

Ahm the man!

HATTERS 1 HULL CITY 0

LUTON TOWN'S flying Croat Ahmet Brkovic spoke of his delight after netting a vital last-minute winner to tame title rivals the Tigers.

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BRK-BUSTER: The Kenilworth Road end goes wild as Ahmet Brkovic celebrates his late winner.

The 30-year-old rose to powerfully head home Steve Robinson's right wing cross at the death and spark pandemonium among the home fans.

And after reliving his moment of glory against second-placed Hull, the 12-goal midfielder told how he now hoped to follow up his winning show by penning a contract extension at Kenilworth Road.

He said: "I was so tired at the end of the game, but then I saw Robbo had got the ball in the corner and I thought 'should I make a near post run?'"

"I did and I managed to get my head on the ball and was just so happy to see it go in. We'd worked so hard and the lads were all really, really pleased to get the win.

"We were all really disappointed after conceding a late goal at Huddersfield and we were really down in the dressing room afterwards because everybody wanted to win, but this was the best way to bounce back."

On his contract negotiations, Brkovic continued: "My deal runs out at the end of the season, but I've been talking to the chairman and the man-

ager and hopefully we can sort something out. Everyone here wants to play at a higher level, but we want to do that with Luton by getting promotion.

"Everyone is buzzing here - the town is buzzing, the whole place is buzzing. There's a great atmosphere that spreads all the way down from the management to the staff and the players.

"There's not much difference to the team from last year, only Rowan Vine and Paul Underwood are new players, but everyone is now starting to believe in themselves and believe in their own ability and we are all working really hard for each other.

"There's a great spirit among the players. We go out after training and have a sandwich or whatever and talk about the games. We got on well off the pitch as well as on it which helps."

Saturday's League One match of the day took place in front of a sell-out 9,500 capacity crowd and in front of a press box packed with national newspaper, television and radio reporters.

Hatters saw Enoch Showunmi replace suspended leading scorer Steve Howard, Alan Neilson step in for Keith

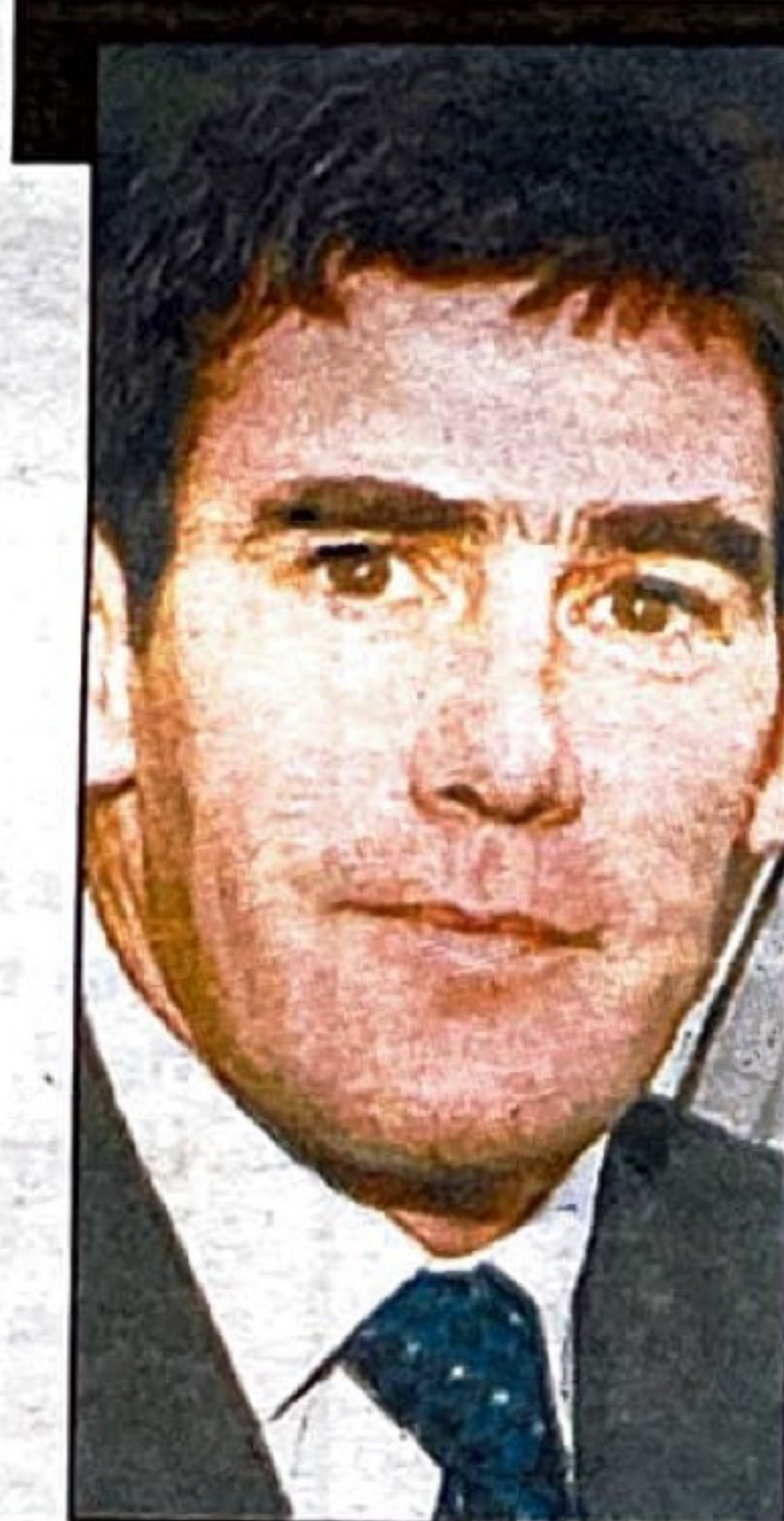
Keane and Chris Coyne return from suspension. And Town used the big stage to produce arguably their best 45 minutes of football of the season in a scintillating first-half display.

