

# It's Springtime for the Hatters

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**A MATTHEW Spring penalty 17 minutes from time brought a well deserved first win under the new regime at Luton Town.**

Mark Stein won it when he turned and twisted in the box trying to make space for a shot and was clearly tripped by Richard Hughes.

The start of the game was delayed by 15 minutes due to traffic problems on the motorway and the Hatters suffered a log jam of their own – they just couldn't break their duck in the first half for the second game running despite having the lion's share of the game.

Twice Stein was through, firstly forcing a desperate save from the legs of Michael Menetrier then, with easily the best chance Town have created all season, he blazed over from close to the penalty spot.

## Limelight

Before all that however it was another ex-Bournemouth player, goalkeeper Mark Ovendale, who found himself in the limelight.

In a most disjointed half, with a high percentage of passes from both sides finding the opposition, Bournemouth suddenly produced a

**Luton 1 Bournemouth 0**

forward move and Stephen Purches' cross found the unmarked Claus Jorgensen six yards out.

Ovendale enhanced his increasing reputation in the Hatters goal with a brilliant reaction save.

That was a rare foray from the visitors who were mainly on the receiving end of some bright attacking moves with Andrew Fotiadis the star turn, winning a surprising number of headers against a big Bournemouth side. But the quality of crosses both from open play and corner kicks was poor and spoilt a number of good opportunities throughout the game.

## Glorious

Fotiadis made a glorious 40 yard run under extreme pressure to get clear of his marker but his low centre aimed towards an on-rushing Stein was cut out by Menetrier.

There were half chances early in the second half for Stein who shinned an intended overhead kick, and for Bournemouth's Chukky Eribenne who was narrowly wide with Ovendale scrambling across his goal when a mis-placed Liam George pass gave him an opening.

When Dean Brennan came on for

George he made an immediate impression. A dummy and one-two with Stein in the box put the youngster clean through but he pulled his shot wide.

Then Taylor and Brennan combined, but just as Spring was cocking his firing foot, Hughes got a tackle in to slide the ball clear.

Taylor was then Hatters' saviour in defence when Ovendale advanced to try to catch a Nicky Fenton free kick and didn't get near it. Big Steve Fletcher headed toward the open goal only for the Luton full back to appear from nowhere to head over his own crossbar from right underneath it.

But the Town were doing most of the attacking and eventually the visitors defence cracked. Hughes sent Stein crashing to the floor in the penalty area and Matthew Spring stepped up to comprehensively bury a powerful spot kick low past Menetrier. And although there was a nailbiting last 17 minutes for the Kenilworth Road faithful, Luton ran out the clock with few real alarms.

**Ovendale, Boyce, Watts, McLaren, Fraser, Taylor, Spring, Holmes, (Locke 86), George (Brennan 57), Stein, Fotiadis. Subs not used Kandol, Stirling, Abbey.**

**Attendance 5,221**



■ ABOVE: Liam George gets away from his marker in Luton's welcome win over Bournemouth  
BELOW: Mark Stein fires in a left foot drive



## Second thoughts

RICKY HILL has had second thoughts about his scathing criticism of his team after Tuesday's 0-0 draw with Peterborough in the Worthington Cup.

"Perhaps I was a little harsh in the heat of the moment after the game," said the Luton boss. "My words were in disappointment because having been warned what Peterborough would do, the players did not take that on board and we definitely didn't play as well in the second half as a result."

"There were positive signs on Tuesday and the clean sheet did our confidence good, but I am concerned about our approach play in the last third of the pitch. There were signs that things were coming together, but it's goals that count. We have got into good areas but we haven't been able to finish."

"I have been chasing a Nationwide Division One striker, but his manager refuses to let him go and I was let down this week when I went to look at another and he didn't play. I will definitely not be taking anyone on loan. We would prefer to buy someone who will be here for two or three years, but we are back to square one in our search."

"So we are looking at all the permutations within the club to see who blends best with who. Dean Brennan has come on for 10 minutes or so and looked bright, but can he do that from the start? I have added Tresor Kandol to the first team squad."

"He has played well and scored in the reserves and seems to have something about him. Putting him in will give his confidence a boost and is a reward for getting down to training. He has been conscientious, coming in mornings and afternoons training with John Moore and

there is a noticeable difference in his attitude around the place."

"As far as Wycombe are concerned we have to go there tomorrow, set out our stall and compete. Laurie Sanchez has got them playing a mixture of Wimbledon long ball style and through midfield. His sides are always competitive and very strong, but we did well there last season and we can take heart from our away performances at Wigan and at Grimsby and Hull in pre-season."

"Stuart Douglas is about back to full fitness and will start training with the squad this week. Gavin McGowan's X-ray is clear, but he is still feeling a niggle in that ankle and that has kept him out since the Bromley friendly five weeks ago."

"Marvin Johnson could be back this week, but we want to make sure his hamstring is absolutely 100 per cent before we play him again."

"We are at Rotherham on Saturday and they had a great season last year. When I was at Sheffield Wednesday I saw them a few times and Ronnie Moore has built a great team. Millmoor is a nice ground with a lovely pitch, but it is a difficult place to get a result."

One of Hill's old team-mates could finally be joining the club after having been mooted as a possible addition to the coaching staff since Hill took over.

Brian Stein has been having talks with chairman Mike Watson-Challis about working for him again after serving the former Baldock Town owner as team manager in the past.

"It's a question of nailing down a job description that suits both Brian and the club," said Hill. "At the moment we don't have any vacancies on the direct coaching staff, but Brian has qualities that can help the club in several areas."



■ Brilliant save: Mark Ovendale tips over from Claus Jorgensen