

DAVE FLETT watches an improved Luton fail to hold

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LUTON TOWN made Division Two's form team Bournemouth look ordinary for two thirds of Saturday's game but spent the last content to settle for a point.

Tenacity and passion saw the Hatters dominate the first hour, controlling every area of the pitch and they deserved more than a solitary Ray McKinnon goal before the interval.

When Gary Doherty added a second on 53 minutes, it seemed a just reward for the home side's superiority. Sadly, for the home supporters, the Hatters protect clean sheets these days with all the dexterity of a two-year-old toddler, still waiting to be potty trained.

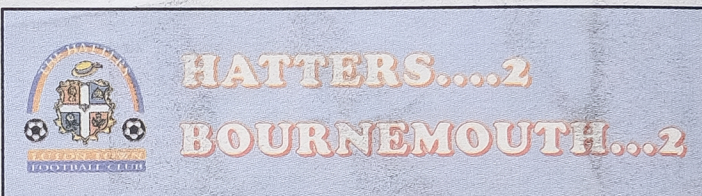
Kelvin Davis has gone 14 games since his last shut-out, the 1-0 Worthington Cup victory over Barnsley.

Like winning games, clean sheets become a habit and the Hatters need to acquire both fast if they are to salvage something from this rollercoaster season.

To be fair, there were definite signs of improvement against Mel Machin's play-off hopefuls. The home side responded to a good reception from the Kenilworth Road faithful who answered Lennie Lawrence's call to back not attack his side.

Players and supporters alike seemed determined to forget the distress of the previous week's 4-0 home thumping by Wigan.

McKinnon, returning after seven weeks sidelined, celebrated his recall in fine style by slamming in a sixth-minute goal.



The Scot was as fired up as the rest of his team-mates in the early stages and his aggressive half-volley from the edge of the area fizzed past Cherries' keeper Mark Qvendale.

Loan man Gerry Harrison created the chance with a strong run and blocked cross and continues to look a revelation at right-back. Harrison's marauding runs down the right and clever distribution were a strong feature in a one-sided first-half.

So was the solidity of midfield duo Paul McLaren and Matthew Spring. Before the game, Lawrence identified the middle of the park as the key area and, for the first hour, it was one that McLaren and Spring bossed tremendously.

Both players had shots saved before half-time and strikers Doherty and Stuart Douglas also went close.

At the other end, Marvin Johnson did an excellent policing job on friend and former team-mate Mark Stein. The division's leading scorer had to wait an incredible 23

minutes for his first touch of the ball and his tame header a quarter-of-an-hour later was the visitors' only effort on Davis' goal before the break.

But it was a different Bournemouth that lined up for the second period and, even before Doherty's strike, Steve Robinson missed two good opportunities for an equaliser.

Harrison was again the creator for the Hatters second goal, sending in a low cross that Douglas dummied at the near post to leave for the 6ft 2in Irishman.

Doherty's first touch let him down but after Douglas saw his shot blocked the 19-year-old from Donegal, recently described by Lawrence as a "reserve centre-half who can play up front after a fashion," was the model predator, reacting quickly to drive into an unguarded net.

"Excellent" was Lawrence's later assessment of Doherty's contribution, the Hatters boss clearly having his mind changed about the youngster's forward talents.

Doherty's partner Douglas, sick at half-time, began to struggle soon after the second goal and the prodigious work put in by McLaren and Spring began to take its toll.

On 56 minutes, Johnson blocked another goalbound Robinson effort but the Hatters skipper was powerless to prevent the Bournemouth midfielder eventually getting on the scoresheet five minutes later.

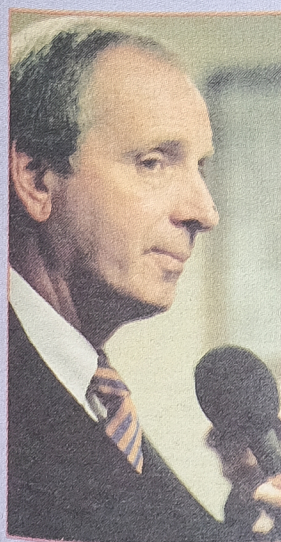
John O'Neill's cross from the left was headed out by Sean Dyche to the edge of the area, where Robinson produced an emphatic volleyed finish into Davis' bottom right

The Cherries added a second soon after when Stein found some rare space and sped towards the Hatters goal.