Flowing football saw Brkovic fire wide in the seventh and 19th minutes and head just past the post in between, while Robinson forced a good block from Bo Myhill in the 10th minute, Showunmi saw two efforts saved by

Myhill in the 21st and 37th minutes and Vine bobbled wide from 25-yards on the half-hour mark.

Hull rallied when Stuart Green forced a save from Marlon Beresford before the break, but after a more even second period, Brkovic popped up in the 89th minute to see his eight-yard header from Robinson's cross bounce off the arms of Myhill and up into the roof of the net for a dramatic winner.

MIKE NEWELL'S VERDICT



"WE'RE pleased with the performance. It was the best we've played in some weeks and it was a great time to get the goal.

"Overall I think we deserved the win and I don't think Hull can have any arguments with that.

"They looked dangerous on the break at times in the second-half, but we were much the better side.

"We played some good football in and around

their box, but at times we were looking for the perfect finish and sometimes you need to take it upon yourself to have a go.

"We're all delighted and the players are delighted, but we're not getting too carried away because it's only three points.

"There's a bit of daylight at the top and we're getting closer, but there's still 15 games to go which is a third of the season."

STAR HATTER



STEVE ROBINSON: The dynamic midfielder shrugged off bruising sustained in the draw at Huddersfield to run the show against Peter Taylor's Hull.

Robinson showed endless energy to pop up with a deep run behind the visitors' defence one minute and then track back to win back possession the next.

His never-say-die attitude was summed up by him setting up Brkovic's last-gasp winner.

Boss deal agreement in sight

HATTERS boss Mike Newell has suggested that negotiations on his new contract could be agreed within the week.

Talks have been ongoing between Newell, his solicitor and Luton chairman Bill Tomlins since October of last year.

But now Newell is confident of securing his immediate future at Kenilworth Road.

He said: "My solicitor had a very productive meeting with the chairman and hopefully things can be sorted out in the very near future, possibly within a week I would imagine.

"I've not had a problem with it and have said on several occasions that I want to stay here, but things have dragged on.

"That's been a bit frustrat-

ing, not only to me, but to other people who want to know what my situation is here."

● Fans can put questions to boss Newell and chairman Tomlins at two open meetings. Tomlins' is at 7.30pm at the Vauxhall Recreation Club on Monday, March 14. Newell's is at the Eric Morecambe suite at 7.30pm on Thursday, March 3.