

Destroyer Phillips!

England striker is too hot for Hatters

SUNDERLAND striker Kevin Phillips sent England manager Kevin Keegan a timely reminder of his talent with a devastating display that helped Sunderland beat the Hatters 3-0 last night.

Phillips is hoping to be involved in England's forthcoming World Cup qualifier against Germany and, on this form, he could be worth a starting place.

The former Baldock Town striker scored one and was the focal point of Sunderland's two other goals in this Worthington Cup second round, first leg clash.

And Hatters' keeper Mark Ovendale had to be at his very best to prevent Phillips adding to his individual tally on the night.

Sunderland boss Peter Reid rested eight players from the side that beat Derby 2-1 on Saturday.

England striker Phillips, first choice goalkeeper Thomas Sorensen and centre-half Darren Williams were the three players to retain their places from the Premiership match.

Ricky Hill made two personnel changes, with Andre Scarlett and Stuart Fraser coming in for Adam Locke and Jude Stirling.

Fraser played on the right-hand side of a five-man defence, with Scarlett joining Matthew Spring and Peter Holmes in a young three-man midfield, which lacked skipper Paul McLaren, who was



**Sunderland 3
Luton Town 0**

**Dave Flett on
last night's
Stadium of
Light game**

moved to the back. Luton worked hard mentally and physically to match their top-flight opponents in an intriguing first-half, with a livewire Phillips posing the only threat to Mark Ovendale's goal.

In fact, Mark Stein could have opened the scoring after just 51 seconds, but Sorensen pulled off a brilliant reflex save after the Hatters' striker had slipped in behind a sleeping Sunderland defence.

Tresor Kandol also headed a Fraser cross wide on 16 minutes and Scarlett's ferocious 25-yard drive from a half-cleared corner whistled past Sorensen's upright five minutes later.

At the other end, Phillips was denied twice in three minutes by

Ovendale. First the ex-Watford forward had his firm header turned behind at the near post by Ovendale on 10 minutes and then the Hatters' keeper spread himself well to save after Phillips had escaped the attention of Julian Watts and burst clear on goal.

Phillips also went close on 31 minutes, turning swiftly before firing a volley inches wide, and tested Ovendale again shortly afterwards with a side-footed effort.

After the break, Phillips continued to stamp his international class on the match and showed tremendous spring on 48 minutes to outjump the Hatters' defence, only for his header to clear Ovendale's crossbar.

But it was the Hatters who should have taken the lead two minutes later. Matthew Taylor's corner travelled across the face of Sunderland's goal but an unmarked McLaren missed the target from three yards out.

Seconds later the visitors were punished for McLaren's miss when John Oster gave Sunderland the lead.

Phillips was again instrumental in the goal, meeting Eric Roy's cross with a snap-shot that Ovendale could only beat out to Oster, who tapped into the unguarded net.

On 61 minutes Phillips, inevitably, doubled the home side's lead on the night with a stylish goal.

Roy was the provider once more, slipping a brilliant pass inside the Hatters' defence for Phillips, who tricked Boyce before coolly slotting the ball into Ovendale's bottom corner.

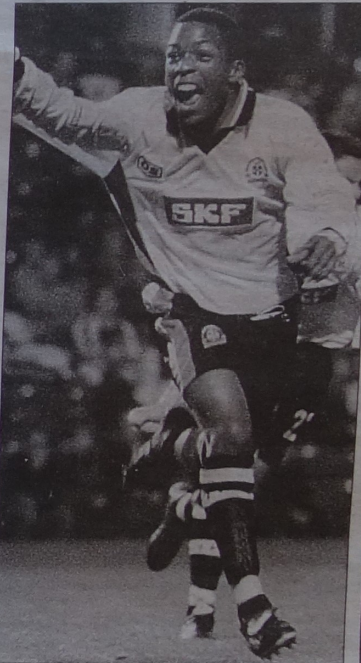
On 69 minutes, Luton manager Hill replaced hard-working front two Stein and Kandol with Liam George and Peter Thomson in the quest for an away goal to take into next Tuesday's second leg.

It nearly worked when Thomson released George on 77 minutes with a clever cushioned head but his striking partner miscued his shot and failed to trouble Sorensen.

At the other end Ovendale produced another fine save to keep out Paul Thirlwell's low drive after a poorly-defended corner.

Thirlwell got on the scoresheet to grab Sunderland's third on 86 minutes when Ovendale suffered the poorest of luck.

The Hatters' keeper reacted superbly to keep out another Phillips' piledriver, but the ball bounced into the visitors' net off a very fortunate Thirlwell.



SO CLOSE: Andre Scarlett's ferocious drive whistled past the Sunderland goal.

Win tickets for Tuesday's second leg

YOUR football-loving *News-Gazette* has two pairs of tickets for next week's Worthington Cup second round, second leg match against Sunderland up for grabs.

The Premiership club come to Kenilworth Road on Tuesday - and you could be there to see the big game FREE.



The Worthington Cup is the only knockout competition open exclusively to all the 92 professional clubs in England and Wales and provides an important route

into Europe. This season's winners will gain a place in the UEFA Cup, an honour currently being enjoyed by Worthington Cup holders Leicester City.

To stand a chance of winning a pair of tickets for Tuesday all you have to do is answer this easy question: **What is the name of**

Sunderland's ground?

Send your answer on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope with your name, address and telephone number, to: Hatters Tickets Competition, Sports Desk, *News-Gazette*, Media House, 39 Upper George Street, Luton LU1 2RD. Entries must arrive by first post Friday.

big match line-up

● **SUNDERLAND:** Thomas Sorensen, Mark Maley (sub Carsten Frowdgaard, 35 mins), Darren Holloway (sub George McCartney, 46 mins), Eric Roy, Darren Williams, Paul Butler, Tom Peeters, Paul Thirlwell, John Oster, Kevin Phillips, Neil Wainwright. Other subs: Jürgen Macho, Brendan McGill, Thomas Butler.

● **UTON:** Mark Ovendale, Stuart

Fraser, Julian Watts, Paul McLaren, Emmerson Boyce, Matthew Spring, Matthew Taylor, Peter Holmes, Andre Scarlett, Mark Stein (sub Liam George, 69 mins), Tresor Kandol (sub Peter Thomson, 69 mins). Other subs: Nathan Abbey (gk), Dean Brennan, Jude Stirling.

● **Referee:** M Cowburn (Blackpool).
● **Attendance:** 24,668.
● **Top Hatter:** Mark Ovendale.