Gavin McGowan took the only course of action he felt open to him, clipping Stein's ankles in a blatant professional foul.

● **SUPERMAC:** McKinnon celebrates his return from injury and early goal with Paul McLaren.

LENNIE'S VERDICT



“ I’m a bit disappointed to surrender a lead but it was a creditable performance against a good side.”

The first-half was the best we've played for a long time. It was excellent and just a pity we didn't get a second goal.

They showed some fight in the second-half and, at the start of the game, we'd have settled for a point.

LUTON TOWN FC 1998-99

August	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 8	Wymcombe	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					
Sat 5	BURNLEY	1-0	Douglas 47	5,554	25
Tues 8	Wrexham	1-1	McKinnon 36	2,951	3
Sat 12	BRISTOL ROVERS	2-0	Davis (S) 7, Alexander 9	5,558	-
Tues 15	Ipswich (WC 2)	1-2	Douglas, 60	9,032	-
Sat 19	Blackpool	0-1		5,695	5
Tues 22	IPSWICH(WC 2)	4-2	Fotiadis 52, Douglas 83, Davis (S) 99		-
Sat 26	WALSALL	0-1	Johnson 120	5,655	-
October					
Sat 3	Fulham	3-1	Gray 3, Douglas 48, Davis (S) 65	11,856	7
Sat 10	York City	3-3	Douglas 22, Evers 43, Gray 55	3,780	4
Sat 17	OLDHAM	2-0	Gray 82, Scarlett 90	5,447	4
Tues 20	NORTHAMPTON	1-0	Alexander 19	6,087	3
Sat 24	Gillingham	0-1		5,602	4
Tues 27	COVENTRY (WC 3)	2-0	Gray 50, Davis (S) 78	9,051	-
November					
Sat 7	Stoke City	1-3	Douglas 81	12,964	6
Tues 10	BARNSLEY (WC4)	1-0	Gray 82	8,435	-
Sun 15	Boreham Wood (FA1)	3-2	Gray 33, 53, Davis (S) 76	1,772	-
Sat 21	Lincoln City	2-2	Gray 43, Doherty 76	4,893	6
Sat 28	MANCHESTER CITY	1-1	Doherty 76	9,070	7
December					
Tue 1	Sunderland (WC5)	0-3		35,742	-
Sat 5	HULL CITY(FA2)	1-2	Davis (S) 36	5,021	-
Sat 12	Macclesfield	2-2	Douglas 3, Gray 90	2,905	8
Sat 19	MILLWALL	1-2	Davis (S) 69	5,939	11
Mon 28	Bournemouth	0-1		8,863	14
January					
Sat 2	Colchester	2-2	Alexander (pen) 7, White 72	4,694	14
Tues 5	WALSALL (AWS 2)	0-3		1,870	-
Sat 9	WYCOMBE	3-1	Spring 16, Evers 69, Douglas 75	5,063	13
Sat 16	Preston	1-2	Fotiadis 15	11,034	12
Sat 23	WIGAN ATHLETIC	0-4		4,934	13
Sat 30	BOURNEMOUTH	2-2	McKinnon 6, Doherty 53	5,426	14
February					
Sat 6	Burnley	A	3		
Sat 13	WREXHAM	H	7, 45		
Sat 20	Bristol Rovers	A	3		
Tues 23	NOTTS COUNTY	H	7, 45		
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		
Tues 23	READING	H	7, 45		
Sat 27	GILLINGHAM	H	11, 30		
April					
Sat 3	Oldham Athletic	A	3		
Tues 6	YORK CITY	H	7, 45		
Sat 10	Northampton	A	3		
Wed 14	Manchester City	A	7, 45		
Sat 17	LINCOLN CITY	H	3		
Sat 24	Notts County	A	3		
May					
Sat 1	MACCLESFIELD	H	3		
Sat 8	Millwall	A	3		

