Saturday Live

LUTON TOWN 0 BRISTOL CITY 3

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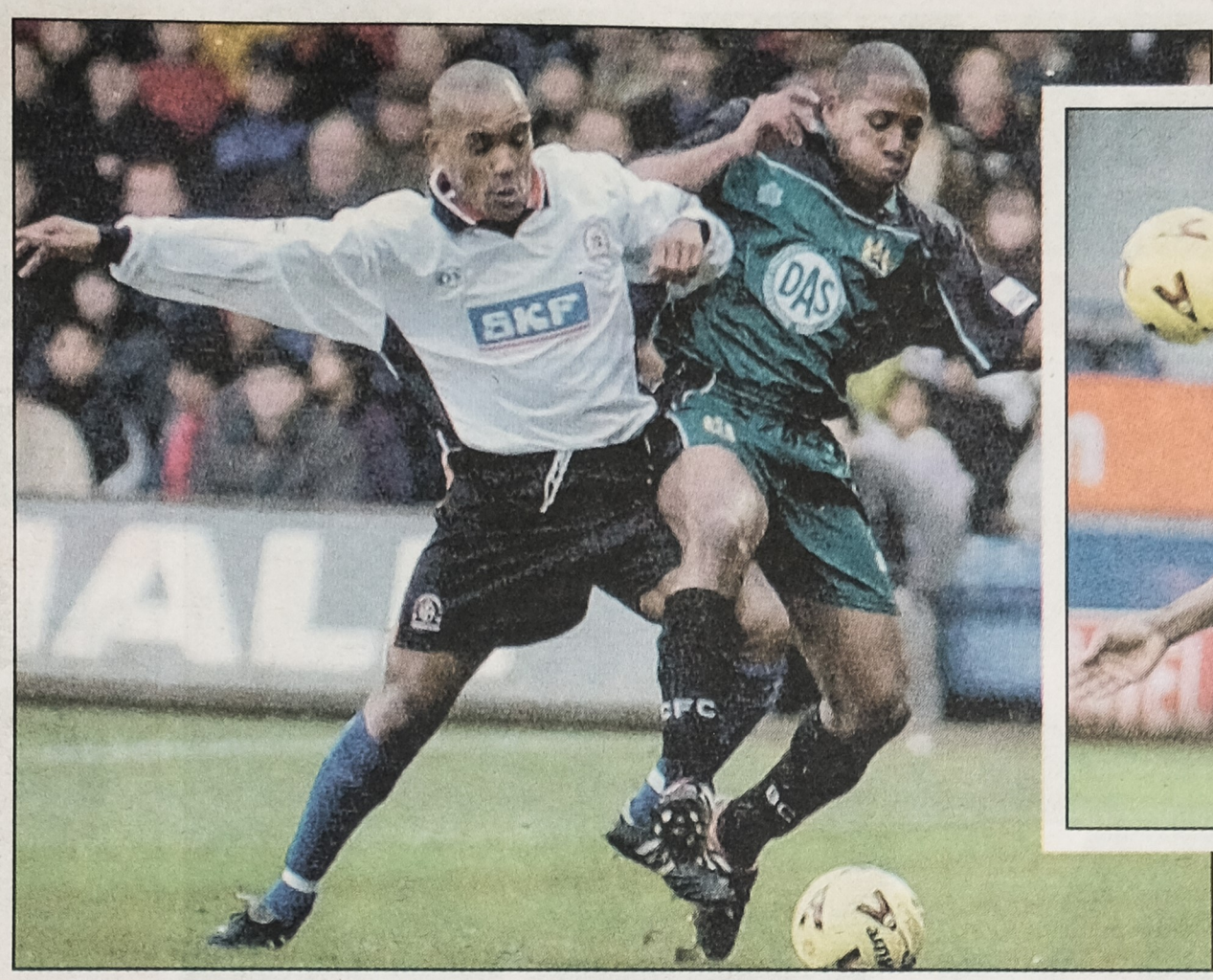
Nationwide Division Two



