

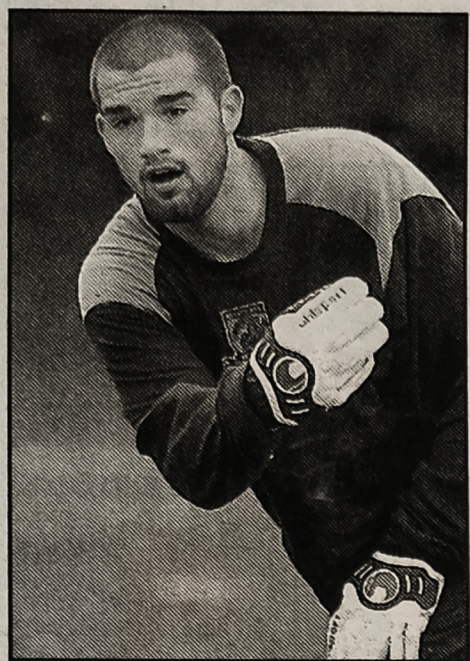
MATCH STATS



HULL CITY

Shots on target	6
Shots off target	6
Corners	3
Free-kicks conceded	19
Offsides	7
Hit woodwork	0

BAD BOYS: Booked: Joseph 72.
Sent off: None



TOP TIGER

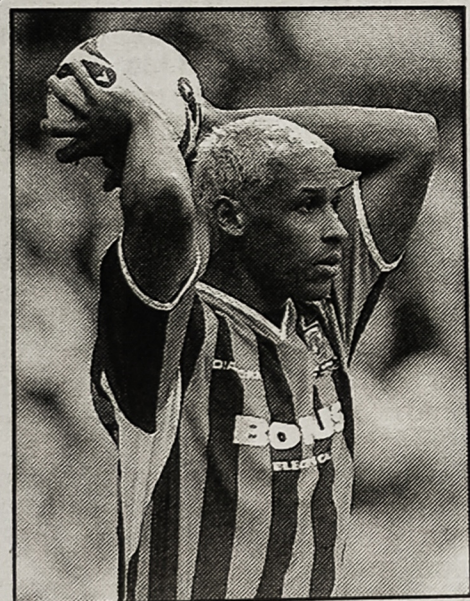
Boaz Myhill: His outstanding performance was his best in a City shirt. He produced several outstanding saves and did not deserve to lose.

LUTON TOWN

Shots on target	16
Shots off target	4
Corners	7
Free-kicks conceded	17
Offsides	7
Hit woodwork	1

BAD BOYS: Booked: None. Sent off: None

HATTERS STARMAN: Kevin Nicholls – The commanding midfielder offered terrific protection to his defence and got forward.



EYE-CATCHER

Marc Joseph obviously knew the television cameras were going to be at the KC Stadium – and the Hull City right-back's hair stylist had certainly done a good job on topping up his blond locks.

TURNING POINT

Marlon Beresford made some vital saves, especially from Stuart Green in the first half and Ryan France after the break. France must have thought he'd scored after a great pass from Green in the 55th minute.

