



HARD GRAFT: Kieron Dyer (left) tries to skip past a Luton defender, who manages to poke the ball away, while Mauricio Taricco pressures a Luton forward (above) Pictures: CLIFFORD HICKS

WIN! WIN! WIN!

Chance to see Ipswich in action



THIS weekend the visitors to Portman Road are Bristol City and Ipswich Town will be looking to maintain their goal-scoring form from last Saturday's Nationwide League match at Oxford. In today's competition we have a pair of the best stand seats to give away for this match, courtesy of the Nationwide Building Society, sponsors of the Nationwide League. To enter, simply telephone our competition line and leave your answer to the question printed below, along with your name, address and daytime telephone number. To

help you answer the question correctly, check today's match stats box.

In last night's match against Luton Town, how many Ipswich Town shots were on target?

Ring 0891 444 395

Calls should cost no more than 50p. Please ask permission from the person who pays the phone bill before calling. The competition line will be open until midnight tonight. A winner will be drawn randomly tomorrow. Normal EADT rules apply.

Thetis condemns Hatters to defeat

by **TONY GARNETT**
Chief Sports Writer

A GOAL from Manuel Thetis 11 minutes from the end earned Ipswich Town a slender lead against a spirited Luton after the first leg of the second-round Worthington Cup tie at Portman Road last night.

Thetis, upfield for a free kick, drilled the ball low into the net from six yards after Bobby Petta's free kick had caused trouble in the Luton penalty area. An attempted headed clearance by Gavin McGowan struck Ipswich skipper Matt Holland and rebounded to Thetis.

It was tremendous for the man from Seville to score on his home debut because Ipswich may well need this single-goal buffer when they visit Kenilworth Road next Tuesday.

Luton are a talented young side, who just lacked the killer instinct up front. They certainly provided an enjoyable evening's entertainment and kept the crowd on tenterhooks throughout.

Ipswich were out of sorts before the interval but when James Scowcroft scored his fifth goal in four starts in the 48th minute, it looked as though all would be well.

Ipswich soon found that Luton were made of stern stuff. The Hatters were level on the hour when the lively Stuart Douglas took advantage of shaky Ipswich defensive work.

Ipswich grabbed their winner from Thetis but a neutral might consider them slightly fortunate as the determined underdogs showed they had quite a bite.

It had started well for Ipswich. David Johnson cut in from the left and powered a drive into the side netting in the opening minutes.

Then it looked for a brief while as though Kieron Dyer might run the show, now that he was back in central midfield.

It was not long before Luton, with a group of youngsters who have come through the youth scheme, and been promoted together with coach John Moore, started to show unexpected authority.

The Hatters looked sharp

with a splendid move in the 10th minute when McGowan combined with McIndoe. The latter jinked past Mauricio Taricco but Richard Wright was equal to the shot.

The occasional Ipswich move spelt danger, notably when Clapham produced a low cross from the left in the 15th minute, which was only just out of the reach of Scowcroft, who was stretching out a leg at the far post.

Luton looked every bit as skilful as many Division One clubs and in the 18th minute Alexander fired across the face of the Ipswich goal.

The lively Douglas beat Thetis and found Gray, but this time Venus was covering well.

Luton kept pressing with Gray, the Northern Ireland international, firing just wide and Evers unable to find a good shooting position when breaking into the penalty area on the left.

Luton could easily have grabbed an early lead but their defensive qualities were put to the test on the half-hour.

Stockwell, restored to the right of midfield, pulled the ball back from the byline and David Johnson's downwards header was smothered on the line by Kelvin Davis, who is still eligible for England Under-21 honours.

Two minutes later Taricco sent Holland bursting through the middle but the formidable Steve Davis blocked the shot.

The exchanges were absorb-

ing, and when Alexander hoisted a free kick into the Ipswich penalty area after 37 minutes, Douglas put in a header which was fortunately no worry to Wright.

Luton lacked finishing power but they were certainly not overawed and in the 44th minute Cox – a 17-year-old making his debut – cut in from the right. He pulled the ball back for Spring, who scooped his shot over the bar. Spring spent most of the match shadowing home skipper Holland.

No doubt a few harsh words in the dressing room from manager George Burley and coach Stewart Houston had an effect because Ipswich had grabbed the lead within three minutes of the restart.

