0	0
Steve Davis	8(0)	2(0)	4	0
Stuart Douglas	6(0)	1(0)	2	0
Sean Evers	8(0)	2(0)	1	1
Andrew Fotiadis	0(3)	0(0)	0	0
Liam George	2(3)	0(2)	0	0
Phil Gray	8(0)	2(0)	1	1
Marvin Johnson	8(0)	2(0)	0	0
Dwight Marshall	3(0)	2(0)	1	0
Gavin McGowan	7(1)	2(0)	0	0
Michael McIndoe	3(1)	0(1)	0	0
Ray McKinnon	7(1)	0(1)	1	0
Paul McLaren	2(1)	1(1)	0	1
Matthew Spring	8(0)	2(0)	0	0
Mitchell Thomas	1(4)	1(0)	0	0
Alan White	2(1)	0(0)	0	0
Nathan Abbey	0(0)	0(0)	0	0
Simon Davies	0(0)	0(0)	0	0
Gary Doherty	0(0)	0(0)	0	0
Stuart Fraser	0(0)	0(0)	0	0
Paul Showler	0(0)	0(0)	0	0

HATTERS BAD BOYS

Player	Y	R
Marvin Johnson	3	1
Gavin McGowan	4	0
Steve Davis	2	0
Liam George	2	0
Stuart Douglas	1	0
Sean Evers	1	0
Phil Gray	1	0
Ray McKinnon	1	0
Paul McLaren	1	0
Matthew Spring	1	0
Total	17	1



● MCGOWAN

LUTON NEWS PLAYER OF THE YEAR STANDINGS

(number of Top Hatter awards won)

Matthew Spring 3

Graham Alexander 2

Steve Davis 2

Sean Evers 1

Phil Gray 1

Ray McKinnon 1



● SPRING