

Talk of the Town with Andy MacKenzie

# Hail Hatters' sixty football!

**HATTERS 1 BOURNEMOUTH 0**  
LUTON TOWN continued their record-breaking 100 per cent start to the season thanks to a moment of inspiration from skipper Kevin Nicholls.

With Bournemouth looking like holding on for a 0-0 draw at Kenilworth Road, Nicholls stepped up to pick off the Cherries with a stunning 25-yard curler nine minutes from time.

The win proved that Hatters really are playing some six-y football at the moment. It was Luton's sixth victory on the spin and left the Town six points clear at the top of League One before second-placed Hull City's game against Bradford last night.

Visiting manager Sean O'Driscoll even had words of praise for the hot-shot Hatters. He said: "Luton are the best side we've played so far this season, I thought they were excellent."

"We did our homework on them and tried to stop them playing and I would have settled for a 0-0 draw with the side we had out, but all credit to Luton – they kept on plugging away."

"They're playing with confidence and are a side on a roll who believe they're going to win every game. And when you think like that you usually do."

Hatters featured only one change to the side that battered bottom club Blackpool 3-1 on Saturday; Kevin Foley coming in for Keith Keane at right-back.

But bank holiday Monday's game saw the Town having to contend with another team who travelled to Bedfordshire clearly intent on defending.

The visitors strung five across the middle and even had front two James Hayter and Alan Connell regularly dropping deep to stifle the play.

So it was no surprise that the first half-an-hour developed into a midfield

## Sixth win in a row puts the Town six clear

battle. Eventual match-winner Nicholls had the first real shot of the day, firing a stinging left-footed shot at goal from outside the box that visiting keeper Neil Moss did well to hold in the 10th minute.

Chris Coyne then saw his powerful header from Steve Robinson's 33rd minute corner pushed up and on to the top of the bar by Moss. And Curtis Davies repeated the trick seconds later thumping a header from another Robinson corner against the stanchion.

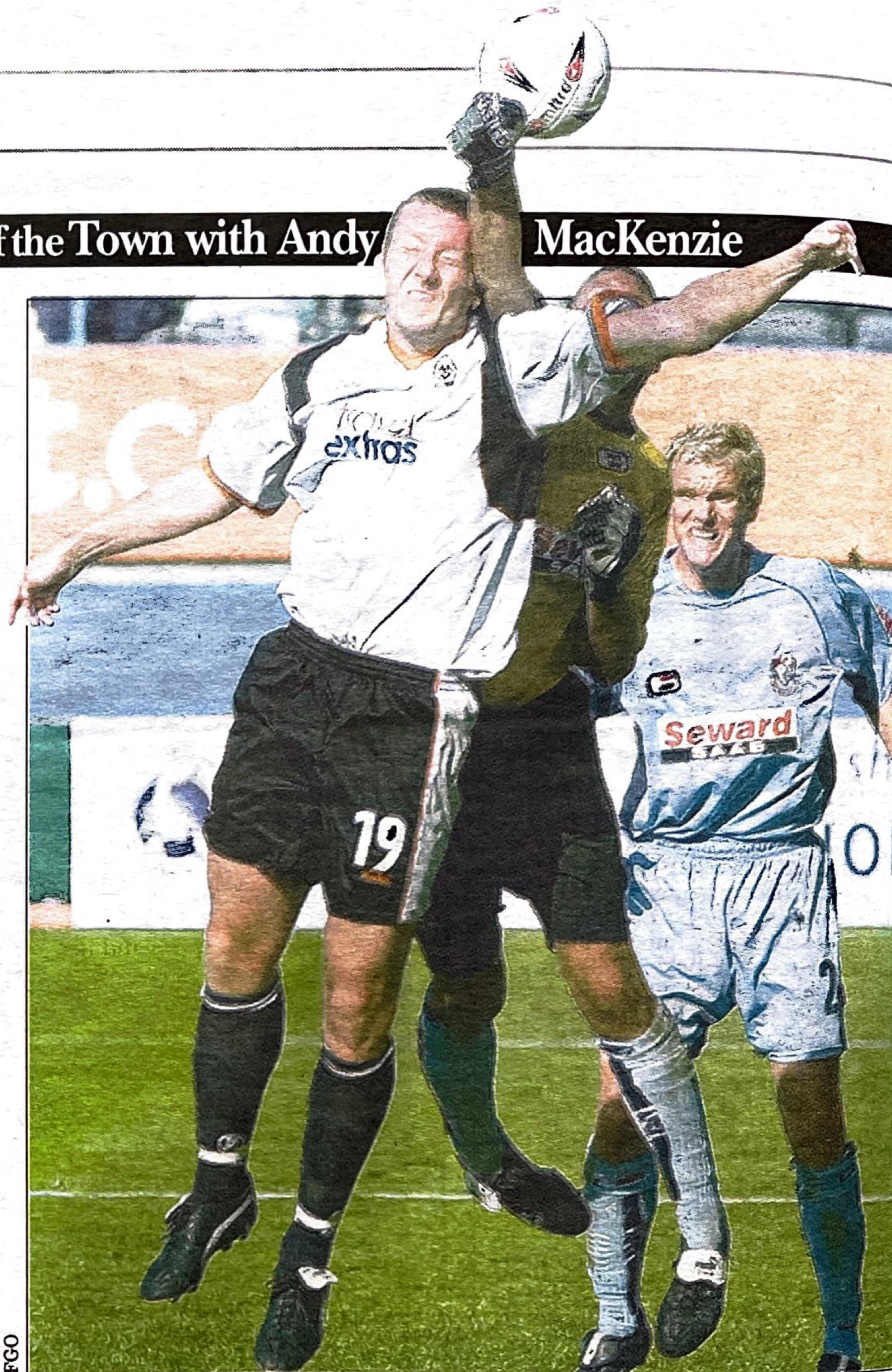
Bournemouth's rare forays forward saw Gareth O'Connor shoot wide in the 41st minute and Connell head just past the post on the stroke of half-time.

Connell had the Cherries' best chance 12 minutes after the break when he seized upon Marlon Beresford's mis-hit goal-kick, but shot wastefully over.

Steve Howard, chasing Jermaine Defoe's record of 10 league goals in consecutive games, saw a 20-yard shot tipped wide in the 59th minute and Rowan Vine then ran clean through two minutes later, but busy Moss saved with his feet.

Howard then saw a flicked header hacked off the line by Eddie Howe before Brian Stock flashed a free-kick across the face of goal and agonisingly close to the Luton post in the 74th minute.

But with Luton seemingly heading towards a frustrating stalemate, Nicholls collected Robinson's square pass and surprised everyone – including the out-of-position Moss – by curling home a beautiful strike from distance.



**THREAT:** Howard puts Cherries keeper Neil Moss under pressure.



### MIKE NEWELL'S VERDICT

"WE were a little bit nervous about Bournemouth because they can hurt teams away from home."

"They played five across the middle and can be difficult to break down, but you have to admire our players."

"We had the majority of the play and created chances and over the 90 minutes that was as good as we've played so far."

"We always had to be

wary of them, but it was comfortable in the end."

"That's probably the least nervous I've been at the end of a game and I didn't feel they were going to score."

"Even when we were at 0-0 we didn't feel we had a bad player on the pitch."

"Sometimes you have to trust what you have out there, which is what we did and we were proved right in the end."