



Luton Town 5 Bristol City 0
TOM LEECH reports from Kenilworth Park



**MATCH
FACTS**



Luton Town: Beresford; Keane, Perrett, Davies, Davis (Showunmi 55); Brkovic, Nicholls, Holmes (Leary 81), Underwood; Howard, Vine (Andrew 81).
 Subs (not used): Seremet, Barnett

Referee: Paul Danson

GOALSCORERS:

Luton: Brkovic (10, 77), Nicholls (26 pen), Davis (45), Holmes (61)
 Bristol City:

SHOTS ON TARGET

Luton: 12
 Bristol City: 4

SHOTS OFF TARGET

Luton: 5
 Bristol City: 2

CORNERS

Luton: 7
 Bristol City: 4

OFFSIDE

Luton: 5
 Bristol City: 4

BOOKINGS

Luton: Underwood (46), Howard (57)
 Bristol City: Fortune (19), Carey (25), Coles (31), Orr (72)

ATTENDANCE: 8,330

**HATTERS STAR MAN:
AHMET BRKOVIC**

His trickery and intelligence never gave dull City a chance

Awesome Hatters back in the groove

WHAT a difference a week makes.

Just seven days after losing to Port Vale in a performance that manager Mike Newell described as their 'worst of the season', Luton Town turned in their best as they blasted five goals without reply.

Goals from Peter Holmes, Sol Davis, a brace from Ahmet Brkovic and a penalty from skipper Kevin Nicholls gave Luton their biggest win of the campaign so far as Hatters ripped apart their West Country opponents with an exhilarating display that justified Newell's team selection.

"I can't be anything other than delighted after watching that," beamed the Hatters boss. "That was by far the best we've played this season."

"Bristol City are a decent side but we dominated from start to finish. Once we got the fourth it was over as a contest – we could have had more than five in the end."

"I told the players after Port Vale that I won't judge them on one poor performance. We didn't play well last week but we've come back in the best possible way. You have to believe in your players and their ability."

Elsewhere, promotion rivals Hull City beat third-placed Tranmere Rovers at Prenton Park, a result that leaves Rovers 13 points adrift which gave Newell another reason to be cheerful.

"We'll enjoy looking at the gap over the weekend but now our minds are firmly fixed on Swindon Town next week."

Newell had written off the Port Vale game as a 'bad day at the office' but it was back to business from the off at Kenilworth Road yesterday as the league leaders scored after just ten minutes through Brkovic.

Davis played the ball over the top for Paul Underwood to chase and the winger – back from injury – played the ball across the City area. The cut back was too quick for Rowan Vine but not for the Croatian Sensation. He delayed his run perfectly to slide in a low shot that gave Steve Phillips no chance in the City net.

