

Still no luck for Blackwell's battlers as away-day woes go on despite good showing

Red-faced Robins mug unlucky Hatters

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE	
CHELTHENHAM	1
Lindgaard 2	
LUTON	0
	07/08

JIM CUNLIFFE
at Whaddon Road
sport@lsnmedia.co.uk

SOMETIMES you just know it's not going to be your day.

After this defeat Hatters boss Kevin Blackwell must be starting to think it's groundhog day.

Administration, the ten-point deduction and players not getting paid is bad enough – but away from home Luton aren't getting the rub of the green.

Luton deserved to win at Whaddon Road. The fact that they didn't is another kick in the teeth for the team and Blackwell. It's a wonder that the manager has any teeth left.

Luton did everything but that most necessary of things – find the net.

Instead the Robins claimed their first win in 11 games, a first ever against Luton in the league, and swapped places at the bottom.

"I'm so frustrated," said Blackwell, "We've been through shit and bad times and we didn't get one bit of luck tonight."

"We'd have won that game nine times out of ten. It would be nice for Luton Town to get a bit of luck when we need it."

The game was moved to a Friday night to accommodate animals of the four-legged variety yesterday.



DENIED: Matthew Spring had two shots saved brilliantly

The best performances have been under lights and the previous seven games were unbeaten.

It was the best run of the season and all signs pointed to Cheltenham becoming the first team this campaign to lose to Luton at home.

Robins' keeper Shane Higgs clearly hadn't read the script as three times

he shut the shop door in spectacular style.

The early goal, scored by Andy Lindgaard after just two minutes, ultimately proved the decider, but it was a goal and a result that flattered Cheltenham who just weren't at the races for the first 45 minutes.

Luton's away day woes seemed to be abating when they fought tooth and nail at Oldham for a thoroughly deserved draw.

This was an altogether more stylish performance, made more impressive by some enforced changes.

Out were rock-solid Bolton loanee Jaroslav Fojut and fan-favourite David Bell. Goal hero against Nottingham Forest, Calvin Andrew, was put on the bench after Blackwell had spent the week saying he was reluctant to put so much pressure in leading the line on his young shoulders.

But disaster struck when Lindgaard appeared on two minutes to poke home Shane Duff's flick from David Bird's long throw.

The Luton of a few months ago might well have buckled but there's a new impetus now because points mean survival.

There was no shellshock just calm methodical play that saw Cheltenham forced back into their own half for long periods.

If not for Higgs, Luton could have had at least three goals by the break. Youngster Marc Wilson tested him on six minutes when he rose to head Darren Currie's corner.

He then twice denied Matthew Spring in outstanding fashion from fierce long range efforts on nine and

25 minutes respectively.

At the other end Dean Brill was only called into action when, wrong footed by Damian Spencer's tame 25-yard effort, he stuck out a leg to black and watched gratefully as Steven Gillespie and Guy Madjo got in each other's way to try and steer the rebound home.

All the while the pace, pressure and passing in their approach play kept the Robins at bay and cried out for a final product that frustratingly didn't come.

Cheltenham were more dogged in the second half and nearly scored when Gillespie produced a solo run and shot on 49 minutes. It wriggled through Brill's legs only for Richard Jackson to clear.

Blackwell threw what was left of the kitchen sink at Cheltenham by bringing on Anthony Grant, Drew Talbot and Andrew in the last ten minutes – the latter going agonisingly close to being the hero for the second game running.

Right at the death he met Spring's deep cross, sending his header looping into the far corner only for Higgs to prove Luton's nemesis with a top drawer save.

The two teams may neighbour each other in the league table. To the home side, it was a case of a six-pointer as they're not accustomed to winning.

Unfortunately, on the road, nor are Luton, but you can't help thinking that if the Hatters continue to play as well as this then the elusive away win will soon arrive – a little bit of luck permitting.

stats corner

MAN OF THE MATCH



KEITH KEANE

Late replacement in central midfield to great effect

THE SQUAD

Brill; Perry; Coyne; Currie; Jackson (Andrew 85); Robinson (Talbot 60); Edwards (Grant 66); Keane; Spring; Furlong; Wilson
SUBS: Goodall, McVeigh

MATCH FACTS

SHOTS ON TARGET
CHELTHENHAM 6 LUTON 8

SHOTS OFF TARGET
CHELTHENHAM 3 LUTON 3

CORNERS
CHELTHENHAM 2 LUTON 9

OFFSIDE
CHELTHENHAM 3 LUTON 3

BOOKINGS
CHELTHENHAM
Sinclair 43, Spencer 70, Gillespie 80
LUTON
Perry 88, Currie 66, Spring 20

REFEREE
STEVE BRATT (WEST MIDLANDS)

ATTENDANCE
3,702

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Bournemouth	1	Gillingham	0
Carlisle	1	Leyton Orient	0
Hartlepool	3	Crewe	0
Huddersfield	2	Bristol R	1
Millwall	2	Oldham	3
Nottm Forest	2	Northampton	2
Port Vale	0	Tranmere	0
Swansea	3	Southend	0
Swindon	0	Brighton	3
Walsall	1	Leeds Utd	1

Played Friday:

Cheltenham	1	Luton Town	0
------------	---	------------	---

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swansea	19	11	4	4	33	16	37
Carlisle	19	10	6	3	31	15	36
Notts Forest	19	9	7	3	31	12	34
Leyton O	20	10	4	6	28	28	34
Leeds	20	15	3	2	39	14	33
Southend	20	10	2	8	31	28	32
Brighton	20	8	6	6	26	20	30
Walsall	20	7	8	5	21	18	29
Doncaster	19	7	7	5	26	20	28
Tranmere	20	7	7	6	22	18	28
Yeovil	19	8	4	7	20	21	28
Hartlepool	20	8	3	9	29	26	27
Huddersf'd	20	8	2	10	19	33	26
Oldham	19	6	6	7	21	20	24
Crewe	20	6	6	8	20	28	24
Swindon	19	6	5	8	25	25	23
Gillingham	20	6	4	10	21	36	22
Northampton	20	5	6	9	23	30	21
Bristol	18	4	7	7	18	24	19
Millwall	19	5	4	10	19	29	19
Cheltenham	19	4	6	9	16	28	18
Port Vale	20	4	4	12	16	29	16
Bournemouth	20	4	4	12	19	34	16
Luton Town	19	6	5	8	20	22	13



NOT THIS TIME: Paul Furlong is beaten to a high ball