

# CUP GLOOM

by DAVE FLETT at the Memorial Ground

LUTON TOWN bowed out of the Worthington Cup last night after a 2-2 draw at Bristol Rovers.

The Hatters stormed to the quarter finals of last season's competition but fell at the first hurdle this time round, going out 4-2 on aggregate.

Lennie Lawrence rested eight players from the side that beat Reading 2-1 on Saturday. Phil Gray, Nathan Abbey and Julian Watts were the only players to keep their places – on loan defender Julian Watts was captain for the evening.

Emmerson Boyte should have given the Hatters an early lead when he latched onto Tresor Kandol's fifth-minute pass and raced on goal. But the 20-year-old wingback shot straight at home keeper Lee Jones when it seemed easier to score.

The visitor's other chances before the interval fell to Gray, who blazed over on 17 minutes and volleyed straight at Jones just past the half-hour.

At the other end, rookie keeper Abbey was rarely tested with Rovers apparently content to defend their two-goal first-leg advantage.

The Hatters lacked the attacking invention to ignite a lacklustre first half and Stuart Douglas and Kandol were often frustrated by a well oiled home offside trap.

Jamie Cureton had the home side's best chance of the half moments before the break but was denied by Abbey and Robbie Pethick hit a post.

Kandol livened up proceedings two minutes into the second half, firing

## Sad Hatters bow out at first hurdle

### BRISTOL ROVERS 2 LUTON TOWN 2

**Bristol Rovers:** Lee Jones, David Pritchard, Trevor Challis, Steve Foster, Andy Thomson, Andy Tillson, Ronnie Mauge (Simon Bryant 78), David Hillier, Jamie Cureton, Jason Roberts, Robbie Pethick.

**Luton:** Nathan Abbey, Adam Locke, Efetobore Sodje, Emmerson Boyte, Alan White, Julian Watts, Phil Gray, Ray McKinnon, Stuart Douglas (Doherty 67), Michael McIndoe, Tresor Kandol (Fotiadis 67). Subs Gary Doherty, Andre Scarlett, Andrew Fotiadis, Ryan Davis, Scott Ward.

**Referee:** B Knight, Orpington, Kent. **Attendance:** 4,414

Hatters in front on the night. The 17-year-old striker netted his first senior goal after Boyce set up Zaire-born Kandol who has now scored for the juniors, reserves and first team this season.

Abbey kept Luton in the tie on 57 minutes when he saved from the powerful Jason Roberts but the division's leading scorer was not to be kept off the scoresheet for long.

And it was an Abbey clanger that gifted him his sixth goal of the

campaign three minutes later – the Hatters keeper dropped a Pethick cross and Roberts chipped over Watts to restore Rover's two-goal aggregate lead.

The home team went ahead after 72 minutes when Cureton beat Watts to the ball from another Pethick cross and beat a static Abbey.

Luton levelled on the night after 80 minutes when sub Gary Doherty headed Ray McKinnon's cross into an empty net after a Jones blunder.



**CHANCES:** Phil Gray had two opportunities which would have meant extra-time