

The 'Entertainers' teach Oxford a lesson in football

SHARP-SHOOTING Luton Town bagged four more goals on Saturday to make them the division's deadliest side on their home patch.

The Hatters have now scored 12 times in five games at Kenilworth Road this season and another breathtaking attacking display saw Oxford, midweek conquerors of Everton, go down 4-2.

In another devastating first-half, Lennie Lawrence's young side stormed into a three-goal lead.

'Let Me Entertain You,' the Robbie Williams song that greets players at five to three on a Saturday afternoon, has so often in the past been received with a rueful smile by home supporters. But these days the choice of music is completely justifiable!

Liam George added to the spectacular collection of goals witnessed at Kenilworth Road this season when he opened the scoring after 13 minutes.

The 20-year-old striker received Stuart Fraser's pass 25 yards out before curling a delightful left-footed shot wide of Oxford keeper Andre Arendse's outstretched right arm and into the bottom corner.

Seven minutes later, Arendse made a hash of his punch after Marvin Johnson's long punt into the box and Fraser capitalised, employing all his neck muscles to send a looping header over the covering defenders for his first senior goal.

It is only six weeks since George opened his first team account but his second in first-half injury time made it six for the season to make him an early contender for the Division Two golden boot.

There was a heavy suspicion of offside, though, when Stuart Douglas released Matthew Spring for a free run on goal.

Spring raced clear without a flag being raised and after luring Arendse off his line unselfishly squared the ball for George to roll it into an empty net.

Nathan Abbey had earlier pulled off an athletic save to turn behind Joey Beauchamp's 20th-minute free-kick and he was kept much

GAVIN MCGOWAN was sent to Lilleshall this week for rehabilitation. The Hatters wing-back tore a cruciate ligament in pre-season training and will not be fit to train for at least a month. Landry Zahana-Oni's knee injury is not as serious and he could be back in first team contention next month after a successful cartilage operation.

busier after the interval. The Hatters came out for the second half with a smile and a swagger but were quickly knocked out of their casual stride.

Abbey palmed away a Steve Davis header and Luton were then shocked by two goals in six minutes, the first a freak effort and the second a defensive and goalkeeping error.

On the hour, Paul Powell's left-wing cross from the touchline flicked off Fraser's boot, looped

over Abbey and went in off a post.

Then unmarked ex-Leeds United striker Derek Lilley reduced the deficit to one, his far-post header squirming under Abbey's body after Jamie Cook's left-wing cross.

Lawrence responded by sending on recalled and reformed Michael McIndoe for on-loan striker Neil Midgley and reverting to a 3-3-4 formation.

The tactical switch worked with the Hatters recovering their composure, George going close to a hat-trick and McIndoe stinging Arendse's hands before Adam Locke capped a fine personal display with a last-minute goal.

He was aided by another change from Arendse who completed a goalkeeping display dodgier than any Del Boy scam. The South African international raced off the line to stop a Douglas breakthrough but skewed his clearance straight to Locke who fired into an unguarded net from 40 yards.

match facts

LUTON TOWN 4 OXFORD 2

● **HATTERS:** Nathan Abbey, Stuart Fraser, Julian Watts, Gary Doherty, Marvin Johnson, Liam George, Adam Locke, Stuart Douglas, Matthew Spring, Neil Midgley (Michael McIndoe, 67), Matthew Taylor. Subs not used: Tresor Kandol, Efetobore Sodje, Andre Scarlett, Daniel Tate.

● **OXFORD:** Andre Arendse, Les Robinson, Paul Powell, Peter Fear, Joey Beauchamp, Steve Davis, Mickey Lewis (Mark Watson, 60), Matt Murphy, Paul Tait (Derek Lilley, 29), Steve Anthrobus, Rob Folland (Jamie Cook, 60).

● **Shots on target:** Luton 7, Oxford 4.

● **Off target:** Luton 6, Oxford 4.

● **Corners:** Luton 6, Oxford 11.

● **Attendance:** 6,102.

● **Top Hatter:** Liam George - always a threat.

Lennie Lawrence's verdict

‘It was a game of two halves. When we're good we're very good as we showed in 30 first-half minutes but for 15 minutes in the second everything went out of the window. It's brilliant seeing them play as well as they did but we must do better if the game turns against us. We can't stop functioning when we come up against a bigger club.’