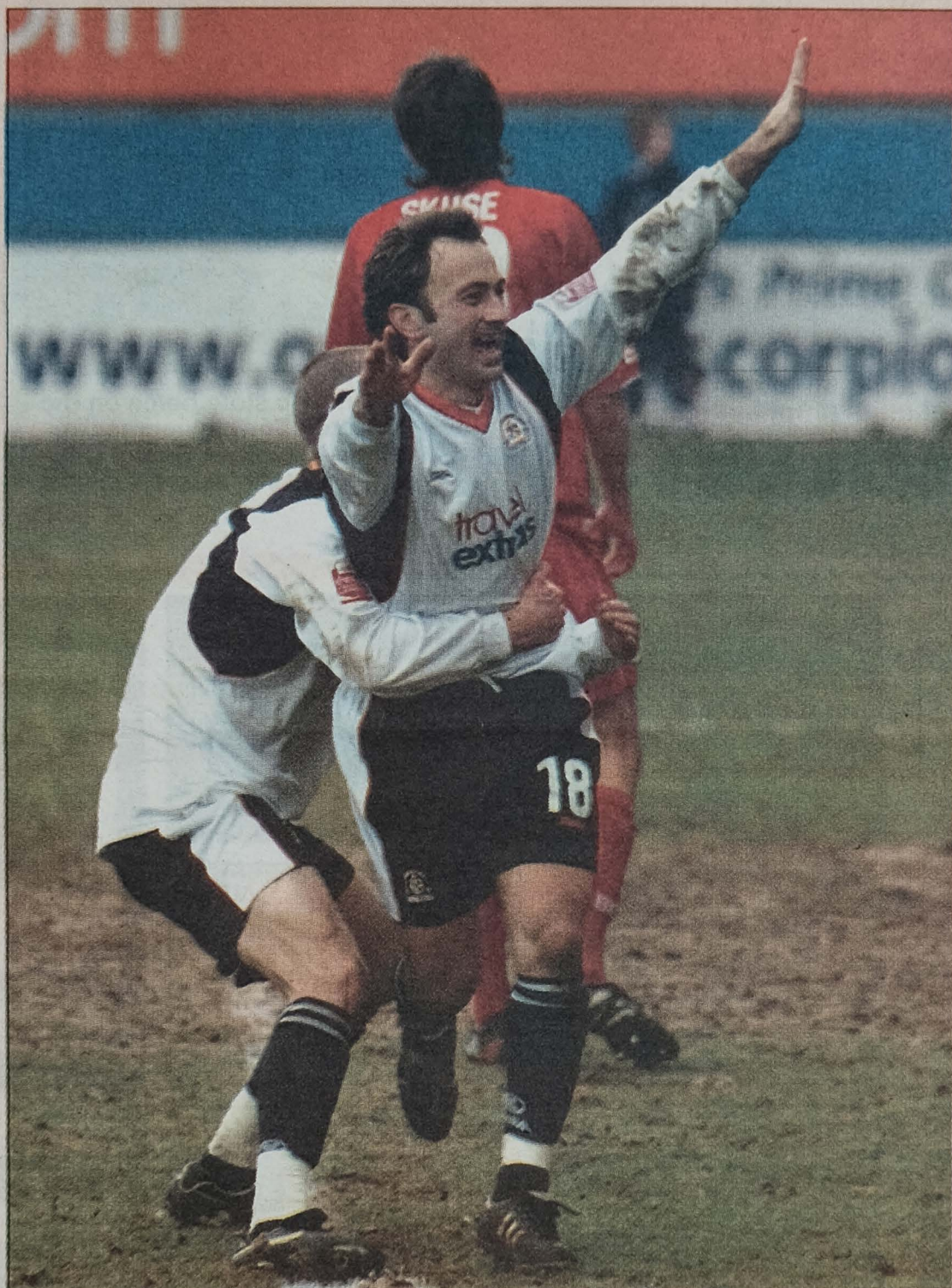
Eight minutes later, Steve Howard thought he'd doubled Luton's advantage but for a great save from City's goalkeeper. Nicholls planted a free kick right on Howard's head and the big striker's effort looked destined for the top corner before Phillips, at full stretch, turned it over.

By now Luton were carving up Bristol City all over the pitch and they finally made it two on 26 minutes when Nicholls netted his sixth penalty of the season.

It came from Howard's marauding run down the left and subsequent cross to Vine that was blocked by City defender Louis Carey's slide. The ball spun up perfectly for Luton's on-loan forward who tried to step over the floored centre half but Carey dragged Vine down giving referee Paul Danson no choice but to award the spot kick. Nicholls made no mistake, sending Phillips the wrong way with a confident strike.

Hatters always look a more formidable outfit when Underwood plays and he was clearly revelling in his first home game since January.

Yet another of his crosses wasn't dealt



■ **Marksmen:** Ahmet Brkovic (above) enjoys the applause from the crowd after scoring and (right) Sol Davis indicates that he has now scored two goals this season

with on the half hour mark as Russ Perrett – in for the injured Chris Coyne – headed back across goal for Howard whose header was somehow cleared off the line by a posse of relieved City players.

But there was more to come – from an unlikely source. Sol Davis goals are a bit like buses – you wait ages for one then two come along at once. The dependable left back had never scored a goal before this season but he doubled his tally and grabbed Luton's third just before half time with a brave slide.

It came from some good build-up by the Hatters before Howard squeezed in a half volley from just outside the area. Phillips fumbled and Davis didn't hesitate to get in where it hurts and beat the City 'keeper to the rebound.

Bristol City's only real effort of any note came on 38 minutes when Luke Wilkshire's long-range drive warmed Marlon Beresford's gloves. Other than that chance City spent the entire half on the back foot as Luton ran Brian Tinnion's play-off chasing outfit ragged.

And in the second half it was more of the same. Goal number four came on 61 minutes when Vine's quick run left City all at sea and his driven cross was guided in from close range by Holmes for the midfielder's first goal of the campaign.

Tinnion's gamble of using all three substitutes early on backfired to compound things as Mickey Bell hobbled off soon after.

Hatters fans even sang for Danny Wilson, such was the party atmosphere. The former Luton player was sacked as City manager in the summer after the Ashton Gate board deemed reaching the play-off final was not enough to keep him in a job.

Ironically this win looks to have severely dented his replacement's outside chances of reaching those heady heights.

There was still time for a fifth as Brkovic wrapped up the scoring with his 14th of a superb season. Howard headed against the crossbar from a corner and Vine's follow up strike was hacked off the line – but only as far as Brkovic who tapped in to round off an awesome display.

