

Cutting edge missing but Hatters boss content with goalless draw

# Away point offers crumb of comfort

## LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE  
**WALSALL** 0  
**LUTON** 0 03/08

**TOM LEECH**  
at Bescot Stadium  
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LUTON TOWN boss Kevin Blackwell distanced himself from the midweek FA charges bought against the club after seeing his side pick up a rare away point.

"I don't think anyone wants to be associated with anything as unsavoury as the club has had this week. It happened before the chairman and I came here. The chairman will clear that up with a statement in the week," said Blackwell who refused to say any more on the subject.

Yesterday's game was as exciting as the scoreline suggests, but this hard-earned draw was only the second point Luton have picked up away from home so far and Blackwell was keen to praise his injury-hit side.

"It was a good performance," he said. "The cutting edge wasn't there but we know that.

"Walsall's a difficult place to come to but we came back unbeaten – and that's what we did.

"It was a tight game and we had to change things around to get more steel in the team. You've got to earn the right to get out of this division."

Walsall's boss Richard Money played for Luton in the early 80s and said of his old team: "There's a massive expectation on them to go back up this season.

"If we were in the Premiership you'd call Luton Town a multi-million pound side with the players they've signed and the wealth of experience they have in their squad.

"If we finish above Luton we'll have had a good season."

International call-ups removed Steve Robinson and Dave Edwards from the side that drew with Brentford last weekend but the Hatters' ranks were bolstered by a pair of Premiership loan signings.

Two 20-year-olds – Marc Wilson from Portsmouth and Anthony Grant from Chelsea – were drafted in before yesterday's game but only Wilson started, replacing Darren Currie. Paul McVeigh was given a start in place of Edwards and veteran Don Hutchison took over from Robinson in midfield.

The Saddlers, promoted from League Two last season, had been beaten just once in the last nine games. In stark contrast, Blackwell's Luton had the unenviable title of worst away record in the



HEADS HELD HIGH: Matthew Spring in the thick of things at Walsall yesterday

division, with just a solitary point from seven games on the road.

Top scorer Paul Furlong limped off minutes into Saturday's FA Cup tie so Calvin Andrew continued as a lone striker with McVeigh supporting him. Walsall had Tommy Mooney and England cap Michael Ricketts in their attack but both sides failed to pack much punch up front.

The talking points of the first half came from two crunching tackles early on. Chris Perry got his name in the book when he put the brakes on speedy winger Ishmel Demontagnac with a late lunge that sent the Walsall player flying. Hatters' new boy Wilson was lucky to escape unscathed from a tangle with Anthony Gerrard that earned the Saddlers' defender a yellow card. Gerrard appeared to go in with studs on a 50/50 ball with Wilson who started brightly on his debut.

Goalmouth action was limited

but both sides had a chance each in a closely fought first half. Luton were foiled on 25 minutes after a long ball was pumped forward for Andrew to chase, and the forward made something of it by brushing aside his marker giving him a run at goal. But goalkeeper Clayton Ince was off his line quickly to smother at Andrew's feet.

Hatters had a let-off just after the half hour mark when some confusion in the box presented Walsall with a chance. A clearance deflected right into the path of Ricketts, who from point blank range, headed wide with Dean Brill breathing a sigh of relief.

Summer signing McVeigh looked more like the player he was at Norwich when handed his start and the Ulsterman went close on 56 minutes. Andrew crossed from nearly the byline and McVeigh met the ball at the near post with a deft touch that went across Ince and inches past the post.

Luton were on top and denied a blatant penalty on the hour. Matt Spring picked out David Bell with a cross field ball and the winger opted to head the ball downwards and into the area but Darren Wrack's arm blocked the intended pass.

Protests were waved away by referee Taylor whose constant whistle blowing added to the stop/start nature of the match.

It had a draw written all over it but again both sides had a chance to win it at the end. On 70 minutes Luton brought on Dean Talbot who almost had an instant impact. Brill drilled a cross into the box and Talbot got some sort of contact on the ball that almost looped over Ince.

Moments later Hatters had Brill to thank for a share of the spoils. The bustling Mooney broke free and hammered a 25 yard strike. It needed a strong save from Brill who was quick to read the danger and save low down.