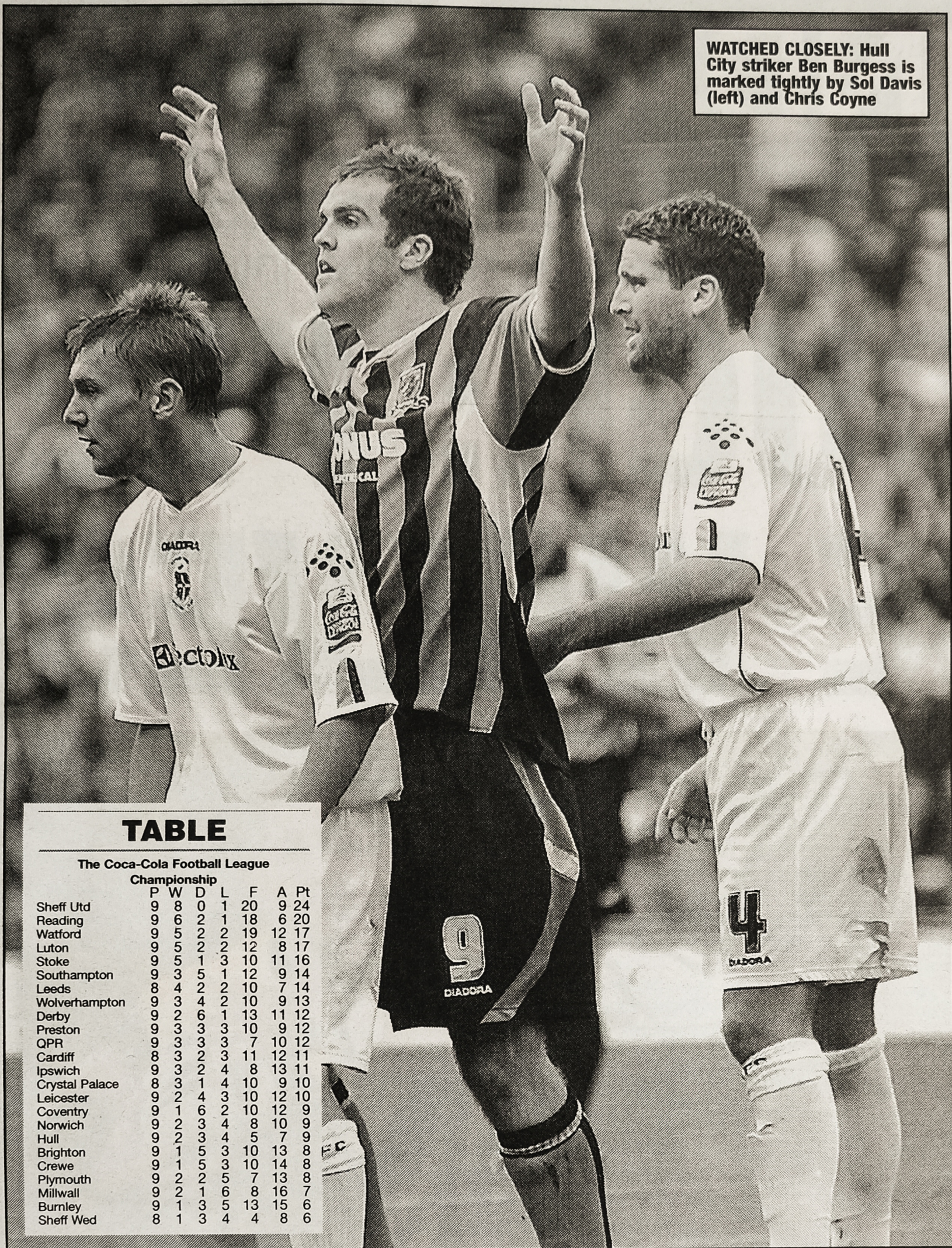
REFEREE WATCH

Graham Salisbury (Lancashire)

He did let the game flow although his display went steadily downhill with some baffling decisions. He didn't always react well – or clearly.



Myhill heroics



WATCHED CLOSELY: Hull City striker Ben Burgess is marked tightly by Sol Davis (left) and Chris Coyne

TABLE

The Coca-Cola Football League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Sheff Utd	9	8	0	1	20	9	24
Reading	9	6	2	1	18	6	20
Watford	9	5	2	2	19	12	17
Luton	9	5	2	2	12	8	17
Stoke	9	5	1	3	10	11	16
Southampton	9	3	5	1	12	9	14
Leeds	8	4	2	2	10	7	14
Wolverhampton	9	3	4	2	10	9	13
Derby	9	2	6	1	13	11	12
Preston	9	3	3	3	10	9	12
QPR	9	3	3	3	7	10	12
Cardiff	8	3	2	3	11	12	11
Ipswich	9	3	2	4	8	13	11
Crystal Palace	8	3	1	4	10	9	10
Leicester	9	2	4	3	10	12	10
Coventry	9	1	6	2	10	12	9
Norwich	9	2	3	4	8	10	9
Hull	9	2	3	4	5	7	9
Brighton	9	1	5	3	10	13	8
Crewe	9	1	5	3	10	14	8
Plymouth	9	2	2	5	7	13	8
Millwall	9	2	1	6	8	16	7
Burnley	9	1	3	5	13	15	6
Sheff Wed	8	1	3	4	4	8	6



