

Bored fans turn on uninspiring Hatters

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE

LUTON	1	
Paul Furlong, 57		
DONCASTER	1	07/08
James Hayter, 27		

TOM LEECH at Kenilworth Road

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HAPLESS Hatters are still struggling to justify their pre-season billing as favourites for promotion after this dull draw with Doncaster.

Hatters were booed off after a dreadful first half that saw them go a goal down through Rovers' forward James Hayter.

Paul Furlong's sixth of the season levelled things just before the hour mark, but Luton's 'route one' football was too much for some of the Kenilworth Road crowd who chanted 'what a load of rubbish' at Kevin Blackwell's men at the final whistle.

There's no doubt that the burden of expectation hangs over the club who are still to find form following last season's relegation from the Championship.

But manager Blackwell is asking for patience from the fans.

"I've got to rebuild this club," he said. "I'm three and a half months into a four year plan.

"I'm trying to rebuild a football club that was on its arse. I know people are moaning about this, that and the other, but they don't know what goes on behind the scenes.

"I've been in the game long enough to know that unless you're playing with style every week the fans soon turn on you.

"We'll just soldier on. We have to make do with what we've got but the squad's down to the limit.

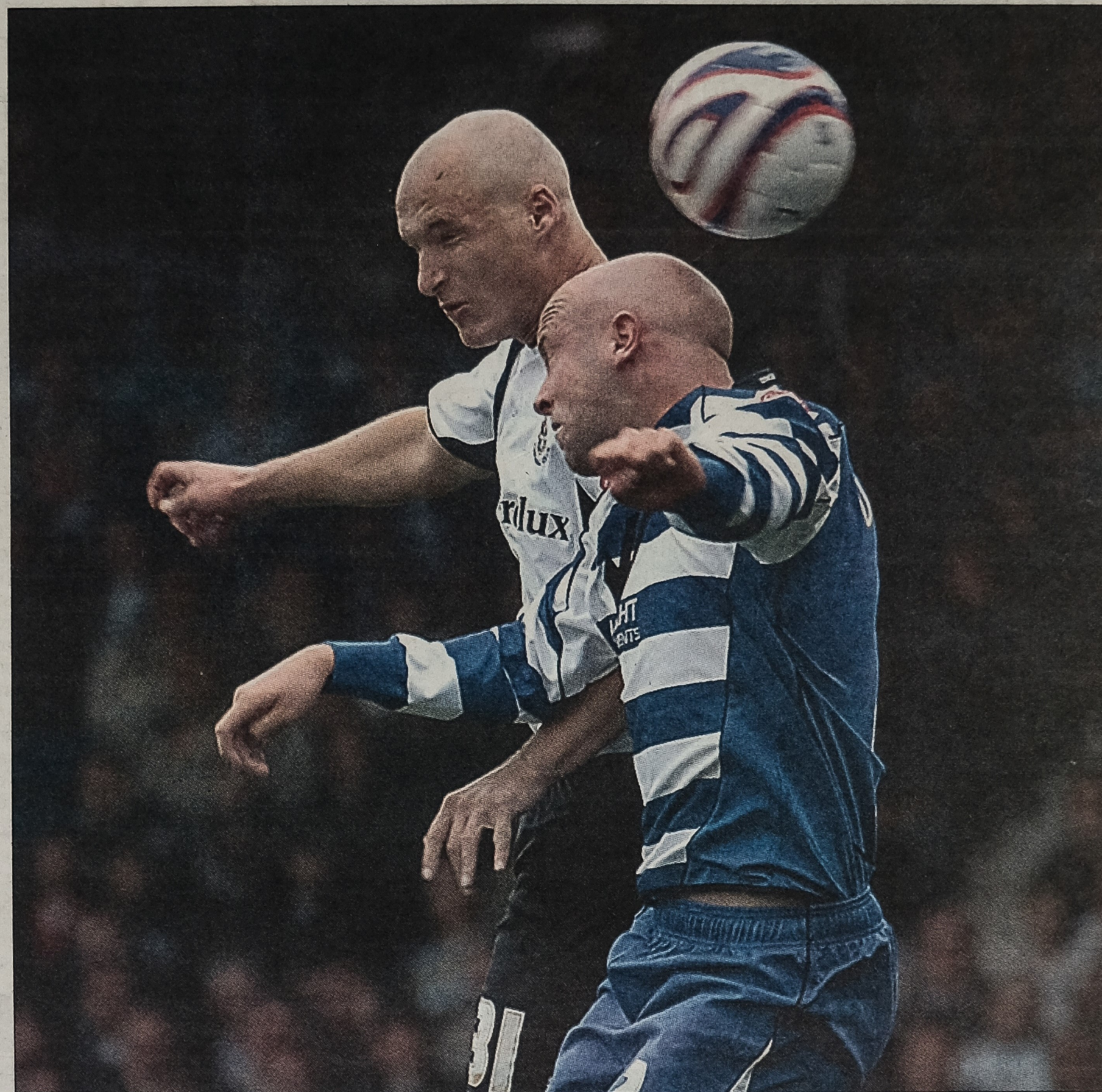
On the draw Blackwell said: "It was a game of two halves. We created much more in the second half. They overloaded us in midfield so we pushed our fullbacks further forward to combat it.

"But we have got to finish our approach play. We've sold strikers such as (Rowan) Vine and (Steve) Howard and they've not been replaced."

David Bell was ruled out with a rib injury after Tuesday night's hard earned point at Yeovil so Furlong returned to the starting line-up after his mid-week suspension. Calvin Andrew kept his place up front as Luton went back to 4-4-2.

