

Town Player Watch

Midfielder Holmes in on goals!

TWO-FOOTED midfielder Peter Holmes returned to the Hatters starting 11 at the expense of Ahmet Brkovic on Saturday.

Holmes slotted into the left-midfield position that has been shared between the 23-year-old and the Croat in recent months.

Here's how he fared...

● Minutes on pitch: 90

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- Passes to Lutton: 16
- Passes to Seasiders: 6
- Pass completion rate: 73 per cent
- Tackles won: 5
- Tackles lost: 2
- Free-kicks won: 0
- Free-kicks conceded: 2
- Headers won: 7
- Headers lost: 0
- Shots on target: 2
- Shots off target: 1
- Shots blocked: 0
- Drabbles ball retained: 3
- Drabbles ball lost: 1
- Drabble completion rate per cent
- Crosses: 4
- Goals: 1
- Assists: 1

VERDICT: Holmes enjoyed a bright afternoon, setting up Emerson Boyce for Luton's first-half opener and then scoring the Town's second himself 11 minutes after the break.

His attacking tendencies were shown up by his three efforts at goal, his four crosses and his successful dribble completion rate. **NEWELL'S VERDICT:** "It's a toss up at the moment between Holmesy and Brko for that position."

"Holmesy's done well on occasions for us here and has an eye for goal. He scored one and made one today and we're pleased with his performance. "It's not that we're disappointed with Brko, we just felt that on the last 15, 20 minutes at Barnsley we'd go with Holmesy today."



HOLME BOY: Peter Holmes puts Luton 2-0 up with this left-footed shot from Enoch Showunmi's pass in the 66th minute.



SHOW-STOPPER: Holmes and his fellow teammates rush to mob Enoch Showunmi after his superb free-kick as Hatters fans rise to their feet.

Town Sea it through

HATTERS 3 BLACKPOOL 2

HATTERS collected another vital three home points at Kenilworth Road – but the Seaside's late fightback made it a rough ride for the Town.

Defender Emmerson Boyce launched Luton on their way to their first league double with his fourth goal of the season in the first-half against Blackpool.

And further Hatters efforts from Peter Holmes and Enoch Showunmi who struck a brilliant free-kick from 20 yards - saw Luton lead 2-0 and then 3-1 after the break.

It looked to be plain sailing for the hosts at that point, but Blackpool did their best to rock the boat.

The Town ran into choppy waters as substitute Kevin Blinkhorn's strike minutes from time put the visitors back in the hunt.

Only a controversial linesman's decision stopped Luton sinking completely when Blinkhorn's second, and Blackpool's third, was ruled out for offside with seven minutes remaining.

Blackpool boss Steve McMahon deemed the linesman "inept" when Town manager Mike Newell also admitted he saw little wrong with the goal. However, Luton could point to a harsh penalty decision for Blackpool's first goal and two home spot-kicks as appeals turned down by referee Steve Tomlin in the opening 45 minutes.

Luton hang on to points

Now Town aim to stay shipshape and continue their impressive Division Two league form that has seen them lose just two of their last 19 league games.

Speaking on Saturday's rearguard showing, Hatters Director of Football Mick Harford admitted: "It's always a concern when you concede goals, but over the past three months we've improved defensively."

"Boycey and Coyne have been tremendous over the past how many games. There was maybe a slight lack of concentration on Boycey's behalf for their second, but you can't blame either of them when they've been excellent for the last few months."

"Unfortunately Marlon had to go. But Morten's come in and has done well, although it takes time to build up that understanding."

"People forget that we're still a young team. We've got the likes of Boyce, Coyne, Davis, Keith and Kevin when he comes back. That's a very, very young

back four, but they've done excellently.' Hatters dominated a one-sided first half and Blackpool were lucky to survive two Luton penalty appeals when Showunmi tumbled under goalkeeper Phil Barnes' 10th minute challenge and when Steve Davis appeared to trip Sol Davis in the box after 15 minutes.