PUT THE WORK IN: Luton's Russ Perrett (left) pulls back Hull City's Chris Brown

HULL CITY 0

LUTON 1

Howard 85

Attendance: 19,184

Match report by
JOHN FIELDHOUSE



DAMIEN Delaney has won countless battles as a Hull City player.

Now, he's preparing to go to war again, to prove the Tigers can survive in the Championship.

Confidence built around an encouraging start to the season is in grave danger of draining away.

This defeat against Luton – City's third in a row – sent Peter Taylor's side sliding into 17th place in the table.

In his three years as a City player, Delaney has heard talk of a crisis before, but he's convinced the Tigers can turn things around.

He said: "It was a disappointing result but we've just got to keep our heads up and keep battling on."

"We seem to keep saying we're playing well, we're creating chances and we're dominating games at times but it just doesn't seem to be happening for us."

"But the boys are good players and we've got a good manager. There is more pressure this season but we can handle that. We'll all be smiling when we come in for training, ready and raring to go again."

City and Luton were locked in a battle for the League One title last season.

verdict

A superb performance from keeper Boaz Myhill failed to save Hull City from a third successive defeat against Luton at the KC.

Steve Howard struck the match winning goal five minutes from time but Damien Delaney remains confident City can turn a worrying situation around.

Steve Howard's late goal on Saturday sealed a deserved win for Luton. They are now 13 places – and eight points – ahead of City. The reasons for that gap were there for all to see.

City had chances early on but the side lacks conviction, as well as a cutting edge. Only a superb performance from keeper Boaz Myhill prevented Luton from romping to a much bigger win.

City need to improve and quickly. Unfortunately, the addition of Danny Coles to a worrying casualty list is another setback.

The Tigers have always responded positively to disappointing results but Delaney – although upbeat – knows the Championship is a different proposition.

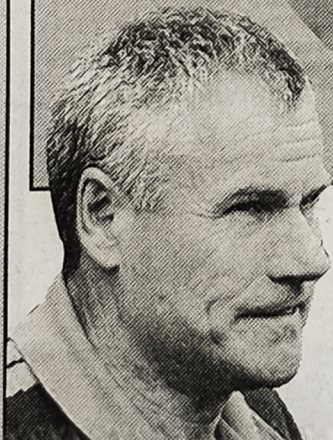
He added: "We've been in awkward positions before. The difference now is that every week, you've got a tough game. You look at the fixture list and there's Coventry, Norwich and Millwall coming up."

"They are tough, tough games. Two of those clubs were in the Premiership – they have big stadiums and big players."

"It's not going to get any easier whereas in the last couple of seasons, you could look at teams and

"Lady luck is not being kind to us. We've hit the woodwork too many times and we've got injuries."

Peter Taylor



prove in vain



TIGERS' HEARTACHE: Hull City's Nick Barmby puts a header in the back of the Luton net only to see his effort correctly ruled out for offside PICTURES: Jack Harland



ALWAYS A HANDFUL: Luton's Ahmet Brkovic tracks back to tackle Andy Dawson



NOT A GOOD SIGHT: Hull City's Danny Coles is stretchered off

HOW THEY RATED



Boaz Myhill

Brilliant. Produced a string of top class saves. The worry was why he was so busy. 9

Danny Coles

Injured early on and City will miss him because he's been one of their best defenders. -



Leon Cort

Found the combination of Howard and Feeney tough to handle. Had to work very hard. 6



Damien Delaney

It was a struggle for the Irishman although City's back-line is being left exposed far too often. 6



Andy Dawson

Battling display on his return to the team. Might have given away penalty for handball. 6



