

Luton make a point

LUTON TOWN delivered a small tonic for fans still depressed by the sale of Gary Doherty by turning in a spirited display against promotion-chasing Wigan.

The Hatters, with only pride left to play for, fully deserved their point from a 1-1 draw against a Latics side desperate for victory to enhance their bid for automatic promotion.

In fact, on another day, Lennie Lawrence's men could have beaten the high-flying Lancastrians. The home side dominated the first-half yet went in at half-time a goal behind courtesy of Neil Redfearn's penalty.

But in a strange 'game of two halves', Phil Gray headed in Luton's only serious chance of a second period that saw Wigan create the better opportunities.

The Hatters started very positively and, on 15 minutes, Marvin Johnson carried the ball out of defence before feeding Paul McLaren, whose stinging drive was pushed over by Wigan keeper Derek Stillie.

Corners from Matthew Taylor and Matthew Spring also caused the visitors countless problems in the first-half.

Stillie spared the blushes of his captain Carl Bradshaw to prevent an own goal and Stuart Douglas sent a glancing header just wide from successive inswinging Taylor corners. Then, Alan White and

matchfacts

LUTON TOWN 1 WIGAN ATHLETIC 1 By DAVE FLETT

● **HATTERS:** Ben Roberts, Alan White, Julian Watts, Marvin Johnson, Gavin McGowan, Paul McLaren, Matthew Spring, Adam Locke, Matthew Taylor, Phil Gray, Stuart Douglas (Liam George, 83). Subs not used: James Ayres, Jude Stirling, Andre Scarlett, Nathan Abbey.

● **WIGAN:** Derek Stillie, Terry Cooke (Alan McLoughlin, 46), Pat McGibbon,

Arjan de Zeeuw, Stuart Balmer, Carl Bradshaw, Kevin Nicholls (Roberto Martinez, 68), Neil Redfearn, Andy Liddell, Jeff Peron, Simon Haworth.

● **Shots on target:** Luton 6 Wigan 7.

● **Off target:** Luton 4 Wigan 6.

● **Corners:** Luton 11 Wigan 3.

● **Top Hatter:** White - concentration improving by the game.

McLaren both saw efforts cleared off the line by midfielder Jeff Peron from successive Spring corners.

Spring went close himself on 34 minutes but his firm half volley was saved by the busy Stillie.

At the other end, only Stuart Balmer had come close with a rising drive that whistled wide before Wigan were awarded a penalty.

Wales striker Simon Haworth outpaced the home defence and pushed the ball wide of Ben Roberts before tumbling dramatically over the on-loan keeper's outstretched body. Hatters boss Lawrence later confirmed that Roberts had admitted that he made contact and, with the ball running out of play, it was a costly collision.

Redfearn, who has scored several important penalties during his 17 years as a professional, made no mistake from the spot, sidefooting low to Roberts' right. Wigan boss John

Benson appreciated that his side were lucky to lead at the interval and responded by withdrawing winger Terry Cooke to bring on Irish international Alan McLoughlin in a bid to combat the Hatters' efficient three-man midfield of Adam Locke, McLaren and Spring.

McLoughlin could have made an instant impact but drilled an excellent opportunity into the sidenetting two minutes after the break. Ten minutes later, Gray put the home side back on level terms with his 11th goal of the season after good work by McLaren.

The Hatters midfielder showed nimble footwork and delivered a deep cross to the far post, where Gray rose brilliantly to head into the roof of Stillie's net.

Wigan went in search of a winning goal but were not confident enough to throw bodies forward, knowing they could leave Kenilworth Road with

nothing. The recalled Gavin McGowan rampaged down the right in a tireless and improved wing-back display, pushing back danger man Peron.

At the back, an assured Johnson and a focussed White were outstanding as Julian Watts battled for supremacy in the air with the talented Haworth.

Wigan were limited to two chances after Gray's equaliser. On 76 minutes, Redfearn volleyed over with the goal gaping and, with just three minutes left, Taylor cleared with Peron ready to pounce after a Roberto Martinez shot had squirmed out from under Roberts' body.

But defeat for the Hatters would have been completely undeserved on a historic date for the club, Monday's match marking the 12th anniversary of the famous 1988 Littlewoods Cup final victory over Arsenal.

Dreyer sets up Dons six-pointer



GOAL: Dreyer.

EX-HATTER John Dreyer scored his first goal since 1997 to hand Bradford City a Premiership lifeline.

Dreyer's goal gave City a 1-0 win at Sunderland on Monday.

They will now leapfrog Wimbledon and move out of the relegation zone if they can beat Egil Olsen's

Lennie's verdict

It was very important to bounce back in front of our own fans. The most important thing was to be committed and



not be seen feeling sorry for ourselves and that was the case. It was a travesty to go one down and anything less than a draw would have been an absolute miscarriage of justice. I'm well pleased with them.

strugglers on Sunday. Two other former Luton players will also have an interest in that game.

Kelvin Davis and Chris Willmott are both on the South London club's books but are unlikely to play.

Dreyer's old team-mate Scott Oakes has also been in the news. See page 63.