

# Factfile

## TEAMS

**CARDIFF:** Alexander (7), Weston (5) (Lee 82), Purse (c) (6), Loovens (6), Barker (6), Cooper (5) (Parry 58), Ardley (4), Ledley (5), Koumas (5) (Mulryne 87), Jerome (6), Ricketts (7). Subs not used: Cox, Margetson.



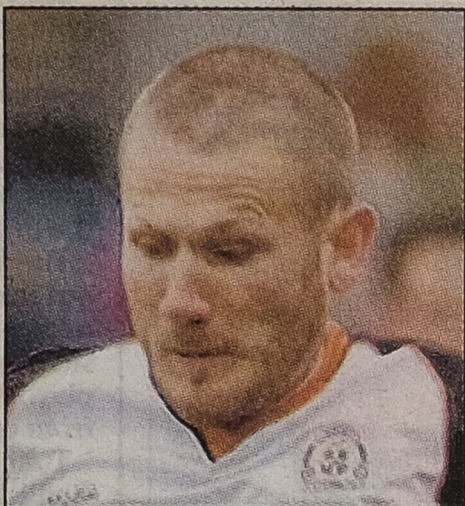
**LUTON:** Beresford, Edwards, Heikkinen, Coyne, Davis, Brkovic (Underwood 76), Nicholls (c), Holmes, Morgan (Keane 81), Feeney (Showunmi 87), Howard. Subs not used: Perrett, Brill.

**REFEREE:** Mike Jones (Cheshire)  
**ATTENDANCE:** 14,657

## SCORERS

**CARDIFF:** Ricketts (9)  
**LUTON:** Morgan (30); Holmes (58)

## MAN OF THE MATCH



**KEVIN NICHOLLS (LUTON):** Midfield was the key and Luton's was dominant while City's was non-existent. The Luton skipper led by example.

## JONES' VERDICT

"We didn't really have a go at them. Once we got 1-0 up we sat back and allowed them to get back into the game."

## WOS VERDICT

Plenty of thrills and spills to entertain the decent-sized crowd but Dave Jones won't take much comfort from that. City's midfield was virtually non-existent yet they still had enough chances to salvage what would have been an undeserved point.

## LEAGUE POSITION

### The Coca-Cola Football League Championship

|                      | P  | W  | D | L | F  | A  | Pt |
|----------------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| Sheff Utd....        | 12 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 25 | 12 | 30 |
| Reading .....        | 12 | 8  | 3 | 1 | 21 | 7  | 27 |
| Luton.....           | 12 | 7  | 3 | 2 | 19 | 11 | 24 |
| Wolve.....           | 12 | 5  | 4 | 3 | 17 | 11 | 19 |
| Watford.....         | 12 | 5  | 4 | 3 | 20 | 15 | 19 |
| Leeds.....           | 11 | 5  | 3 | 3 | 13 | 10 | 18 |
| Soton.....           | 12 | 3  | 8 | 1 | 13 | 10 | 17 |
| Ipswich.....         | 12 | 5  | 2 | 5 | 12 | 17 | 17 |
| QPR.....             | 11 | 4  | 4 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 16 |
| Stoke.....           | 12 | 5  | 1 | 6 | 12 | 19 | 16 |
| <b>CARDIFF</b> ..... | 11 | 4  | 3 | 4 | 15 | 14 | 15 |
| Norwich.....         | 12 | 4  | 3 | 5 | 13 | 13 | 15 |
| Crystal P.....       | 10 | 4  | 2 | 4 | 13 | 10 | 14 |
| Preston.....         | 12 | 3  | 5 | 4 | 12 | 14 | 14 |
| Burnley.....         | 12 | 3  | 4 | 5 | 18 | 16 | 13 |
| Derby.....           | 12 | 2  | 7 | 3 | 16 | 17 | 13 |
| Hull.....            | 12 | 3  | 4 | 5 | 9  | 10 | 13 |
| Coventry.....        | 12 | 2  | 6 | 4 | 15 | 18 | 12 |
| Leicester.....       | 12 | 2  | 6 | 4 | 12 | 15 | 12 |
| Plymouth.....        | 12 | 3  | 3 | 6 | 9  | 16 | 12 |
| Brighton.....        | 12 | 1  | 7 | 4 | 12 | 17 | 10 |
| Sheff Wed..          | 11 | 2  | 4 | 5 | 9  | 14 | 10 |
| Millwall.....        | 12 | 2  | 4 | 6 | 10 | 18 | 10 |
| Crewe.....           | 12 | 1  | 6 | 5 | 11 | 20 | 9  |

