

Douglas has 'em in a Stu

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Luton Town 3
Brentford 1

STRIKER Stuart Douglas made a dream return as the Hatters earned their first win in 14 games with a superb performance.

They hit the Bees with a triple whammy in 23 pulsating first half minutes and the Londoners never recovered.

After missing two golden chances, Douglas scored one after 16 minutes via a post, another after working a one-two with Mark Stein, and Matthew Spring notched the third from the penalty spot.

Brentford, in truth were never in the game but their in-form striker Andy Scott scored their consolation goal with 18 minutes to play, his ninth in 11 games, when the town defence went to sleep.

Included in the squad for this first time this term after suffering a hamstring tear in Luton's first pre season game, Douglas was preferred up front to top scorer Tresor Kandol.

And what a different the 22-year-old made.

Luton's reshaped attack burst into life in the 11th minute when Douglas's pace took him away from the Bees defence and onto Liam George's great through ball.

He placed it carefully past Olafur Gottskalksson but past the far post.

Seconds later, Matthew Taylor's pinpoint cross was nodded on by Stein to an unmarked Douglas once again but his touch let him down and another good chance went begging.

The home side had the ball in the net when Taylor headed Stein's cross

goalward. Liam George helped it into the net only for it to be controversially ruled out by a dubious offside decision.

Douglas made amends for earlier transgressions in the 16th minute, when he made another quick forward burst through the inside right channel.

Stein found him well and Douglas this time managed to knock it home via the back post.

Douglas doubled his tally when goalkeeper Nathan Abbey's long upfield kick put the visitors defence in trouble.

He worked a one-two with Stein before forcing the ball over the 'keeper.

Stein had an important hand in the Hatters third goal as well.

He got in front of his marker Ivar Ingimarsson and screamed for the ball as he raced into space.

Taylor duly delivered right into his stride and Ingimarsson comprehensively chopped him down from behind.

Up stepped Matthew Spring to send the Iceland international 'keeper the wrong way to give the town undreamed of riches – a three goal lead.

Douglas limped off a minute before the break but the hamstring twinge was to his other leg, and hopefully not too serious.

The town came out determined to give nothing away after the interval.

George made a chance for Stein that he headed over the bar, and then the little Irish Under-21 international forced a great save from Gottskalksson himself from an excellently worked free-kick move.

Peter Holmes sent a flashing drive just off target before Brentford's two Icelanders Ingimarsson and Gottskalksson suffered a breakdown of communication that almost brought a fourth goal for the town.

After an awful defensive mix-up the keeper kicked the ball inches wide in his attempt to clear the danger.

A dreadful lapse in the town defence then presented Brentford with a their goal.

Caught square, the Hatters defence left Scott totally alone on the Brentford left, and he looked fully confident in taking the ball on and giving Abbey no chance with his shot.

Luton Town: Abbey, McLaren, Locke (Breitenfelder 18), Boyce, Watts, Taylor, Holmes, Spring, George (Brennan 86), Douglas (Thomson 44), Stein. Subs not used Kandol, Ovendale.

Town Man of the Match: Liam George.

Attendance: 5,382.

■ On the slide: Mark Stein goes sprawling and Brentford go 3-0 down from the penalty spot

Ramsay pays the penalty

ASSISTANT manager Chris Ramsay has become the first casualty of Luton Town's terrible start to the season.

He left the club by mutual consent on Wednesday and Ricky Hill will now assume total responsibility for the first team, assisted by Lil Fucchillo on a day-to-day basis.

Hill said: "I am very disappointed to see a good friend and great coach go, but we both felt we weren't able to turn things round as quickly as we wanted.

"I don't see it as Chris carrying the can for poor results, but we haven't made the changes we perhaps should have done.

"We have taken a course of action we felt was best. Chris can walk away with his head held high."

Hill insisted that Luton's directors were not involved in the decision.

"Lil Fuccillo will be helping me on match days and possibly one or two days during the week. His main role hasn't changed and he will continue to co-ordinate the scouting, but we do not have an assistant manager right now. I am pleased still to be here and I am working night and day to improve our position.

"At the end of the day it is about the players and their performance on the field. We have just been knocked back for two loan signings.

"Two managers have been on the phone to apologise for that, but the players we want do not see the Second Division as a showcase for the advancement of their careers.

"We are down to the bare bones

again, but we should see the long term injuries clear up for next week and that will give the squad a boost."

The Luton boss has rejected defender Jose Saavadra, who was recommended by former Hatters favourite Raddy Antic, but he does hope that Norwegian Kent Karlson's financial requirements can be met.

Karlson played in a behind-closed-doors friendly at QPR a fortnight ago and impressed as the sort of commanding figure and centre back that Hill is seeking.

The decision to drop the expensive Mark Ovendale for the match at Oxford after a poor game at Cambridge was a brave one and hopefully showed the rest of the players that reputation alone will not guarantee a place in the team.



■ He's back! Stuart Douglas milks the applause after scoring his second goal on his return to the side