But Town made the breakthrough in the 25th minute when Chris Coyne showed trickery on the left flank and drilled in a low cross that went all the way through to Kevin Nicholls. Nicholls' shot rebounded to Holmes whose instant drive was touched home by Boyce from six yards out.

Stephen McMahon cleared Howard's header off the line in the 38th minute and keeper Barnes denied Howard with a fine block on the stroke of half-time.

Howard, Showunmi, Boyce and Keith Keane all went close after the break

before the Town finally doubled their advantage in the 66th minute.

Showunmi robbed the dithering Simon Grayson and fed Holmes to shoot home left-footed from 15 yards.

Three minutes later Blackpool's loan Wigan player Tony Dinning scored from the spot after Boyce was adjudged to have tripped Richard Walker.

Showunmi raised the roof with his stunning, left-footed free-kick that curled into the top corner in the 74th minute for his sixth goal of the season.

But five minutes later Walker out-jumped Coyne and Blinkhorn beat Boyce to the loose ball to stab home.

Blinkhorn was first to react again, prodding home after Hyldgaard parried Walker's shot, but the linesman's flag kept Luton's promotion push afloat.

STAR HATTER: Steve Robinson. Vital work in midfield gave teammates space.

MIKE NEWELL'S VERDICT



"WE'RE going to have to learn to kill sides off when we get two-goal leads.

"We could have had it all over by half-time. But it's been like that all season; we've had teams on the rack and let them off.

"We're pleased with the performance for the first half-an-hour, but you will get times when the opposi-

tion get into the game. We let them have too much at the start of the second-half and then again at the back end of the half.

"I couldn't see why their goal wasn't given, but then we had a blatant penalty not given when Sol was tripped.

"These things will even
out over a season."



HATTERS

Luton 3-2 Blackpool

Boyle 25 Dinning 69 (pen)
Holmes 36 Blinkhorn 75

Shows 74

Who Scored For/Agt

6yd 9 15

18yd 39 24

Outside

18yd 7 7

How Scored For/Agt

Shots 33 17

Headers 13 15

Vollies 3 6

Penalties 3 6

Free Kicks 1 1

Own Goals 2 2

Goalkeepers 10 10

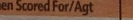
Goals 6 6

Goals conceded 6 6

Points won 3 3

Points lost 1 1

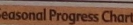
When Scored For/Agt



Luton Town's Scorers

Player	Goals
Adrian Forbes	9
Steve Howard	5
Gary McCafferty	0
Eric Showers	0
Emmerson Boyce	0
Tony Troosh	0
Peter Holmes	0
Lee Mansel	0
Kevin Foley	0
Steve Robinson	0
Russell Perrett	0
Kevin Nicholls	0
Chris Payne	0
Matthew Judge	0
David Briggs	0
Alan Brierley	0
Michael Courtney	0
Michael Hughes	0
Paul Hughes	0
Michael Spring	0
Alman Brierley	0

Seasonal Progress Chart



Top Scorers in Each Category

Category	Player	Goals
Hooded Goals	Howard, Perrett	2
Long Range Shots	Howard, McCafferty	2
Inside 6 yards	Perrett	2
Shots 6-18 yards	Perrett	2

Last 6 League Games

Opponents	H/A	Score
Blackpool	H	3-2
Barnsley	A	0-0
Peterborough	A	2-1
Grimsby	A	2-3
Brentford	H	4-1
Wycombe	H	4-0

Swings

When behind	Score
Drawn when behind	4
Lost when behind	3
Drawn when ahead	3
Lost when ahead	5

Set Piece Goals

Category	Score
Scored from Corners	6
Scored from Free Kicks	7
Conceded from Corners	4
Conceded from Free Kicks	5

Attendance Figures

Category	Score
Highest Attendance	8,339
Lowest Attendance	5,002
Average Attendance	6,103