At the double: Matt Hill gets into the thick of it against Luton's Mark Stein and (inset) Matthew Spring

HATS OFF TO CITY AS THREE GOALS TOPPLE THE HATTERS

Team Check

LUTON TOWN

16	Nathan Abbey
30	Petri Helin
29	Kent Karlsen
2	Gavin McGowan
17	Emmerson Boyce
15	Matthew Taylor
8	Paul McLaren (capt)
4	Matthew Spring
11	Liam George
9	Stuart Douglas
10	Mark Stein
	SUBSTITUTES
5	Julian Watts
14	Andrew Fotiadis
12	Adam Locke
28	Rocky Baptiste
27	Kevin Amankwaah

BRISTOL CITY

14	Steve Phillips
5	Keith Millan (capt)
2	Louis Carey
24	Matt Hill
7	Scott Murray
3	Mickey Bell
11	Brian Tinnion
31	Simon Clist
22	Aaron Brown
10	Tony Thorpe
16	Lee Peacock
	SUBSTITUTES
41	Anthony Malessa
9	Peter Beadle
23	Joe Burnell
21	Ivan Tistimetanu
27	Kevin Amankwaah

Attendance:
6,595

Referee:
Mark Cooper

By **ANDY STOCKHAUSEN**
at Kenilworth Road

BRISTOL City extended their unbeaten run to 12 games with this impressive victory over relegation-threatened Luton Town.

The game was decided in a devastating 12-minute spell mid-way through the second half in which the visitors scored three times.

Scott Murray netted his fifth goal of the season to break the deadlock after 55 minutes and Lee Peacock doubled the lead eight minutes later.

Mickey Bell lashed in City's third goal in the 67th minute to seal a convincing victory in style.

City arrived at Kenilworth Road on the back of a run which had seen them climb into the top half of the table. Goalkeeper Steve Phillips had recovered from a shoulder injury and manager Danny Wilson was able to name the same starting line-up which beat Notts County 4-0 last week.

In contrast, Luton had won only twice all season and Ricky Hill's injury-ravaged squad was precariously poised just one place off the foot of the Second Division.

Luton began in positive fashion and forced a corner on the left side in the opening minute.

City defenders were unable to clear the danger and Stuart Douglas's header from six yards out was gathered at the second attempt by the sprawling Phillips.

City responded almost immediately when Brian Tinnion's clever backheel put Mickey Bell in behind the Luton defence. His cross was cleared for a corner, from which giant central defender Keith Millan hammered the ball into the net only for referee Mark Cooper to roll the effort out for an infringement.

City were forced to endure another anxious moment when Douglas broke free on the right and his danger cross-cum-shot was pushed away by Phillips and Matt Hill cleared at the expense of a corner.

City's defenders then again struggled from the set piece and Kent Karlsen's header flew inches wide of the far post with the goal at his mercy.

Luton continued to press and when another Matthew Taylor corner was only partially cleared McGowan sent his curling shot skidding wide of the target.

City rallied and a period of sustained pressure saw them carve out their best opening of the game so far after 11 minutes. Tony Thorpe, Brian Tinnion and wing-back Scott Murray combined to create an opening for Aaron Brown whose close-range shot flew over the bar to the astonishment of visiting fans packed behind the goal. However, his effort would not have counted had it have gone in because of an off-side decision.

Having established a foothold in midfield, City were beginning to pass the ball to good effect with Simon Clist and the busy Tinnion at the heart of their best moments. The visitors almost unlocked Luton's defence on 20-minutes when Mickey Bell ran on to Tinnion's intelligent through ball. Unfortunately for the City wing-back, the ball skidded off a surface made heavy with rain and ran away from him.

Bell had better luck when a shooting opportunity presented itself and his rasping drive from just outside the penalty area forced an athletic save from the Hatters' keeper Nathan Abbey.

The home fans came to life when the lively Taylor burst into life on the left and aimed a centre towards former Chelsea striker Mark Stein. But the impressive Millan proved too strong in the air and headed clear.

