

CITY (3-5-2)

Steve Phillips – STAR MAN 8

Louis Carey – Another highly-competent display in City's back three 6

Keith Millen – A tower of strength, he had a real battle with Douglas in the first half 6

Matt Hill – Made to work hard by Luton's attackers, he was not found wanting 6

Scott Murray – A creative force, he scored one goal and helped make two others 7

Brian Tinnion – His vision and experience laid the foundations for victory 7

Simon Clist – His tackling and passing were a feature of City's midfield domination 6

Aaron Brown – Gave the ball away on occasions but worked tremendously hard 5

Mickey Bell – Stout in defence, he attacked whenever possible and took his goal well 6

Tony Thorpe – Worked hard in difficult conditions and had a hand in the first goal 5

Lee Peacock – Held the ball up well and thoroughly deserved his goal 6

Ratings are compiled on the assumption that a professional footballer earning his money is worth a five. The marks are a reflection of the opinion of our reporter at the match.

Star Man

STEVE PHILLIPS

A mature performance. His saves in the first half kept City in the game



Substitutions

Joe Burnell (for Brown, 52 mins) 6
Peter Beadle (for Thorpe, 60 mins) 5
Ivan Tistimetanu (for Tinnion, 88 mins)
Not used: Kevin Amankwaah, Tony Malessa

Opposition file

Luton (3-5-2)

Nathan Abbey 5
Kent Karlsen 5
Emmerson Boyce 6
Paul McLaren 5
Petri Helin 7
Matthew Spring 5
Matthew Taylor 6
Gavin McGowan 6
Liam George 7
Stuart Douglas 7
Mark Stein 6

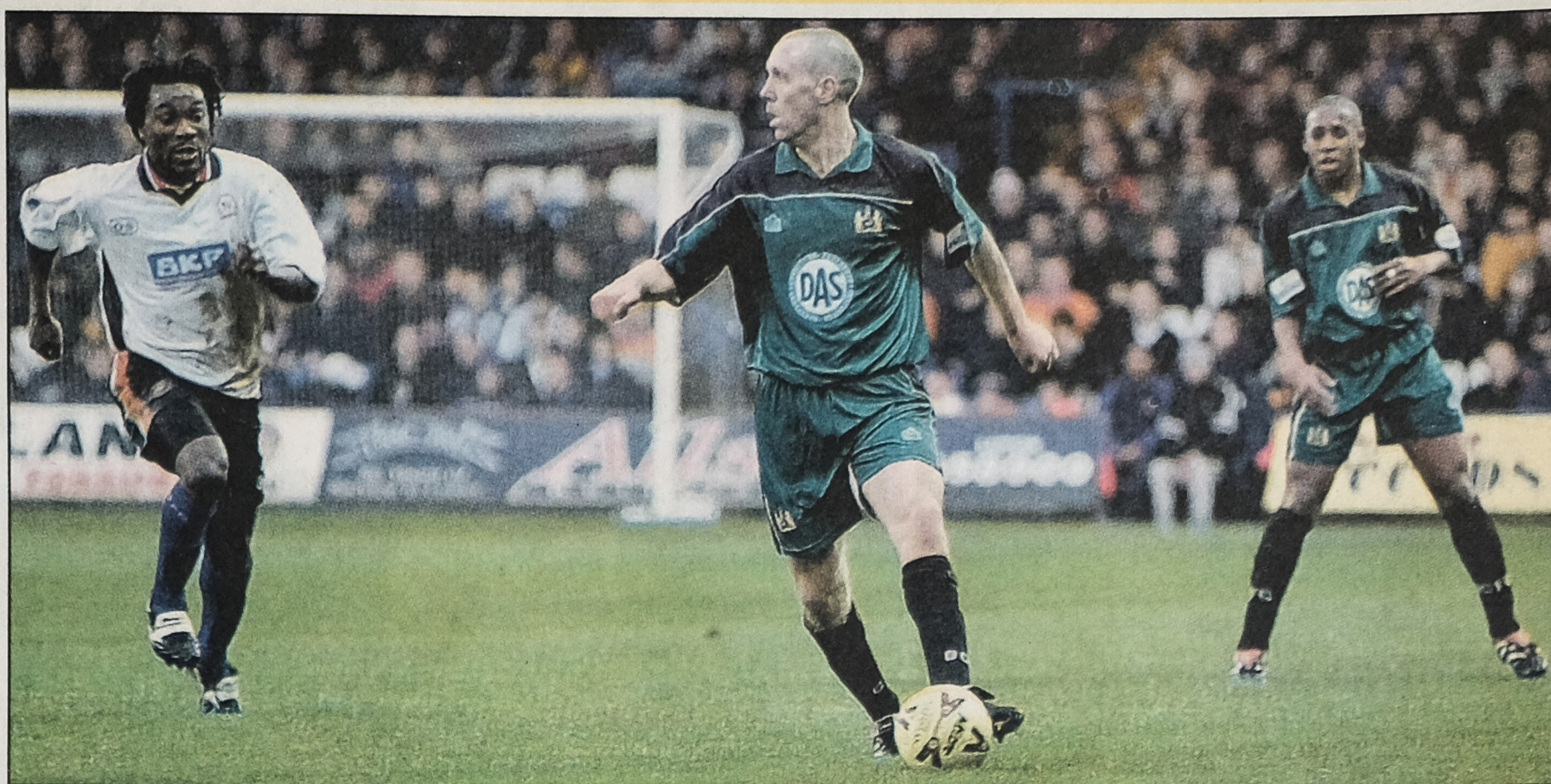
Substitutions

Andrew Fotiadis (for Douglas, 45 mins) 5
Rocky Baptiste (for Stein, 74 mins)
Not used: Mark Ovendale, Adam Locke, Julian Watts

Who's next?

