

BOYS' BRIGADE NEARLY STEALS MARCH ON TOWN

DAVE ALLARD



IPSWICH TOWN 2 LUTON TOWN 1

**WORTHINGTON CUP, Round Two, 1st leg
Portman Road, Tuesday, September 15, 1998**

HATS off to those Hatters of Luton Town.

Fielding the youngest ever side in the club's history, they went out bravely and boldly at Portman Road last night against a home side that were breaking all scoring records not that long ago.

The midfield foursome contained three 18-year-olds and a 20-year-old. One of the 18-year-olds, Jim Cox, was making his debut.

Possibly the high riding Second Division outfit from Bedfordshire deserved a draw. As it is, a 2-1 loss in which they gained a precious away goal sets this cup-tie up nicely for the second leg at Kenilworth Road next Tuesday.

Luton looked a real breath-of-fresh-air, devil-may-care outfit. For them, there was no thought of sitting back to stifle. They went at Town all they could and, with a sharper cutting edge in the last third of the field, could well have won the day.

Town spluttered a bit, although they pepped up after the break. It was tough, far from the sort of show that is going to maintain a challenge at the top of the First Division.

The happy Hatters put the Blues off their stride for much of the time as they chased all over the place in a bid to go for the throats of the opposition.

James Scowcroft and David Johnson maintained their bright form up front. But there were few other impressive displays in a team that did not pass the ball anything like it could.

New French defender Manuel Thetis could not clear the ball well enough and Luton equalised, but he gave a satisfactory home debut show and was thrilled with his winning goal after 79 minutes.

Mick Stockwell returned to the Town side from the start last night on the right of midfield after his shin injury as Kieron Dyer went back into the middle.

England Under-21 stalwart Dyer kept probing away, but, like team-mates, his final pass often let him down.

Scowcroft struck and put Town ahead in the 48th minute to make it five goals in four games since making a belated start to the season after a foot injury.



SHUT-OUT: Kieron Dyer finds there is no way through as he attempts to mount a raid from midfield

The Blues' man of the match Johnson made a blistering run down the right and Scowcroft hooked home a classic right foot effort.

Luton were level on the hour through Stuart Douglas. Thetis slid in to try to clear, but could not do so effectively. The ball squirted to Douglas who picked his spot.

In the 79th minute Thetis was restoring Town's lead. From a ball delivered from the right, Gavin McGowan tried to clear with his head. But it hit the back of Matt Holland's neck and dropped for Thetis.

The Frenchman swept home a peach of a right foot shot.

Johnson was unlucky with a series of

efforts on goal. The 30-goal man of last season, who is still on just two this term, brightened a generally uninspiring Town show with his powerful runs and strong finishes.

A Luton side that in the 1980s won the League Cup at Wembley and were beaten in a final as well, look to mean business this time around, too.

But they may find it harder in the return against a Town side who last night were made to realise full well that they face quite a task in making the third round draw.

Only one player was booked, Luton's Graham Alexander.

PORTMAN ROAD ACTION TIMETABLE

1 min: Johnson hits the side-netting.

6 mins: Gray not far off with his shot.

30 mins: Stockwell crosses, Johnson header saved well by Davis.

46 mins: Johnson shot blocked by Davis.

48 mins: Johnson crosses and Scowcroft hooks home right footer to put Town ahead.

53 mins: Johnson great skill, but misses the target.

60 mins: Douglas swoops and Luton are level.

66 mins: Dyer just wide of the far post.

69 mins: Johnson's storming run. Firm shot saved.

77 mins: Douglas so close for Luton.

79 mins: Thetis sweeps in for 2-1 to Town.