

Bristol struggle to hold Town attack

Point for unlucky Hatters

BRISTOL CITY 0 LUTON 0
Dave Flett at Ashton Gate

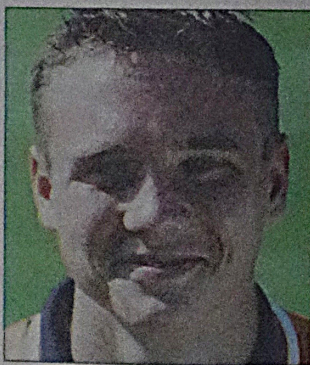
Luton Town will enter the new millennium without a league win in eight weeks after yesterday's 0-0 draw at Bristol City.

But Lennie Lawrence's men were full value for their first away point since October and went close to winning.

Lawrence reverted to a 3-5-2 formation for the Ashton Gate clash, with top scorer Liam George dropped for the fit-again Phil Gray and Alan White returning from a one-month loan stay at Colchester to anchor the midfield.

Gray should have returned with a bang on six minutes but, after Stuart Douglas's pass put him clean through, a poor first touch saw the ball roll harmlessly to the home keeper.

Matthew Taylor was a constant attacking menace throughout the game, Mercer tipping a 25-yard drive over the bar on eight minutes before the Hatters wing back unleashed a vicious strike that pinged back off a post shortly before half



**MATTHEW TAYLOR: Hit the
woodwork twice**

time. The home side's best chance before the break came from Peter Beadle whose header was cleared off the line by ex-City defender Julian Watts.

Luton continued to press for the breakthrough in the second half, Taylor again forcing Mercer into a low save and flashing another piledriver just wide. In between, Gray's stinging 25-yard drive was pushed behind by the busy Mercer and Watts nodded the resulting corner just wide.

At the death, substitute

Andrew Fotiadis almost snatched a deserved victory. Ex-Charlton midfielder and Mortimer conceded possession in midfield, presenting the ball to Fotiadis who sprang past Keith Millen before being saved by his shot wide.

In a desperate search for attacking inspiration, boss Tony Pulis had to throw on Tony Thorpe, but at Bristol after his loan spell with the Hatters.

But Thorpe made little impact and the home side's only serious threat in the second half brought a fine chance save from Nathan Abbey.

The Hatters' keeper fired a long-range Tistimetanu drive and recovered to stop Beadle's low up.

Bristol City: Mercer, Taylor, Tinnion, Mortimer, Hutchings (Tistimetanu 66), (Thorpe 63), Beadle, Lavin (46), Millen, Black.

Luton: Abbey, Boyce, Taylor, Spring, Watts, Johnson, Locke, White, Douglas, Foster, Doherty. Subs not used: Fraser Scarlett, Tate.

Attendance: 11,832

Top Hatter: Matthew Taylor