

Just magnificent

White, Gray strike to end that misery run



BURNLEY 0 LUTON

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Dave Flett reports
from the Turf Moor
ground...

Luton Town ended a miserable run of four straight defeats with a superb victory at promotion-chasing Burnley.

Alan White's first goal of the season put the Hatters into half-time in front of Phil Gray netted his ninth of the campaign after the break to seal victory. Luton boss Lennie Lawrence made two changes from the side that lost 1-0 at Exeterham.

Stuart Fraser, who suffered a bruised knee in Saturday's clash, was replaced by Emmerson Boyce and Alan White came in for Andrew Fotiadis, with Lawrence preferring three midfielders and three forwards.

The Burnley line-up included ex-Hatters Steve Davis and Mitchell Thomas in a three-man defence, with former Arsenal and England star Ian Wright in attack.

Both sides had to contend with driving rain at a drenched Turf Moor, with surface water on most areas of the pitch. The Hatters enjoyed a bright start, with Matthew Spring driving narrowly wide from 20 yards after just two minutes.

Stuart Douglas went close twice moments later, firing one effort into the side-netting and hooking another shot after Boyce's dangerous low cross.

Phil Gray also tested home keeper Paul Crichton with a low ninth minute drive. Burnley struggled to create chances before the break, Davis heading their best opportunity wide from a Glen Little corner after 11 minutes.

Gary Doherty was the first victim of the poor weather conditions on 16 minutes when his back-pass stuck in the

mud but a clear-through Wright went for the spectacular option and his tame 30-yard shot was safely gathered by Ben Roberts.

Luton took the lead on 25 minutes after excellent work from Douglas.

The Hatters striker displayed pace and determination to latch on to a Spring through ball before teeing up White, who drilled his shot into Crichton's bottom right-hand corner from the edge of the area.

Gavin McGowan became the first man in referee Paul Danson's notebook after a series of indiscretions were finally punished by a yellow card following a foul on Burnley's Little.

Gray went close to sending Luton into a 2-0 half-time lead, but his 25-yard snap shot was turned behind by a sprawling Crichton.

Spring rattled the back of Burnley's net two minutes into the second-half but his fierce 25-yard drive was ruled out with Gray adjudged to have fouled Davis in setting up the chance.

Eight minutes later Gray doubled the visitors' lead.

Burnley's defence failed to clear Spring's corner and when centre-half Ian Cox slipped Gray capitalised by slamming into the roof of Crichton's net from six yards.

Home boss Stan Ternent bowed to crowd pressure moments later, sending on top scorer Andy Payton, having already made a double substitution at half-time.

Payton could have pulled a goal back just past the hour but Doherty's excellent recovery tackle prevented him from testing Roberts.

The desperate home side pushed back Luton's wing-backs by throwing four men forward and Little went close on 63 minutes but skied over after waltzing through several tackles.

On 71 minutes, Davis reminded Hatters' fans of his long-range shooting power.

He belted a 35-yard piledriver against the underside of a well-beaten Roberts' crossbar.

Unfortunately, for the ex-Hatters' skipper, his spectacular effort bounced on the goal-line and out and was cleared by the visitors' defence.

Wright, without a goal in four games for Burnley, wasted his side's best chance of an avenue back into the game on 77 minutes when he side-footed woefully wide after being put clear through by Lenny Johnrose.

A minute later, Luton should have extended their lead when Gray's quick free-kick released Adam Locke for a clear run on goal.

Locke, in splendid isolation, shot straight at Crichton and Douglas fired the follow-up wide.



COMEBACK GOAL: Alan White struck in the first-half

big match line-up



RIVAL: Mitchell Thomas faced his old club Hatters.

● **BURNLEY:** Paul Crichton, Graham Branch (Paul Smith, 46 mins), Paul Cook (Andy Payton, 51 mins), Steve Davis, Lenny Johnrose, Glen Little, John Mullin (Micky Mellon, 46 mins), Mitchell Thomas, Ian Wright, Andy Cooke, Ian Cox. Other subs: Ronnie Jepson, Dean West.

● **HATTERS:** Ben Roberts, Emmerson Boyce, Gavin McGowan, Julian Watts, Gary

Doherty, Marvin Johnson, Phil Gray, Matthew Spring, Stuart Douglas (Andrew Fotiadis, 88 mins), Adam Locke, Alan White. Other subs: Liam George, Paul McLaren, Matthew Taylor, Nathan Abbey.

● **Referee:** Paul Danson (Leicestershire).

● **Attendance:** 12,080.

● **Luton top player:** Phil Gray.