

DAVE FLETT WATCHES THE HATTERS GO DOWN TO A LATE GOAL



SHOOT ON SIGHT: Phil Gray saw this first-half effort turned over by Blackpool keeper Steve Banks.



FORWARD THINKING: Captain Steve Davis looks to drive upfield with ex-Queens Park Rangers defender David Bardsley attempting to block his way.



ME AND MY SHADOW: Michael McIndoe keeps a close eye on Blackpool striker Mar-

17-YEAR-OLD BLACKPOOL STRIKER



LEAN ON ME: Michael McIndoe uses the Tangerines' right back Marvin Bryan to gain an aerial advantage.

Would you Adam and Eve it



JIMMY RIDDLE: Hatters 18-year-old winger Jimmy Cox asked questions of the home defence on his full league debut but received little assistance from his attacking teammates.

FRANK CARSON, Roy 'Chubby' Brown and Joe Pasquale were all playing in Blackpool on Saturday, but the seaside resort's football manager waited 85 minutes to play a joker of his own.

That was the moment Nigel Worthington chose to introduce trump card Adam Nowland, a 17-year-old YTS striker who repaid his manager's faith with an 88th-minute winning goal.

"He'll be back to sweeping the stands on Monday," the beaming Blackpool boss quipped afterwards.

The young striker upstaged the Hatters own teenage trio of 18-year-olds Matthew Spring, Michael McIndoe and league debutant Jimmy Cox.

It was Nowland's first goal in senior football and he finished the game feeling as high as the town's famous tower while Hatters boss Lennie Lawrence was contemplating throwing himself off it.

"Massively disappointing" was a downbeat Lawrence's forthright appraisal of the afternoon not only because of the late goal but also his side's lack of attacking inspiration and his substitutes' failure to make any significant improvement.

The Hatters manager even scrapped his side's post-match warm down which has become a feature stuck to religiously since Mandy Mallins' appointment as Fitness Instructor this season, preferring instead to lock the players in for a 20-minute dressing room inquest.

Lawrence explained: "It might not have physiologically been the right thing to do but we had to get them in and talk to them."

Earlier, it had all started so promisingly for the visitors as they dominated the first 25 minutes.

Spring was again prominent in the opening stages, bossing the midfield and covering every blade of grass as the Hatters took the game to the home team.

On four minutes, Spring fed an advancing Sean Evers whose lay off in the Blackpool penalty box created a chance for Phil Gray.

Gray shot low and brought an unconventional save out of home keeper Steve Banks who pushed his effort over the bar.

Spring himself went close on 23 minutes after another intricate move involving Graham Alexander and Stuart Douglas that ended with the young midfielder driving just wide from 20 yards with Banks well beaten.

Two minutes later a characteristic Steve Davis surge forward was halted by a shell-shocked Blackpool defence only for the ball to break to Gray on the edge of the area whose spectacular volley drifted inches wide.

Sadly, for the visitors, they couldn't maintain that early momentum and the Seasiders started to impose their authority.

LENNIE'S VERDICT

"We were too casual on the ball, didn't move enough and gave away possession which didn't help us one iota. Blackpool were strong and showed us what they can do. We looked tired and didn't have anything to give when it mattered. We made so little



The movement that had troubled the home side for the first 25 minutes seemed to stop and careless touches from the front pair of Gray and Douglas saw most subsequent attacks break down.

The Hatters passing was not as fluid as in recent games but that was inevitably going to happen sooner or later with a side so committed to the passing game as Luton.

What disturbed Lawrence most was the lack of attacking options when in possession.

Spring and Davis were forced to dwell unduly on the ball too many times because of the lack of movement in front of them.

At the back, Davis and Marvin Johnson's lack of pace was



exposed as regular balls over the top led to the home team.

Johnson was lucky not to concede a penalty when his outstretched leg felled home Omerod and no contact seemed to be made.

The Hatters centre-half also tangled with Blackpool striker Chris Malkin in the second half as Graham Cain waved aside all penalties to the chagrin of a vociferously abusive home crowd.

Mr Cain could hardly be accused of leniency and, on 62 minutes, he dismissed more than a kick when Gavin McGowan appeared to be in the chest. Instead, he awarded the Hatters a free kick.

Aside from Mr Cain's interventions, the referee also helped in their quest for a point by awarding from Blackpool prior to Nowland's winning goal.

