

BURNS BLASTS SUICIDE SQUAD

99/00

Royals boss slams sloppy defence

TOMMY BURNS branded Reading's defending as suicidal after his side slumped to a 2-1 defeat at home to Luton Town on Saturday.

With just five minutes remaining Chris Casper played the ball out to Andy Gurney on the right and Reading needlessly conceded a throw-in.

The ball should have been cleared up field but instead substitute Michael McIndoe played in Liam George from the throw and he tucked home the winner from close range.

Andrew Fotiadis had earlier given the Hatters the lead on 53 minutes when he headed home from six yards out.

But Reading roared back, and boosted by the introduction of debut-making striker Nicky Forster, levelled three minutes later when Martin Williams prodded home his first goal of the season from close range.

It is the second week on the trot that Royals have paid the price for poor defending.

And manager Tommy Burns said: "We have to be looking to win these type of games. Had we got the first goal I think we would have gone on to win, so to lose in the fashion we did is very disappointing."

Burns claimed his side were bullied out of it in last week's 3-1 defeat at Cambridge, but on Saturday it was lapses in concentration that proved costly.

"It was a big letdown," said Burns. "But to be fair the players worked very hard in the game."

"We played reasonably well considering all the changes we had but the goals we lost have to be looked at.

"It's a real disappointment for everybody but I don't think you can question the commitment.

"I think the first goal needed to be shut down but he (Fotiadis) got a free header and that's very disappointing.

"And the second, instead of kicking the ball up the park we tried to pass it around on the 18-yard box and that's

By NICK IVE

DIVISION 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Notts County	3	2	1	0	6	0	7
Wigan	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
Luton	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Burnley	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Preston	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Bristol Rovers	3	2	1	0	2	0	7
Bournemouth	3	2	0	1	7	4	6
Brentford	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
Cardiff	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Wycombe	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Blackpool	3	1	1	1	5	5	4
Bury	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Wrexham	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Bristol City	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
Chesterfield	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
Stoke	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
Cambridge Utd	3	1	0	2	6	7	3
Oxford Utd	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
READING	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Colchester	3	1	0	2	1	7	3
Millwall	3	0	2	1	5	7	2
Gillingham	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Oldham	3	0	0	3	0	4	0
Scunthorpe	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

just suicide. It's hard to take when you lose goals in that fashion."

Reading looked much more solid in midfield with the inclusion of debutants Neil Smith, a £100,000 signing from Fulham and Peter Grant, a free transfer from Norwich.

And Grant, who played in a holding role behind Darren Caskey and Smith, vowed that he and the team will give it 100 per cent in order to get things right.

The former Celtic ace said: "We are all disappointed but we've got to take it as a group like when we win.



► **IMPRESSIVE DEBUT** – Nicky Forster outpaces Luton's Matthew Taylor in Reading's 2-1 defeat at Madejski Stadium on Saturday. Picture: EDDIE GREVILLE (ref: 3117/99)

"We're just going to work harder so we'll go back to training on Monday and work on things and be ready for Tuesday's game against Peterborough. I've come here to win things and I will give 100 per cent every game.

"Reading are as important to me now as Celtic and Norwich were and I want to win things here. I'm going to move down to Reading. This is my new home

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