NOVEMBER
18 Chesterfield (FA Cup) (A)
25 Wigan (H)
DECEMBER
2 Bury (H)

Luton Town 0 Bristol City 3 Nationwide League Division Two, Kenilworth Road, Nov 11, 2000



Mark of the man:
City's playmaker Brian Tinnion seems to have made himself time and space as usual to assess his options before using that cultured left foot

Flying Phillips paves way for City triumph

THIS game will be remembered for a swashbuckling second-half performance from a City side which displayed ruthless finishing.

A three-goal salvo in the space of 12 minutes sealed an ultimately comfortable victory for the visitors and increased the pressure on under-fire Hatters manager Ricky Hill.

Talk among travelling supporters was of predatory strikes from Scott Murray, Lee Peacock and Mickey Bell, and powerful displays from Simon Clist and Brian Tinnion. Just how many will recall the part played by Steve Phillips is open to debate.

His role may have been reduced to that of a detached onlooker after the interval, but City's young goalkeeper undoubtedly kept his side in the game in a first half which ought to persuade Luton's directors and fans to give their manager more time.

Desperate to improve upon a record of just two wins in 17 games, the Hatters penned City back into their own half for long periods, carving out enough chances to have won the game several times over.

Douglas ensured Keith Millen endured a torrid first 45 minutes, while Louis Carey and Matt Hill required eyes in the backs of their heads to keep tabs on elusive former Chelsea striker Mark Stein and partner-in-crime Liam George, who proved adept at exploiting the space behind Luton's front two.

Yet Phillips stood like a rock between his team and disaster, pulling off a series of notable saves to thwart a lively home attack spearheaded by the bustling Stuart Douglas.

He was in the right place at the right time to gather an Emmerson Boyce header in the opening minute and then made two memorable stops to keep out efforts from George.

But he reserved his best save for the 35th

minute when instinctive reactions enabled him to somehow get a hand to Stein's rasping goalbound drive.

Danny Wilson's assessment of his goalkeeper's performance was spot-on. "It was a fabulous save and Steve really did keep us in the game in the first half," admitted City's manager.

"He's growing in confidence with every clean sheet he keeps and is showing a greater maturity. He's become a competent Second Division goalkeeper and he definitely won us this game."

Luton were unable to make the breakthrough their pressure warranted. Douglas limped off with a recurrence of an old hamstring injury shortly before half-time and the home side faded as an attacking force thereafter.

City, infused with the self-belief borne of a run of nine games without defeat, weathered the storm and then proceeded to take the game by the scruff of the neck.

They required just 10 second-half minutes to take the lead. Tony Thorpe's blocked shot rebounded to Murray, who picked his spot to beat a defender on the line from 10 yards and register the fifth goal in what is rapidly becoming a landmark campaign for the little Scot.

"That first goal was absolutely vital, a real turning point," insisted Wilson. "I was not sure whether Luton could play as well again in the second half, but I knew we could do better."

"We counter-attacked with real pace and the wing-backs demonstrated just how dangerous they can be when they get forward and both took their goals well."

The embodiment of perpetual motion, Murray's direct running took him into areas where he could inflict maximum damage and, having put City in front, he then had a hand in the two further goals.

When he received Clist's astute pass on the edge of the penalty area in the 63rd minute, he ensured

the ball found its way to Peacock on the far post and the big striker executed a deft finish to net his first away goal for the club.

Murray and Peacock then combined to create a magnificent third goal for Bell, crossing and helping the ball on respectively for the dashing wing-back to finish with a lethal left-foot volley from just inside the penalty area.

In the space of 12 minutes, Luton's optimism had been crushed, their hopes of averting an impending crisis lost without trace.

City manager Wilson, a Luton player in the late 1980s, expressed sympathy and no little understanding for Hatters boss Hill.

"He just has to keep focussed and stick to the things he believes in," said Wilson, who still has painful memories of ultimately unsuccessful spells in charge of Barnsley and Sheffield Wednesday.

"It's a difficult situation for Ricky, but the way his team played against us, I'm sure they'll not go down. I just told him to keep going – there was no way we were three goals better than them."

"But that's typical of football in that things always seem to go against you when you're down near the bottom."

"The only difference in the end was that we took our chances and they missed theirs."

Post Verdict

City rode their luck in the first half, but emerged after the interval with all guns blazing to claim a comprehensive victory in some style.

Andy Stockhausen



Match facts

6	SHOTS ON TARGET:	4
3	SHOTS OFF TARGET:	6
6	CORNERS:	4
11	FOULS CONCEDED:	10
2	OFFSIDES:	4
ATTENDANCE: 6,595		
Atmosphere Entertainment		
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		

Bookings

LUTON	CITY
McGowan (foul, 85 mins)	Bell (dissent, 74 mins)
Sendings-off	
None	

Goals

LUTON	CITY
None	Murray (55 mins) Peacock (63 mins) Bell (67 mins)
Referee	
MARK COOPER – consistent	