Ryan France

Did have a couple of chances and was unlucky when Beresford produced a super second-half save. 6



Stuart Green

Did add attacking impetus in the opening half and brought a terrific save from Beresford. Faded. 6



Jon Welsh

Effective first half but was out-numbered after the break. Would he have fared better with Woodhouse? 6



Stuart Elliott

Tried to inject inspiration into tired-looking legs. Put a close range header over the top. 6



Chris Brown

Never stopped running and caused trouble. Went close but spurned a couple of opportunities. 7



Nick Barmby

Had his moments when in possession, but wasn't as effective out wide in the second half. 6



FROM THE BENCH

Matt Duke (not used)

Curtis Woodhouse (not used)

Marc Joseph (for Coles, 7) 6 - A tough return to action

Ben Burgess (for Brown, 79) 6 - Too little time to impress

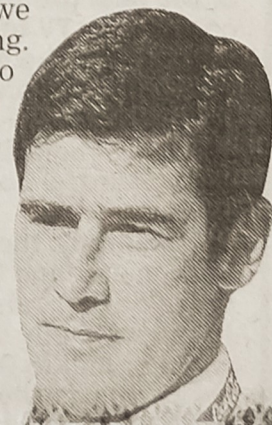
Craig Fagan (for Barmby, 62) 6 - Put himself about

THE HATTERS

Beresford 8;
Edwards 7,
Coyne, 7, Perrett
6, Davis 6;
Brkovic 7, Nicholls
8, Robinson 7,
Morgan 7,
Howard 7, Feeney
7. Subs Brill,
Barnett (for Perrett, 90), Andrew,
Holmes, Keane.



NEXT UP FOR CITY: Coventry City, Ricoh Arena, Saturday September 24, 3pm.



Mike Newell

say if we half-perform, we'll get a victory. Now, every week, you really have to be on your game.

"I'm not saying we're not on it now. We seem to be passing the ball well enough but we don't seem to be getting the goals. But that's football and you sometimes can't explain it.

"Honestly, there's no panic. We're still in September. There are still around 30 games to go. It's just a matter of being patient. We're confident. We know we can win at this level."

No-one in the Tigers' camp would blame injuries but the slump has coincided with the absence of key players.

Luton skipper Kevin Nicholls showed what City are lacking. He was the first to everything and never

stopped encouraging his players.

Together with Steve Robinson, he supplied the type of service to front-men Steve Howard and Warren Feeney that City's own strikers could only dream of.

Luton also had 16 shots on target, compared to City's six. Given that ratio, it was only a matter of time before they scored.

Luton keeper Marlon Beresford pulled off tremendous saves to deny Stuart Green and Chris Brown in the first half - and Ryan France in the second.

The opening 45 minutes were fairly even. Both sides had a goal disallowed for offside - City rightly for Nick Barmby's header, but Luton wrongly for Ahmet Brkovic's toe-poke after replays showed the ball

had come off Andy Dawson before the Croatian midfielder struck.

The second half was a different story. Taylor switched players and formations but City were poor. Myhill, who had already denied Howard, Dean Morgan and Carlos Edwards, somehow kept out efforts from Kevin Nicholls, Sol Davis and Chris Coyne.

He even performed heroics in the build-up to the winning goal only to be let down by his defenders.

Morgan got in behind City's back four. His close range effort was palmed away by Myhill. As the Tigers stood and watched, Brkovic turned the ball back into the area and Howard, who had hit the post earlier, buried a fierce drive from six yards.

City threw players forward but could not really create openings.

Taylor admitted: "As much as I was pleased with Boaz, it concerned me how well he had to play because of the amount of chances Luton had.

"Early doors, their keeper made two very good saves and I thought in the second half, we were going to get a point. We'd have taken 0-0.

"But we were very, very poor in our shape for the goal. I've told the players they've got to look at the video. We didn't have enough bodies in the area and we were sleeping. There were too many holes. We were all over the place."

"We might have won by more goals but we'll settle for 1-0 and three points. We would have been disappointed with a draw considering the chances we had."