



HEADS UP: Action from last night's Luton v Lincoln game with new boy Chris Coyne (12) in the thick of it for the Hatters.

Coyne's misery

NEW boy Chris Coyne suffered a heart-breaking start to his Hatters' career when his late own goal cost Joe Kinnear's men victory against an average Lincoln side.

Coyne's unfortunate blunder cancelled out Aaron Skelton's first-half goal and earned Lincoln a 1-1 draw at Kenilworth Road last night.

The Australian B international, who had enjoyed a solid debut before his mistake, diverted a wayward shot from Peter Gain past a powerless Carl Emberson.

Gain's effort had been heading for the corner flag before Coyne's intervention and it was a huge blow for Luton, who were hoping to cement their position as early promotion pacesetters with maximum points.

Remarkably, Coyne's own goal was the third the Hatters have conceded this season already, with Lee Mansell and Emmerson Boyce the other culprits.

Hatters boss Joe Kinnear gave new signing Chris Coyne his debut in the heart of the home defence, alongside Russell Perrett.

Aaron Skelton was switched to the right-hand side of midfield and Adrian Forbes was dropped to the bench.

Stuart Douglas also returned to the starting line-up, replacing axed striker

Aussie gets own goal in Luton debut game



**LUTONTOWN 1
LINCOLN CITY 1**

**Dave Flett on
last night's
Kenilworth
Road match**

Steve Howard, and the versatile Ian Hillier filled in at left-back after Marvin Johnson broke down in the warm-up.

Lincoln included the Hatters' 1988 Littlewoods Cup hero Kingsley Black in their side.

Luton made a slick start to the match and Liam George embarked on an eighth minute run before cutting in from the right and sending a firm shot flashing wide.

Seconds later the lively George raided down the left and produced a perfect cross for Skelton to put the home team in front.

The Hatters' captain charged into the penalty box to meet George's centre and planted a fine header past the helpless Alan Marriott.

Hillier almost surprised Marriott on 14 minutes when his speculative 35-yard

drive skidded off the greasy surface and was scrambled behind for a corner by the Imps' keeper.

Black then rolled back the years and reminded Hatters' fans of his wing skill by cutting inside Hillier and unleashing a dipping shot that Carl Emberson tipped over spectacularly.

And Tony Battersby should have levelled the scores on 38 minutes but headed wide from just five yards out.

Hatters' scorer Skelton failed to reappear after the break and was replaced by Paul Hughes, who returned to the side after suspension.

The quality of the match deteriorated in the second-half, with both sides struggling to create good opportunities.

Marriott made a comfortable save from Douglas' header on 53 minutes after Hillier's fine cross and, at the other end, Lincoln midfielder Peter Gain blazed over moments late.

George then wasted a good chance, excellently created by Nicholls, when a poor touch eventually led him to shoot over when off balance.

Black sent a 25-yard drive whistling over the bar on 62 minutes but Emberson continued to enjoy a quiet evening in the Hatters' goal.

big match line-up

● **LUTON:** Carl Emberson, Emmerson Boyce, Russell Perrett, Chris Coyne, Ian Hillier, Aaron Skelton (sub 46 mins Paul Hughes), Matthew Spring, Kevin Nicholls, Liam George (sub 63 mins Adrian Forbes), Carl Griffiths, Stuart Douglas. Other subs: Mark Ovendale, Richard Dryden, Lee Mansell.

● **LINCOLN:** Alan Marriott, Jason Barnett (sub 67 mins Grant Brown), Steve Holmes, Paul Morgan, Kingsley Black, Adam Buckley, Tony Battersby (sub 46 mins Dave Cameron), Lee Thorpe, John Finnigan, Ben Sedgemore (sub 46 mins Justin Walker), Peter Gain. Other subs: Paul Pettinger, Paul Mayo.

● **Referee:** Steve Baines (Derbyshire).

● **Attendance:** 5,066.

● **Top Hatter:** Ian Hillier – confident and polished display.

George limped off on 63 minutes and was replaced by summer signing Forbes.

A one-goal margin always looked precarious, however, and Coyne held his head in anguish after marking his debut by diverting Gain's poor shot past Emberson.

Luton and Coyne will now be looking to put the setback behind them with another home match against Torquay United on Saturday.

The following Tuesday they travel into London to take on Leyton Orient at Brisbane Road.

Last night's setback followed a battling performance and a 2-1 win at York on Saturday.