

Record-breaking Hatters

01/02



■ Climbing high: Gary McSwegan heads clear

Torquay 0 Luton 1

THE Hatters ground out a victory at Plainmoor to set a club record of 11 away wins in a season.

Ahmet Brkovic's first league goal for the club after 21 minutes proved far too much for a poor Torquay side.

Despite the impotency of the home side, Town fans were biting their fingernails as five minutes of injury time was added on.

But the home side posed little or no threat to a competent Luton rearguard superbly marshalled by Russell Perrett.

It took a brilliant first half save by Kevin Dearden to keep the score down to one goal.

And Perrett could have made sure of the win late in the game when he put a point-blank header wide.

Then Dean Crowe was similarly awry when the the Luton-born Dearden was caught out of position.

As United tried to retrieve a point the only real scare to the Hatters came in the 94th minute when substitute Emmerson Boyce brought down Kevin Hill in trying to shepherd the ball out for a goalkick.

The referee saw the foul inches outside the penalty area, leaving Boyce relieved at not conceding a penalty.

He did receive a booking for his indiscretion.

It was an indication of the way the game went that two central defenders, Perrett and Rueben Hazell for Torquay were head and shoulders above their team-mates.

An interminable spell of long balls from both sides at the start was broken by a devastating Luton move.



■ Happy Hatters: Croatian Ahmet Brkovic salutes his goal at Torquay

Matthew Spring won the ball in midfield, Kevin Nicholls played a terrific through ball for Brkovic to run on to and the little Croatia had the composure to take the ball round the keeper and before scoring.

Brkovic almost made it two after 40 minutes when he forced Dearden to a superb save.

Gary McSwegan again was ineffectual up front but did produce a perceptive crossfield ball to find Matthew Taylor in acres of space on the left. A low centre found Brkovic and his accurate shot was denied by the diving Dearden.

Unfortunately for Town, Brkovic, who has looked increasingly on his game in recent weeks, limped off at half time to be replaced by Paul Hughes.

The game limped through the second half with little to recommend it.

Manager Joe Kinnear, after producing a side that scored goals in abundance, seems to have settled for the cautious Plymouth-style approach in the last two away games, bringing two single goal victories.

After a sticky spell, this was the fourth win on the trot for the Town.

Luton Town: Emberson, Neilson, Perrett, Coyne, Johnson (Boyce 69m), Brkovic (Hughes 46m), Spring, Nicholls, Taylor, Crowe, McSwegan (Valois 81m)

Subs not used Ovendale (GK) & Hillier

Luton Bookings: Hughes 57, Boyce 94

Attendance: 3280

Luton Man of the Match: Russell Perrett.

NATIONWIDE DIVISION THREE

Cheltenham	1	Rushden	1
Exeter	4	Darlington	2
Kidderminster	3	Hartlepool	2
Leyton Orient	3	Halifax	1
Lincoln	3	Carlisle	1
Macclesfield	1	Plymouth	1
Mansfield	2	Scunthorpe	1
Rochdale	1	Shrewsbury	0
Southend	2	Oxford Utd	2
Torquay	0	Luton	1
York	P	Bristol Rovers	P

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plymouth	36	23	8	5	54	25	77
Luton	36	21	6	9	68	43	69
Mansfield	35	20	6	9	58	38	66
Rochdale	35	16	11	8	49	39	59
Scunthorpe	37	15	12	10	66	48	57
Cheltenham	33	14	13	6	49	36	55
Hull	36	15	10	11	48	36	55
Shrewsbury	37	15	9	13	51	44	54
Rushden & D	37	14	12	11	47	44	54
Kidd'minster	35	15	7	13	44	37	54
Hartlepool	36	14	8	14	55	42	50
Exeter	35	13	8	14	39	55	47
Swansea	37	12	10	15	46	54	46
Southend	36	12	9	15	44	47	45
Macclesfield	37	11	11	15	33	43	44
Darlington	37	11	10	16	47	58	43
Oxford	37	10	12	15	46	49	42
Lincoln	35	10	11	14	38	48	41
Carlisle	33	9	11	13	38	41	38
Bristol Rov	35	10	8	17	34	44	38
York	33	10	8	15	40	55	38
Leyton O	35	9	9	17	46	59	36
Torquay	37	8	12	17	34	56	36
Halifax	36	5	11	20	225	58	26