

Newell fumes over a no score bore

03/04

Wycombe 0
Luton Town 0

ON Valentine's Day of all days this Beds-Bucks derby lacked any heart from either side.

This tepid 0-0 draw, without any passion, was overshadowed by the speculation that Mick Harford could be on his way out of Kenilworth Road.

Hatters boss Mike Newell made it clear he wants his assistant to spurn the wooing by new Nottingham Forest manager Joe Kinnear.

"There is nothing I can tell you. Everyone knows that Kinner is interested in Mick but we want him to stay. He is an important part of the team, but at this point in time I cannot do anything to make him."

Over 1,800 Hatters fans tried their best to help Mick make his mind with chants of 'One Mick Harford' and 'We Hate Forest', with a multitude of banners in support of Harford.

Ex-Luton manager Kinnear was appointed the new Forest boss in midweek and given the task of keeping the third from bottom club in Division One.

Kinnear, known for his wheeler-dealing, made Harford his number one transfer target and offered the man, regarded by Luton fans as a living legend, a contract as his right hand man at the City ground.

The move came as no surprise since the pair have worked together previously at Wimbledon and Kenilworth Road when Kinnear took the Hatters up from the Third Division.

Teeanger Keith Keane celebrated his call up to the Ireland Under 19 XI with a starting place at right back, in for Ian Hillier who injured himself during the pre-match warm-up.

It was the only change manager Mike Newell made to a side whose two home wins in four days against Colchester and Brighton had put Luton within a point of the play-offs.

Luton were pre-match favourites to beat their near neighbours who prop up Division Two.

Wycombe, who lost 3-1 at Kenilworth Road



■ The eyes have it: Hatters new boy Keith Keane looks for inspiration from above – none came, although his debut was impressive

back in October, now have former England and Arsenal skipper Tony Adams at the helm.

His appointment has not led to a dramatic change of fortune and their first half performance suggested they are doomed for the drop.

Luton were not much better, and in fact it was Wanderers who created the only clear-cut chance of the half on 34 minutes.

Wycombe striker Nathan Tyson beat the traditional off-side trap and latched on to Danny Senda's long pass, shaped to shoot, but Morten Hyldegaard stood firm and parried the effort away.

Luton's players lacked any spark for the entire 45 minutes and had to withstand strong home pressure just before the interval.

Referee Steve Bennett had seen enough and was replaced by Lee Cable at half time with a mystery injury, although he had no apparent problem keeping up with play in a lethargic first half.

Luton had to wait until 50 minutes for their first real attack of the game when, from a Matthew Spring free kick, Chris Coyne wriggled free of his marker on the edge of the box but placed his volley wide.

After just over an hour Luton finally got their first shot on target, this time Coyne turned provider, crossing back into the box for Steve Howard, whose back-post header was palmed over by goalkeeper Scott Bevan.

This signalled Luton's best spell of the game, in particular for Enoch Showunmi whose overhead kick went narrowly wide and moments later only Bevan's quickness off his line denied the striker's powerful run through the middle.

In the heart of defence Coyne and Emmerson Boyce were outstanding, but Luton's midfield lacked any creativity or industry.

Two minutes from time Hatters' fans almost had to face the indignity of defeat to their local rivals when, on the break, Tyson's cross found Jermaine McSparran, who blazed over from seven yards.

Newell was less than impressed with his side's display. "I am not happy with the point, particularly after the Brighton game and I am bitterly disappointed with the way we played today."

"We could not put a pass together in midfield and we never attempted to hurt them in the first half."

Commenting on Keith Keane's debut, Newell said: "He was one of the plus-points of the game along with Coyne and Boyce at the back."



■ Enoch Showunmi: Went close in the second half



MATCH
FACTS



Luton Town: Hyldegaard; Keane, Coyne, Boyce, Davis; Nicholls, Spring, Robinson, Holmes (Brkovic 73m), Howard, Showunmi.
Subs: Brill, Davies, O'Leary, Leary

Referee: Mr Steve Bennett (Kent) – replaced by Lee Cable (46m)

GOALSCORERS:

Wycombe: -

Luton: -

SHOTS ON TARGET

Wycombe: 6

Luton: 1

SHOTS OFF TARGET

Wycombe: 2

Luton: 4

CORNERS

Wycombe: 3

Luton: 5

OFFSIDE

Wycombe: 1

Luton: 3

BOOKINGS

Wycombe: Johnson (20), Tyson (31),

McSparran (83)

Luton: Keane (52), Davis (69)

ATTENDANCE: 6,407

HATTERS STAR MAN:
MORTEN HYLDGAARD

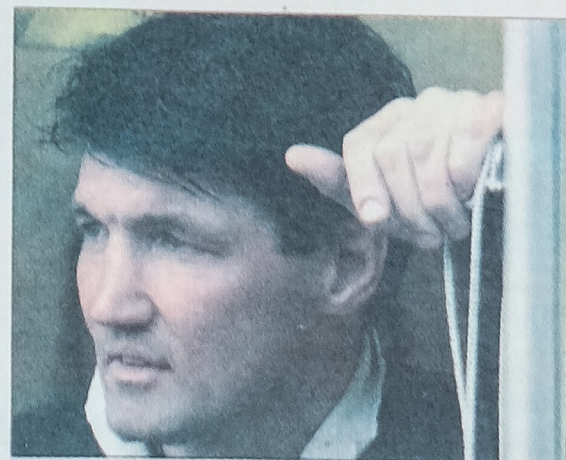
Another clean sheet for the 'Great Dane'

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plymouth	30	17	9	4	65	27	60
QPR	31	16	10	5	55	29	58
Bristol City	30	16	10	4	44	22	58
Swindon	31	14	9	8	50	39	51
Port Vale	30	14	6	10	48	42	48
Wrexham	30	14	5	11	36	30	47
Barnsley	31	12	11	8	40	35	47
Brighton	31	13	7	11	43	35	46
Luton	29	12	10	7	44	39	46
Hartlepool	30	11	10	9	45	37	43
Bournemouth	30	11	10	9	34	33	43
Rushden & D	30	11	6	13	49	49	39
Sheffield Wed	31	9	12	10	35	39	39
Blackpool	30	11	6	13	37	43	39
Colchester	29	10	8	11	29	37	38
Tranmere	29	8	13	8	33	40	37
Oldham	31	8	12	11	46	46	36
Brentford	31	9	7	15	33	47	34
Chesterfield	31	8	10	13	31	46	34
Grimsby	29	8	9	12	33	50	33
Peterborough	31	6	11	14	35	44	29
Stockport	31	5	13	13	40	53	28
Notts County	31	6	7	18	30	53	25
Wycombe	31	4	11	16	32	52	23

Division Two results

Bournemouth	1	Notts County	0
Brentford	1	QPR	1
Chesterfield	2	Rushden & D	0
Grimsby	2	Brighton	1
Peterborough	0	Bristol City	1
Port Vale	1	Oldham	0
Sheff Wed	1	Hartlepool	0
Stockport	2	Swindon	4
Wrexham	1	Barnsley	0
Wycombe	0	Luton	0



■ Pondering his future? Mick Harford