



Luton Town FC

TOM LEECH reports
from Kenilworth Road

Fans' compliments to their top 'Chef'

03/04

**Luton Town 1
Chesterfield 0**

STEVE Howard marked his comeback up front with an early goal as Hatters struggled to see off a weak Chesterfield side.

He struck in the second minute with a trademark header in a first half full of promise.

But the second half turned out to be as miserable as the weather.

The one redeeming feature was that it provided three points as Luton aim to get into the play-off shake-up by the New Year. Hatters welcomed back Sol Davis and Chris Coyne from suspension, replacing stop-gap defenders Peter Holmes and Lee Mansell.

The midfield pair were relegated to the bench despite performing admirably in their makeshift role in the goalless draw at Sheffield Wednesday last Saturday.

Hatters were looking for their seventh home win of the season and despite Mike Newell's cautionary programme notes (not to expect an easy win), it was still very much on the cards.

The Spirelites have been in the relegation places since late August and have taken just three points from 27 on their travels.

Newell fielded an attacking side looking to utilise his three fully-fit strikers.

Adrian Forbes has done a fantastic job as a stand-in for Steve Howard – while the latter recovered from a hernia – scoring seven goals.

Gary McSheffrey has been a revelation since joining the club on loan and this was his last game before returning to Coventry City, after a three-month spell.

Last season's top scorer Howard, an impressive emergency centre half at Wednesday, is much more effective up front and as three into two doesn't go, Forbes was moved to play wide right.

And that attacking ethos proved successful after just two minutes. A midfield surge released Forbes and his pinpoint cross found Howard in the penalty area. His header looped over Carl Muggleton.

Luton's zappy passing football was no doubt aided by the slippery surface and on eight minutes they should have gone further ahead.

Matthew Spring's intelligent through-ball



■ Farewell to Gary McSheffrey whose successful loan spell ended yesterday

fed speedy McSheffrey, who was denied a clear scoring opportunity by the late lunge of Alan O'Hare.

The 'Chef' looked determined to leave the club with something to savour, creating a chance out of nothing on 13 minutes.

Ahmet Brkovic played a ball inside for him and he nonchalantly dummied his marker, leaving the ball for Howard who put him through one-on-one. Unfortunately, McSheffrey fired at the goalkeeper's feet.

Luton's last real chance of the half came on 25 minutes when Howard almost got a second. Ian Hillier's deep cross found the big striker at the back post. His initial header

was blocked and when the ball rebounded to him he fired straight at the 'keeper from just five yards.

Lowly Chesterfield did not pose any threat in the first half and their cause was not helped when striker Chris Brandon had to leave the field on 40 minutes.

He came off worse in a clash of heads with Coyne and needed stitches.

He started the second half and Chesterfield began to get into the game.

Neither side looked capable of adding to the scoresheet.

The closest Luton came to scoring again came from two ambitious drives from Steve Robinson on 63 and 80 minutes.

The first came when he latched on to a quickly-taken free kick and took a pot-shot from 25 yards out which was on target but lacked pace.

Then his snapshot from the edge of the box just went wide of the right-hand post.

The groans reverberated around Kenilworth Road when the fourth official signalled three minutes of added time – it was that bad.

But the Hatters faithful chirped up at the end to give McSheffrey a standing ovation and a big thanks for his endeavours.

Newell, commenting on the second half, said: "We all want to see nice football but over 46 games you have to stick at it and grind some results out."

"It is three points and two months ago we would have given it away."

On McSheffrey Newell said: "It goes without saying I want him and I hope we have not seen the last of him. Everyone can see he has the talent and ability."



■ Brkov battles for the ball as Hatters try to improve their lead



**MATCH
FACTS**



Luton Town: Beresford; Hillier, Coyne, Boyce, Davis; Forbes, Robinson, Spring, Brkovic (Holmes 74m); Howard, McSheffrey. Subs not used: Mansell, Brill, Crowe, Leary.

Referee: Ray Olivier (West Midlands)

GOALSCORERS:

Luton: Howard (2m)

Chesterfield: -

SHOTS ON TARGET

Luton: 9

Chesterfield: 0

SHOTS OFF TARGET

Luton: 6

Chesterfield: 5

CORNERS

Luton: 2

Chesterfield: 3

OFFSIDE

Luton: 7

Chesterfield: 5

BOOKINGS

Luton: Forbes (17), Boyce (71), Hillier (90)

Chesterfield: Blatherwick (75), Robinson (90)

ATTENDANCE: 5,453

**HATTERS STAR MAN:
STEVE ROBINSON**

BUSY IN MIDFIELD AND TIDY IN POSSESSION

Division Two results

Barnsley	3	Stockport	3
Blackpool	1	Bristol City	0
Bournemouth	1	Brentford	0
Brighton	2	Wrexham	0
Colchester	0	Plymouth	2
Grimsby	0	Tranmere	1
Hartlepool	2	Swindon	0
Luton Town	1	Chesterfield	0
Oldham	0	Notts County	1
Port Vale	1	Rushden	1
QPR	3	Sheffield Wed	0
Wycombe	1	Peterborough	2

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
QPR	20	10	8	2	35	14	38
Plymouth	20	10	7	3	42	23	37
Brighton	20	10	4	6	31	23	34
Barnsley	20	9	6	5	28	25	33
Hartlepool	20	8	7	5	32	24	31
Bournemouth	20	8	7	5	28	23	31
Port Vale	20	9	4	7	26	25	31
Colchester	20	9	4	7	24	27	31
Bristol City	20	7	9	4	25	17	30
Luton	20	8	6	6	33	33	30
Blackpool	20	9	3	8	25	27	30
Rushden	20	8	4	8	35	32	28
Swindon	20	7	7	6	27	24	28
Wrexham	20	8	4	8	22	22	28
Grimsby	20	7	5	8	25	28	26
Brentford	20	8	2	10	23	30	26
Sheffield Wed	20	6	7	7	23	26	25
Tranmere	20	6	7	7	20	28	25
Oldham	20	5	8	7	30	31	23
Peterborough	20	4	8	8	24	29	20
Stockport	20	4	8	8	27	35	20
Notts County	20	5	4	11	18	30	19
Chesterfield	20	2	7	11	14	27	13
Wycombe	20	2	6	12	21	35	12