David Johnson and Petta played a one-two to open the Luton defence. The ball was pulled back and Scowcroft did the rest from close range.

His finish, a shot across goal, was ice cool.

A couple of minutes earlier, Davis had pushed out a shot from David Johnson. The loose ball was never cleared properly and Holland, moving up menacingly from midfield, fired wide.

Petta started to come to life. His cross was held by Davis. In the next home attack, Scowcroft flicked on a high ball, which left Johnson to turn his namesake in the Luton defence but then pull his shot well wide.

These had been torrid moments for Luton, who showed the character to fight back in style.

In the 56th minute Evers forced a save from Wright, who stood his ground and let the shot rebound off him.

Three minutes later Spring sent Douglas haring past Venus through the middle. It looked a close decision but the flag was raised for offside.

Douglas put the ball in the net but it did not count. Luton were not to be denied. On the hour they were on terms.

Thetis was unable to get in a clean clearance and the ball rebounded kindly for Douglas, who scored from close range as consolation for his disappointment moments earlier.

Dyer, who seems at his best when given a wide role, jinked in from the right and fired a low shot across the face of the Luton goal.

Tanner took over from Venus in the Ipswich defence and for a while the home side piled on the pressure.

Johnson had a left-foot sizzler blocked by Davis. Then Petta appeared on the right but Alexander did enough to stop Scowcroft getting in a header from the cross.

In the 71st minute the ball bounced close to Stockwell in the six-yard box but he seemed unaware of where it was and Marvin Johnson booted clear.

Then Cox produced a sensational interception. The teenage debut-maker doubled back into his own penalty area to rob David Johnson as he looked sure to score with the rest of the Luton defence well beaten.

The Hatters almost grabbed a goal in the 77th minute. Gray rolled the ball back to Douglas, whose full-blooded shot was not far off the mark.

Alexander became the only player to be booked in the 78th minute for a foul on David Johnson. It proved costly because after the delay when Fotiadis replaced Douglas, Ipswich scored their winner from the free kick.

Petta hoisted the ball into the area and it was Thetis who got his name on the scoresheet.

The referee played five minutes of injury time but neither side took advantage. It will be a gripping battle next week.

Ipswich Town

2

1 Wright 7
2 Stockwell 6
3 Taricco 6
4 Clapham 6
5 Thetis 7
6 Venus 6
7 Dyer 7
8 Holland 7
9 D Johnson 8
10 SCOWCROFT 8
11 Petta 6

SUBSTITUTES

12 Mathie (unused)
13 Bracey (unused)
14 Sonner (unused)
15 Tanner (Venus, 66)
16 Holster (unused)

BOOKINGS

NONE

GOALS

Scowcroft (48)
Thetis (79)

Match stats

Corners 4
Offsides 8
Fouls conceded 8
Shots on target 7
Shots off target 14

Formation: 4-4-2
Weather: Dry

Luton Town

1

1 K Davis 7
2 Alexander 7
3 McGowan 6
4 SPRING 8
5 S Davis 8
6 M Johnson 8
7 Cox 7
8 Evers 7
9 Douglas 7
10 Gray 7
11 McIndoe 7

SUBSTITUTES

12 Fotiadis (Douglas 79)
13 Abbey (unused)
14 Thomas (unused)
15 Bacque (Cox, 82)
16 White (unused)

BOOKINGS

Alexander (foul on Johnson, 78)

GOALS

Douglas (60)

Match stats

Corners 5
Offsides 1
Fouls conceded 9
Shots on target 5
Shots off target 17

Formation: 4-4-2
Pitch: Perfect

DATE: Tuesday, September 15, 1998 VENUE: Portman Road
REFEREE: Andy D'Urso (Billericay) 8 ATTENDANCE: 9,032

Bristol sign new defender

BRISTOL City, who meet Ipswich Town at Portman Road on Saturday, signed a central defender yesterday. They have taken Clemens Zwijsenbrg from Danish club Aalborg on a three-month loan with a view to a £400,000 deal. The Dutchman's transfer was not completed in time for tonight's Worthington Cup second round, first leg tie against Crewe. He is expected to make his debut at Portman Road. Town manager George Burley plans to watch City's tie with Crewe tonight.