## stats corner

### MAN OF THE MATCH



**Jaroslav Fojut**

Commanding display at the back kept Walsall quiet

### THE SQUAD

Brill; Perry, Coyne, Fojut, Jackson; Wilson, Spring, Hutchison, Bell; McVeigh (Talbot 70m), Andrew. Subs: Goodall, Keane, Currie, Grant

### MATCH FACTS

#### CORNERS

WALSALL 2 LUTON 6

#### OFFSIDE

WALSALL 2 LUTON 1

#### SHOTS ON TARGET

WALSALL 2 LUTON 3

#### SHOTS OFF TARGET

WALSALL 5 LUTON 5

#### BOOKINGS

WALSALL 1

Gerrard 18

LUTON 2

Perry 5, Hutchison 34

#### REFEREE

ANTHONY TAYLOR  
(GREATER MANCHESTER)

#### ATTENDANCE

5,056

### FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

|                |   |              |   |
|----------------|---|--------------|---|
| Friday         |   |              |   |
| Swansea        | 0 | Huddersfield | 1 |
| Saturday       |   |              |   |
| Bristol Rovers | 2 | Millwall     | 1 |
| Crewe          | 1 | North'ton    | 0 |
| Doncaster      | 0 | Tranmere     | 0 |
| Leeds          | 2 | Swindon      | 1 |
| Leyton Orient  | 2 | Brighton     | 2 |
| Oldham         | 1 | Port Vale    | 1 |
| Southend       | 2 | Chelt'ham    | 1 |
| Walsall        | 0 | Luton        | 0 |

|               |  |            |
|---------------|--|------------|
| Playing today |  |            |
| Hartlepool    |  | Bournem'th |
| Yeovil        |  | Gillingham |

|              | P  | W  | D | L  | F  | A  | Pts |
|--------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|
| Carlisle     | 15 | 8  | 4 | 3  | 23 | 11 | 28  |
| Leyton O     | 16 | 8  | 4 | 4  | 25 | 26 | 28  |
| Notts Forest | 15 | 7  | 6 | 2  | 25 | 9  | 27  |
| Leeds        | 16 | 13 | 2 | 1  | 31 | 12 | 26  |
| Southend     | 16 | 8  | 2 | 6  | 25 | 22 | 26  |
| Swansea      | 15 | 7  | 4 | 4  | 25 | 16 | 25  |
| Brighton     | 16 | 7  | 4 | 5  | 21 | 16 | 25  |
| Tranmere     | 16 | 6  | 6 | 4  | 18 | 13 | 24  |
| Doncaster    | 16 | 6  | 5 | 5  | 22 | 18 | 23  |
| Crewe        | 16 | 6  | 5 | 5  | 18 | 20 | 23  |
| Huddersf'd   | 16 | 7  | 2 | 7  | 16 | 23 | 23  |
| Walsall      | 16 | 5  | 6 | 5  | 17 | 17 | 21  |
| Swindon      | 15 | 5  | 5 | 5  | 23 | 17 | 20  |
| Hartlepool   | 14 | 6  | 2 | 6  | 20 | 18 | 20  |
| Northampton  | 16 | 5  | 4 | 7  | 19 | 21 | 19  |
| Luton Town   | 16 | 5  | 4 | 7  | 18 | 20 | 19  |
| Bristol      | 16 | 4  | 7 | 5  | 17 | 21 | 19  |
| Yeovil       | 15 | 5  | 4 | 6  | 12 | 16 | 19  |
| Oldham       | 15 | 4  | 4 | 7  | 13 | 16 | 16  |
| Gillingham   | 15 | 4  | 4 | 7  | 14 | 28 | 16  |
| Millwall     | 16 | 3  | 4 | 9  | 14 | 25 | 13  |
| Port Vale    | 16 | 3  | 3 | 10 | 13 | 22 | 12  |
| Bournem'th   | 15 | 3  | 3 | 9  | 15 | 25 | 12  |
| Cheltenham   | 16 | 2  | 6 | 8  | 14 | 26 | 12  |