

ROVERS (3-5-2)
Scott Howie — Left exposed for both goals, otherwise another solid performance **6**
Che Wilson — At fault for Luton's opener, but put it behind him and kept going **6**
Andy Thomson — Did well going forward and looked imposing at the back **7**
Steve Foster — Another impressive display. His consistency makes him a key man in defence **7**
Mike Trought — Looks more and more at home. It's going to be hard to dislodge him **7**
Scott Jones — He did well again in the second-choice position. Used the ball well **7**
Kevin Gall — His pace on the break always made him a threat. Took his goal well **7**
Ronnie Mauge — Hustled and hustled to help Rovers gain the upperhand in midfield **7**
David Hillier — He can't stop scoring! Prompted well with some classy distribution **7**
Nathan Ellington — **STAR MAN 8**
Martin Cameron — Should have scored at least one. Off the pace at times, but battled hard throughout **5**
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
Nathan Ellington — Should have had his first hat-trick but scored one and made another

Substitutions
David Gilroy (for Cameron, 90 mins)
Not used: Alvin Bubb, Mark Foran, David Pritchard, Ryan Clarke

Opposition file
Luton Town (3-5-2)
Carl Emberson **6**
Ian Hillier **6**
Emmerson Boyce **5**
Marvin Johnson **5**
Jude Stirling **7**
Matthew Taylor **7**
Paul Hughes **5**
Adam Locke **5**
Kevin Nicholls **6**
Carl Griffiths **5**
Steve Howard **5**

Substitutions
Adrian Forbes (for Griffiths, 46 mins) 6
Lee Mansell (for Hughes, 46 mins) 6
Stuart Douglas (for Ian Hillier, 77 mins)
Not used: Richard Dryden, Mark Ovendale

Who's next?
AUGUST (A)
27 Darlington
SEPTEMBER (H)
1 Shrewsbury (A)
8 Leyton Orient (H)
15 Lincoln (A)
*week beginning Sep 10, Birmingham City (H), Worthington Cup second round

Goal 1: Ellington fires home . . . Goal 2: Hillier leaves the keeper stranded . . . Goal 3: Gall strikes again



Why hero Gall holds the key for Gerry



Look who's scored again: Rovers' midfield man David Hillier celebrates his second goal in successive games with team-mate Nathan Ellington

GERRY Francis labelled Kevin Gall his key man as Rovers unlocked the door at the top of the Third Division.

The former Newcastle United youngster scored the goal that was to end Luton's 100 per cent record in a compelling game that Rovers dominated – but never managed to kill off.

That was down to their own wastefulness in front of goal and a couple of sloppy defensive blemishes in an otherwise impressive display.

There was much to admire in what was the Pirates' best display so far by some measure. "Kevin has great pace and energy but he's not really strong enough to play up front as an out-and-out centre-forward, although I have had a look at him there," said Francis.

"In the position he's playing for me, he gives us that real cutting edge with his ability to make runs and take people away. "He must be an absolute nightmare for opposition midfielders because his speed and stamina mean he's backward and forward at you all the time."

Gall makes no secret of the fact he still nurtures hopes of making it up front but acknowledges that the manager's decision to switch him has had its benefits.

"The position I'm in now means I don't have to play with my back to goal and can push forward, which is what I enjoy doing. It means I can be a threat to defenders because they are on the back foot," said Gall.

"Nathan Ellington showed really good anticipation to beat the keeper to the ball and lay it back for my goal. I thought I'd side-foot it rather than try and smash it and risk it going over the stand!"

Gall's 75th-minute strike, curled home from just inside the box, handed Rovers a two-goal cushion that was to prove crucial after they had failed to fully capitalise on a string of earlier chances.

Once the home side got on top after an even opening spell, they carved out enough opportunities to have been four or five goals clear by the interval.

Although Ellington's performance was at times irresistible, he had chances either side of the opening strike of the game, which came just after the half-hour mark.

It was the product of a well-executed move which saw Gall cut in from the right to feed Ellington, who had got ahead of his marker to steer the ball on at the near post.

"We've been working in training on getting in front of defenders at the near post and it paid off here," said Ellington.

The youngster twice saw the combined efforts of keeper Carl Emberson and the Hatters' defenders foil him as he latched on to through balls from David Hillier and Andy Thomson.

But it was Martin Cameron who was left rueing his luck from the two clearest openings of the first half, pulling one shot across goal from eight yards before volleying another attempt off target from similar distance.

By then, Luton were back in the game after Che Wilson's attempt to nod the ball back to keeper Scott Howie went awry and Matthew Taylor seized on the mistake, firing home inside the far post for a goal out of the blue.

It turned again when David Hillier conjured up his second goal in five days, although there was rather more uncertainty about this strike than the one

that crashed into Wycombe's net last Tuesday.

At first it appeared to have hit Cameron on the way in but the Scot later confirmed: "It came off a defender. If it had hit me, I'd have claimed it – don't worry about that!"

The eager Scot had one of those games when little went his way in front of the net, although he worked hard and won some useful headers.

He had his hand in Gall's goal, too, battling to the byline to send over a cross which looked to be destined for the keeper until Ellington intervened.

The warm applause as the Scot made a stoppage-time exit to be replaced by the promising David Gilroy at least showed the crowd had appreciated his effort, even if he hadn't exactly torn up any trees.

Luton, though, had set up a jittery last 10 minutes for home fans by seizing on hesitation in the Rovers' defence.

Stuart Douglas forced his way through and, as Howie advanced to smother, the ball broke loose to Lee Mansell, who promptly scooped it into the roof of the net.