On 27 minutes, confusion between Sean Evers and Davis led to a chance for Tangerines striker son but he allowed the Hatters keeper to stop his three-yard effort around the post.

Loose passes from Alexander and Spring into Bent before coolly picking his spot and firing low into Davis' bottom corner.

An unhappy Lawrence did not go easy on his players afterwards. He said: "I'm disappointed that out of the 14 players we used today they couldn't conjure anything better than that. The biggest disappointment, apart from the late goal, was that after the first 20 minutes we didn't look likely to score."

"There were too many players carrying others and it needs changing without a shadow of doubt. We



PUTTING THE BOOT IN: Sean Evers and Blackpool's Phil Thompson compete for the ball while Stuart Douglas also tries to muscle in.

badly need people back. I also need to look at whose on the bench because the two substitutes offered absolutely nothing.

"It was disappointing to lose with two minutes to go but we are not kidding ourselves and there is no way on this earth we should have won it."

Lawrence did have a word of encouragement for the Hatters latest full debutant, saying: "Cox was excellent but for him to be our most likely attacker can't be right."

TOP HATTER
GAVIN MCGOWAN

Another tenacious display to continue his game-by-game improvement at left back. Battled well in an often rear-guard action and deserved better than a 1-0 defeat.



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)	1-2	Douglas 60	9,032	-
Sat 19	Blackpool	0-1		5,695	5
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	BOURNEMOUTH	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 19 1998	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stoke City	9	8	0	1	16	5	24
Preston	9	6	2	1	21	10	20
Bournemouth	9	5	2	2	12	6	17
Blackpool	9	5	2	2	12	11	17
Luton Town	9	5	2	2	11	7	17
Walsall	8	5	1	2	13	10	16
Man City	8	4	3	1	11	7	15
Fulham	8	4	3	1	10	5	15
Bristol Rovers	9	3	4	2	14	10	13
Millwall	8	4	1	3	8	8	13
York City	8	3	3	2	13	12	12
Colchester United	9	3	3	3	10	12	12
Wrexham	9	3	3	3	10	12	12
Notts County	9	3	2	4	10	11	11
Chesterfield	9	3	2	4	4	7	11
Gillingham	9	2	4	3	12	10	10
Wigan Athletic	9	3	1	5	10	10	10
Oldham	9	2	2	5	9	14	8
Burnley	9	2	2	5	8	12	8
Northampton	9	1	4	4	8	12	7
Reading	7	1	2	4	6	14	5
Lincoln City	9	1	2	6	6	16	5
Macclesfield Town	9	1	2	6	3	10	5
Wycombe Wndrs	8	0	2	6	4	13	2

APPEARANCES
AND GOALS

Player	Apps	Goals
Graham Alexander	9(0)	3(0)
Hervé Bacqué	2(4)	1(1)
Jimmy Cox	1(0)	1(0)
Kelvin Davis	9(0)	3(0)
Steve Davis	9(0)	3(0)
Stuart Douglas	7(0)	2(0)
Sean Evers	9(0)	3(0)
Andrew Fotiadis	0(3)	0(1)
Liam George	2(3)	0(2)
Phil Gray	9(0)	3(0)
Marvin Johnson	7(0)	3(0)
Dwight Marshall	3(1)	2(0)
Gavin McGowan	8(1)	3(0)
Michael McIndoe	4(1)	1(1)
Ray McKinnon	7(1)	0(1)
Paul McLaren	2(1)	1(1)
Matthew Spring	9(0)	3(0)
Mitchell Thomas	1(5)	1(0)
Alan White	2(1)	0(0)
Nathan Abbey	0(0)	0(0)
Simon Davies	0(0)	0(0)
Gary Doherty	0(0)	0(0)
Paul Showler	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
Graham Alexander	1 0
Stuart Douglas	1 0
Sean Evers	1 0
Phil Gray	1 0
Michael McIndoe	1 0
Ray McKinnon	1 0
Paul McLaren	1 0
Matthew Spring	1 0
Total	19 1



JOHNSON

LUTON NEWS PLAYER OF
THE YEAR STANDINGS

(number of Top Hatter awards won)	Player	Standings
3	Matthew Spring	3
2	Graham Alexander	2
2	Steve Davis	2
1	Sean Evers	1
1	Phil Gray	1
1	Marvin Johnson	1
1	Gavin McGowan	1
1	Ray McKinnon	1



SPRING