City midfielder Brown tested Abbey with a long-range shot, but City were soon forced on the back foot and conceded a free kick 25-yards from goal in a central position. Matt Spring rolled the ball into the path of Taylor whose shot cannoned off City's wall to safety.

City again had to be alert when McGowan tried to pick out Douglas with a swirling centre which required centre-back Louis Carey to intercept.

Encouraged by this, Luton again broke forward and when Stein cut inside Carey and shot from just inside the penalty box Phillips had to make a smart save.

City's keeper was again in action moments later, going down to his right to collect a Liam George effort.

Finnish international Petri Helin was becoming increasingly influential in midfield when his probing pass found George in space on the left-hand side of the 18-yard box. His shot flashed just wide of goal.

City survived the onslaught and came back with an attacking move of their own which ended when Thorpe's attempt to trick his way into the penalty area was thwarted by Emmerson Boyce.

Playing against his former club, Thorpe was struggling to find space in and around the 18-yard box and both he and strike partner Peacock were being closely policed by Luton's three central defenders.

Luton suffered a major blow when dangerous front man Douglas was forced to limp out of the action moments before half-time with a recurrence of an old hamstring injury. He was replaced by Andrew Fotiadis who took on the role of striker alongside Stein.

HALF-TIME:
LUTON 0
CITY 0

THE second half began with Luton pressing forward and Phillips was forced to come off his line and collect when Stein aimed a cross towards George. Referee Cooper called a temporary halt to proceedings when Brown went into a challenge with two Luton players only to end up flat on his back and writhing in agony. But after treatment, the City man was able to continue, albeit with a limp.

City boss Wilson decided to make a change eight minutes into the second half when it became clear Brown could not continue. The Bristolian limped off to be replaced by fellow Youth Team product Joe Burnell.

Torrential rain was making for difficult playing conditions and City's defenders were caught out when Taylor surged down the left flank and sent over a telling cross towards the penalty spot where Matt Hill had to head over at the expense of a corner.

But City went ahead with their first meaningful attack of the half in the 55th minute.

Thorpe latched on to a long clearance only to see his shot blocked by Luton keeper Abbey. Boyce had an opportunity to clear the ball but failed to do so, and **MURRAY** nipped in to shoot past a Luton defender and into the net from 10-yards to put City in front.

Emboldened by their goal City threw men forward straight from the restart only for Bell to concede a free kick in a challenge which forced him from the field to receive treatment.

Having seen his side take the lead, Wilson decided to withdraw Thorpe in favour of Peter Beadle, who was pushed up front alongside Lee Peacock.

No sooner had Beadle arrived than City were 2-0 ahead. Clist played the ball into the Luton penalty area and when Murray failed to wriggle free, **PEACOCK** found himself in possession at the far post with only Abbey to beat. The striker executed a neat chip to send the ball over Abbey and into the net for his first away goal of the season.

City extended their lead in the 67th minute with a clinical move and finish. Murray delivered a pin-point cross from the right wing which was helped on by Peacock into the path of the onrushing **BELL** who needed no second invitation to plant a sweet left-foot shot across Abbey and inside the far post.

Hatters' fans were now resigned to a sixth home defeat of the season and irate supporters vented their spleen on the board of directors.

In an attempt to inject new life blood into his attack, Hill replaced the tiring Stein with Rocky Baptiste 16 minutes from time. The otherwise impressive Bell had moments earlier blotted his copybook by earning a yellow card for dissent. Events went from bad to worse for Luton when McGowan was booked five minutes from time after up-ending Bell. Wilson withdrew the tireless Tinnion in the 88th minute, sending Ivan Tistimetanu on in his place to shore up the centre of midfield.

● Bristol City under-17s drew 0-0 at home to Crystal Palace in the FA Academy League. The under-19s drew 2-2 at Fulham.

Two-page report, reaction, match facts and stats from Kenilworth Road in Monday's Post