Post Verdict
A THOROUGHLY entertaining clash but Rovers had enough chances to have won by a landslide. A couple of defensive slips made the game a lot edgier than it should have been.

Chris Swift



Causing a stir: Martin Cameron makes his presence felt among the Luton defence

IT'S YOUR SHOUT
A fan's view by Shaun Oldham, from Yate

Gas were always in control . . .
"I thought it was great! The way we let Luton's second goal in was a bit sloppy and made it a bit of an anxious finish but I always thought we had control of the game and Luton never really managed to contain us.
Nathan Ellington just looks different class and defenders don't know how to stop him.
Steve Foster had another good game too and he's been playing really well so far.
He's taken over the role Andy Tillson used to play for us because he's so reliable.
Martin Cameron is getting there but needs to up his pace a bit. I think it's taking a while because of the step-up from part-time football in Scotland and it's probably tougher down here.
I was impressed with Kevin Gall as well – but 'The Duke' would definitely be my man of the match.
Fair play to David Hillier as well – he hadn't scored for us in God knows how long . . . and then he gets two in a week!
We're top of the table and you can't really argue with that. I reckon we can stay there because I don't think there are going to be too many teams in this division who are going to trouble us."

Hillier: Can't stop scoring now

WE hope you enjoy It's Your Shout, the fans' feature which gives you the chance to air your opinion on Rovers matches. If you would like to be considered for this slot contact us:
By Post – Sports Desk, Evening Post, Temple Way, Old Market, Bristol, BS99 7HD.
By Fax – 0117 934 3575
By e-mail – esport@epp.co.uk
Don't forget there's another chance to air your views on any sporting issue in the Green 'Un every weekend, using the same methods of communication.

How they stand
Nationwide League Division Three

ROVERS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Southend	3	2	1	0	5	3	9
Rochdale	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
York	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Luton	3	2	0	1	1	4	4
Darlington	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Shrewsbury	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
Kidderminster	3	2	0	1	2	3	6
Hull	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Mansfield	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Rushden & Os	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
Lincoln City	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Hartlepool	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Swansea	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Halifax	3	1	1	1	4	6	3
Scunthorpe	3	1	0	2	5	9	3
Leyton Orient	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
Macclesfield	3	0	2	1	2	4	2
Carlisle	3	0	1	2	4	2	1
Cheltenham	3	0	1	2	4	6	1
Oxford Utd	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
Plymouth	3	0	1	2	2	8	1
Exeter	3	0	1	2	2	8	1
Torquay	3	0	0	3	0	5	0

Match facts

11	SHOTS ON TARGET:	8
10	SHOTS OFF TARGET:	2
8	CORNERS:	8
10	FOULS CONCEDED:	17
4	OFFSIDES:	2

ATTENDANCE: 9,057

Atmosphere

Entertainment

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Bookings

ROVERS	LUTON
Wilson (foul, 87 mins)	Boyce (foul, 84 mins)

Goals

ROVERS	LUTON
Ellington (30 mins), Hillier (64 mins), Gall (75 mins)	Taylor (42 mins), Mansell (81 mins)

Referee
CLIVE PENTON (Sussex) . . . excellent

Nogan and Proctor combine to give York the perfect lift

TERRY Dolan's York shot up the table with a 2-1 win over Leyton Orient at Bootham Crescent.

Lee Nogan put them in front four minutes before the interval and Michael Proctor doubled the lead on the hour. There were 15 minutes left when Aaron McLean scored a consolation for the Os.

Darlington, who were entertaining Bristol Rovers today, won the north-east derby after going a goal down to a Mark Tinkler strike for Hartlepool after 15 minutes. Brian Atkinson pulled one back for the Quakers and Darren Mellenby completed the scoring three minutes before half-time.

Title favourites Hull had to settle for a second successive 0-0 draw, with Carlisle unable to score for the third game on the trot.

Kidderminster left it late against bottom of the heap Torquay, Tony Bird's penalty giving them a 1-0 injury-time success while Mansfield's Wayne Corden did the same to give the Stags a 3-2 victory at Cheltenham.

Craig Disley scored twice before Julian Alsop did the same for Cheltenham and time was running out when Corden struck.

Swansea's good start ended with a 3-0 thrashing at Lincoln, Lee Thorpe (2) and Steve Holmes' penalty earning the Imps maximum points.

Scunthorpe followed two defeats with a 4-0 win at Exeter.

The Grecians were never in the hunt as Martin Carruthers scored twice and new recruits Carl Bradshaw and Kim Grant grabbed the others.

Rochdale won away for the second time on the trot, coming out on top 2-1 at Plymouth. A Simon Coleman own goal gave the Pilgrims the lead but Gary Jones and Paul Connor scored in each half to wrap up the points.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

ROVERS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Southend	3	2	1	0	5	3	9
Rochdale	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
York	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Luton	3	2	0	1	1	4	4
Darlington	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Shrewsbury	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
Kidderminster	3	2	0	1	2	3	6
Hull	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Mansfield	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Rushden & Os	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
Lincoln City	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Hartlepool	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Swansea	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Halifax	3	1	1	1	4	6	3
Scunthorpe	3	1	0	2	5	9	3
Leyton Orient	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
Macclesfield	3	0	2	1	2	4	2
Carlisle	3	0	1	2	4	2	1
Cheltenham	3	0	1	2	4	6	1
Oxford Utd	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
Plymouth	3	0	1	2	2	8	1
Exeter	3	0	1	2	2	8	1
Torquay	3	0	0	3	0	5	0