**NEXT FIXTURES:** Sat 15 Brighton (a)  
Tue 18 Preston (h)

# Luton dish out reality check to Bluebirds

**CARDIFF C..... 1 LUTON TN..... 2**

**ANDY ROSE** reporting

**CARDIFF CITY** were given a reality check as high-flying Luton ended their eight-match unbeaten run.

City have quietly gone about their business in recent weeks, steadily rising up the Championship table after an unconvincing start to the season.

But just when it looked as if manager Dave Jones had found a winning formula Luton arrived to put everything firmly back into perspective.

There is still much work to be done, not least in midfield where, without the suspended Jeff Whitley, they struggled against their more physical and imaginative opposition.

With their supply line cut, strikers Cameron Jerome and Michael Ricketts were forced to live off scraps for most of the match yet they still carved out enough chances to have claimed at least a point.

Cardiff were denied twice by the woodwork after going behind to what proved to be the winning goal from Peter Holmes in the 58th minute goal, with Ricketts also seeing his 95th-minute effort hacked off the line by Carlos Edwards.

That would have been harsh on a well-drilled Luton Town side who have taken their first season back at this level in their stride.

An expectant crowd of 14,657 were rewarded with a game full of goalmouth action.

But it was the visitors who dominated proceedings virtually from the moment they went behind inside nine minutes, save for a late second-half rally from the home side.

Ricketts collected his third goal in six games since arriving on loan

from Leeds after combining with Jerome to cause panic in the visitors' defence. Neil Alexander's punt was flicked on by Ricketts to his strike partner.

The ball found its way back to the former England striker who fired into the bottom corner.

But Luton's response was almost immediate.

Alexander was rooted to the spot as Wayne Feeney's header looped over him and on to the crossbar before Darren Purse cleared off the line.

Moments later Steve Howard should have done better with a free header but the panic which had gripped Luton before was now infecting the City defence.

The Hatters grabbed a deserved 30th-minute equaliser but it was tinged with controversy.

Neal Ardley endured a tough afternoon in the centre of midfield

and he badly miscalculated when he dropped off as his defence pushed up hoping to catch a clutch of Luton players offside.

The linesman ignored them all, with Rhys Weston failing to check Dean Morgan's run on to Ahmet Brkovic's through ball to blast past Alexander.

It was the first goal Cardiff had conceded in 390 minutes of league football and they could have shipped another eight minutes into the second half when Alexander parried Peter Holmes' powerful volley and Joe Ledley mopped up the danger.

But the midfielder was not to be denied his first goal of the season for too long and after Howard had clipped Brkovic's cross back across the face of goal past a stranded goalkeeper he bundled the loose ball into the net with 58 minutes gone.

That sparked desperate attempts at a fightback, and substitute Parry was denied a goal with his first touch by goalkeeper Marlon Beresford.

Quite how Purse's wonderful volley from a Koumas corner stayed out of the goal is anyone's guess after it crashed back off the woodwork on 66 minutes.

But Luton proved they were not yet finished when Howard rapped a post at the opposite end, with Morgan seeing his rebound effort well saved.

In-form Jerome failed to find the gaping net with an overhead kick from the tightest of angles before Ricketts agonisingly struck a post in the 90th minute with a header.