A frustrating half began well enough for the Hatters. Nine minutes in and a neat link up between Furlong and Andrew teed up David Edwards who shot was smothered by a posse of players blocking Rovers' goalkeeper Neil Sullivan.

On 20 minutes Luton nearly got their reward for keeping the ball well when Chris Perry was released down the right. His cross was deep for



Hatters defender Jaroslaw Fojut goes for a high ball in the draw with Doncaster yesterday. Below, Paul Furlong smiles after his equalising goal

Andrew at the far post who headed back across goal. Spring arrived on time but headed over.

And that was as 'good' as it got. Doncaster took the lead seven minutes later and could have had three or four before the break.

The goal was straightforward enough - James Coppinger shook off Alan Goodall and reached the byline before crossing. Hayter met it in the middle with a powerful point blank header that gave on-loan Spurs 'keeper Ben Alnwick no chance on his home debut.

Skipper Chris Coyne went off injured on the half hour mark and was replaced by Richard Jackson. Perry, who began the game at right back, took the captaincy and moved to central defence.

But it didn't bolster Luton's shaky backline. The away side played like they were at home, steamrolling Hatters and carving up opportunities with alarming ease. There was a double let off on 41 minutes when Rovers were thwarted by the wood-

work twice.

Hatters switched off at the set piece and in a goalmouth scramble first Stephen Roberts headed against the post then Hayter headed against the crossbar.

News of England's win over Australia at the Rugby World Cup filtered through which changed the crowd's boos to cheers, but on the pitch there was nothing to celebrate at half time.

There was a sign of life on 55 minutes when Steve Robinson took advantage of some hesitant Doncaster defending cutting inside, and shooting low past Sullivan but inches past the post.

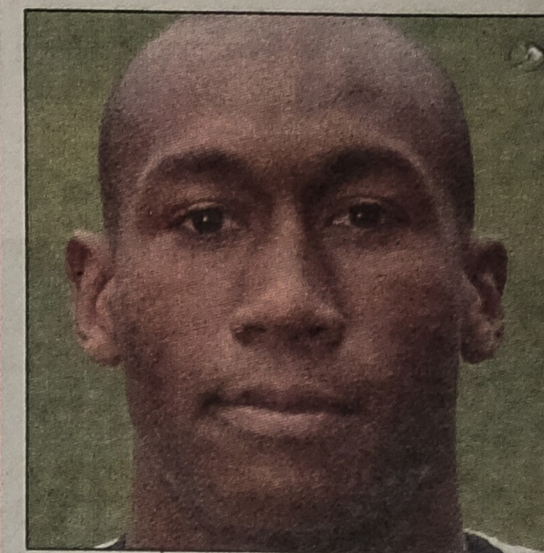
Then two minutes later came the breakthrough. Furlong lead a break out of Luton's half and picked out Andrew unmarked on the left. The veteran striker continued his run and hurled himself at his partner's pinpoint cross to head in the equaliser.

It should have spurred his side on but instead the game fizzled out.

Spring blazed over from just outside the area and Furlong prodded straight at Sullivan from close range but Luton were left to reflect that it was two points dropped rather than one gained against an average Doncaster Rovers.



stats corner



Calvin Andrew

Enthusiastic display up front

THE SQUAD

Alnwick; Perry, Coyne (Jackson 31m), Fojut, Goodall; Currie (McVeigh 84m), Spring, Robinson, Edwards; Furlong, Andrew. Subs: Brkovic, Talbot, Hutchison

MATCH FACTS

CORNERS

LUTON 2 DONCASTER 4

OFFSIDE

LUTON 2 DONCASTER 2

SHOTS ON TARGET

LUTON 4 DONCASTER 4

SHOTS OFF TARGET

LUTON 9 DONCASTER 6

BOOKINGS

LUTON

Currie 23, Goodall 50, Robinson 65

DONCASTER

Mills 81

REFEREE

(NORTHANTS)

ANDY WOOLMER

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Brighton	0	Bristol Rov	0
Carlisle	4	Millwall	0
Cheltenham	1	Oldham	1
Crewe	1	Bournem'th	4
Leeds	1	Yeovil	1
Leyton Orient	0	Swansea	5
Luton	1	Doncaster	1
Northampton	2	Port Vale	1
Nottm Forest	2	Hartlepool	1
Southend	1	Tranmere	2
Swindon	5	Gillingham	0
Walsall	4	Huddersf'd	0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tranmere	10	5	4	1	15	9	19
Leyton O	10	6	1	3	15	17	19
Carlisle	10	5	3	2	16	8	18
Swansea	10	5	2	3	16	10	17
Notts Forest	9	4	4	1	15	6	16
Swindon	10	4	4	2	18	10	16
Southend	10	5	1	4	16	15	16
Hartlepool	10	4	2	4	17	14	14
Brighton	10	4	2	4	12	10	14
Walsall	10	4	2	4	13	13	14
Yeovil	10	4	2	4	7	9	14
Leeds	10	9	1	0	19	4	13
Northampton	10	3	4	3	15	13	13
Huddersf'd	10	4	1	5	9	16	13
Bristol Rvs	10	2	6	2	11	13	12
Doncaster	10	3	2	5	13	14	11
Luton	10	3	2	5	11	13	11
Oldham	9	3	1	5	10	12	10
Crewe	10	2	4	4	10	15	10
Gillingham	10	3	1	6	8	21	10
Cheltenham	10	2	3	5	8	14	9
Port Vale	10	2	2	6	8	12	8
B'mouth	10	2	2	6	9	15	8
Millwall	10	2	2	6	6	14	8