DIVISION TWO

Up to January 30 1999

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fulham	27	18	4	5	40	20	58
Preston	28	16	7	5	51	27	55
Walsall	28	15	6	7	39	32	53
Stoke City	27	15	9	7	43	24	53
Bournemouth	26	13	7	6	43	24	46
Gillingham	27	11	12	4	42	25	45
Chesterfield	28	13	6	9	32	23	45
Man City	28	11	11	6	33	23	44
Millwall	29	11	10	8	34	32	43
Wigan Athletic	27	11	7	9	38	27	40
Reading	27	10	9	8	33	37	39
Blackpool	28	9	10	9	31	33	37
York City	29	9	8	12	37	47	35
LUTON TOWN	26	9	8	9	35	35	35
Burnley	29	8	9	12	34	47	33
Bristol Rovers	26	7	11	8	37	30	32
Oldham	28	6	11	16	28	39	30
Colchester Utd	26	6	11	11	25	34	29
Wrexham	27	7	13	15	25	43	28
Notts County	26	6	7	13	27	38	25
Northampton	27	5	10	12	24	33	25
Lincoln City	27	6	6	15	27	45	24
Wycombe Wdrs	28	5	8	15	25	37	23
Macclesfield	27	4	9	14	20	35	21

GAMES AND GOALS

Player	Apps		Goals	
	Lge	Cup	Lge	Cup
Nathan Abbey	0(0)	1(0)	0	0
Braham Alexander	19(0)	0	3	2
Hervé Bachevalier	2(2)	0	0	0
Emmerson Boyce	0(0)	1(0)	0	0
Jimmy Cox	2(2)	1(1)	0	0
Kelvin Davis	26(0)	9(0)	0	0
Steve Davis	2(0)	0	0	0
Simon Davies	2(0)	0	0	0
Gary Docherty	1(8)	2(2)	3	0
Stuart Douglas	2(30)	7(1)	7	2
Sean Dyche	4(0)	1(0)	0	0
Sean Evans	4(0)	1(0)	0	0
Andrew Fioditis	4(8)	2(2)	1	1
Stuart Fraser	1(1)	1(0)	0	0
Liam George	2(3)	0(2)	0	0
Phil Gray	22(1)	0	0	0
Gerry Harrison	6(0)	1(0)	0	0
Marvin Johnson	24(0)	8(0)	0	1
Tresor Kandari	0(0)	1(0)	0	0
Dwight MacFarland	3(1)	3(3)	1	0
Gavin McGowan	19(1)	0	0	0
Michael McIndoe	8(3)	3(3)	0	0
Ray McKinnon	17(1)	6(1)	2	0
Paul McLaren	7(4)	4(3)	0	1
Kofi Nyamah	0(0)	1(1)	0	0
Andre Scarlett	1(3)	0(2)	0	0
Paul Showler	26(1)	0	0	0
Matthew Spring	2(0)	8(1)	1	0
Michael Thomas	11(5)	3(0)	0	0
Alan White	8(0)	0	0	0
Landry Zahana-Oni	2(1)	0(0)	0	0

HATTERS BAD BOYS

PLAYER	Y	R	
Garry McGowan	12	1	Garry Harrison
Graham Alexander	7	1	Matthew Spring
Marvin Johnson	4	1	Total
Mitchell Thomas	4	1	62
Steve Davis	6	0	
Stuart Douglas	5	0	
Paul McLaren	5	0	
Phil Gray	2	1	
Michael McDowd	4	0	
Kelvin Davis	1	1	
Liam George	2	0	
Ray McKinnon	2	0	
Alan White	2	0	
Jimmy Cox	1	0	
Sean Dwyer	1	0	
Gary Doherty	1	0	
Sean Evers	1	0	



● **McGOWAN**

LUTON NEWS PLAYER OF THE YEAR STANDINGS

(Top Hatter awards won)	
Graham Alexander	5
Steve Davis	5
Matthew Spring	5
Phil Gray	3
Marvin Johnson	3
Sean Evers	2
Gerry Harrison	2
Gavin McGowan	2
Ray McKinnon	2
Kelvin Davis	1
Stuart Douglas	1
Sean Dyche	1
Paul McLaren	1
Andre Scarlett	1
Paul Showler	1
Mitchell Thomas	1

● **HARRISON**
Top Hatter v
Bournemouth