

Hatters now relying on walking wounded

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE

LUTON

Furlong '69'

SWANSEA

Keane (o.g) '5', Buaza '64', Scotland '82'

1

3

07/08

TOM LEECH
at Vale Park

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LUCKLESS Luton fell to only their second home defeat of the season as the fates conspired against the Hatters once again.

With player sales already stripping the squad, injuries to Chris Perry and Dean Brill helped Swansea to run out comfortable winners.

Even though Brill is unlikely to be fully fit for Tuesday's Cup tie at Anfield, he will have to be patched up for the match as there are no other goalkeeping options at the club.

After the match assistant manager Sam Ellis vented his disapproval of the sales of David Edwards and Chris Coyne midweek with a dig at administrator Brendan Guilfoyle and football agent Ben Mansford who endorsed the transfers.

"I don't know if the player sales are over," he said. "We don't know who or when the next sale could be. The reason for the month's notice is that we don't feel the players deserve to be left alone."

"When we came here we felt we had a chance to build something but that's life. We're leaving at the best time in the circumstances. A new consortium would have to buy a club with no assets – because that's the way it's going."

"The administrator is relying on the advice of an ex-solicitor who may or may not have the best interests of the club at heart. I presume he knows what he's doing."

"All I'd say was that three days into a 25-day transfer window is too quick to sell players. Edwards in particular was worth, in my eyes, £1.5 million."

Ellis also insisted he and manager Kevin Blackwell would be leaving the club. "Whoever takes over may want someone else in charge," he said. "We've had no contact with any of the groups interested in buying the club. We won't stay any longer than Bournemouth. As far as I'm concerned after then, we won't be here."

"The lads acquitted themselves well today. With the injuries it was always going to be an uphill task but the attitude and commitment was good."

The Welsh side went ahead through Keith Keane's own goal and doubled their advantage through Spanish striker Guillem Bauza.

Substitute Paul Furlong scored with his first touch to give the Kenilworth Road crowd hope but Jason Scotland made sure of the three points late on.

Luton managed to hold on to Brill, Calvin Andrew and Drew Talbot



FULL OF INCIDENT: Clockwise from top: Paul Furlong scores for Luton with his first touch; Dean Brill who was injured for most of the match and will have to be patched up to play at Anfield as there are no other options; John Carver and Kevin Blackwell



before kick off so Hatters had the same goalkeeper and strike partnership from last weekend's cup heroics.

But with Matt Spring suspended and Edwards and Coyne sold suddenly, they were minus a two midfielders and their skipper. In stepped Steve Robinson, Don Hutchison and Richard Jackson with Perry taking over as captain.

With the goings-on off the field this was not the ideal time to be taking on top of the league Swansea. The Welsh side had only lost twice away all season and went a goal up just five minutes in.

Skillful winger Andy Robinson skinned Jackson before cutting inside from the left and drilled a shot that deflected off Perry beating Brill. The covering Keane accidentally bundled the ball over the line.

But heads didn't drop and only the post denied an early response from the home side. Drew Talbot hounded Dennis Lawrence into making a mistake at the byline and the striker went for goal but couldn't beat the angle, smacking his shot against Dorus De Vries' near

post.

From then on Hatters had plenty of the play – they just needed a bit of luck. However as Luton fans are well aware, that was last spotted around the Kenilworth Road area sometime in the early 90s.

To emphasise the fact Brill went down injured mid way through the half but with no keeper on the bench had to stay on with Keane and Alan Goodall taking turns on goal kicks.

Darren Currie went close on 26 minutes with a fine solo effort as Hatters' confidence grew. Talbot should have done more with a glancing header.

It looked to be shaping up as an interesting second half until the club's only recognised centre half limped off on 56 minutes. Perry was replaced by left back Lewis Emanuel whose loan move to Lincoln was cancelled mid-week and Hutchison took on the armband.

The former Tottenham defender's loss was felt on 64 minutes when Swansea went two up with a slick counter attack. The move came from a Luton corner when the clearance came to Scotland on the half-way

line. He held it up for Angel Rangel who fed it to Darren Pratley. Hatters were short on numbers at the back and Pratley's pass split Luton open and gave Bauza an easy tap-in.

With nothing to lose Blackwell switched to three at the back and threw Furlong on – with an instant impact. Emanuel broke down the left and fizzed a cross to the near post. Talbot got a touch that deceived De Vries but it was Furlong following up who raised the roof prodding in from close range.

But the fightback had the stuffing kicked out of it when Scotland grabbed Swansea's third eight minutes from time. The Swans were allowed time and space on the edge of the box and when Trinidad & Tobago international Scotland spun his marker and hit a low drive the injured Brill was never going to get down in time.

So onto the simple task of beating Liverpool at Anfield on Tuesday night with a squad of players who are being sold from under the Hatters' feet. But Luton have a plan – "We'll get a Wickes' brick wall up in defence," revealed Ellis.

stats corner

MAN OF THE MATCH

Keith Keane

A performance full of fight and determination



THE SQUAD

Brill; Jackson (Furlong '69'), Perry (Emanuel '56'), Keane, Goodall; Bell, Robinson, Hutchison, Currie; Andrew, Talbot. Subs: O'Leary, Morgan, McVeigh.

MATCH FACTS

SHOTS ON TARGET

LUTON 3

SWANSEA 7

SHOTS OFF TARGET

LUTON 6

SWANSEA 5

CORNERS

LUTON 6

SWANSEA 7

OFFSIDE

LUTON 0

SWANSEA 4

BOOKINGS

LUTON 1

Jackson '62'

SWANSEA 0

REFEREE

F GRAHAM

ATTENDANCE

6,756

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Cheltenham	1	Bournemouth	0
Crewe	1	Leeds	0
Doncaster	1	Carlisle	0
Huddersfield	1	Gillingham	3
Luton	1	Swansea	3
Northampton	1	Hartlepool	1
Nottm Forest	4	L'ton Orient	0
Oldham	1	Brighton	1
Port Vale	3	Millwall	1
Southend	1	Yeovil	1
Walsall	2	Swindon	2

Played Friday

Tranmere 0 Bristol Rovers 2

Playing Monday

Crewe v Leeds

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swansea	23	14	5	4	44	21	47
Nott'm Forest	24	12	8	4	39	16	44
Carlisle	24	12	6	6	38	25	42
D'caster	25	11	8	6	38	24	41
Walsall	26	10	11	5	32	22	41
Leeds	25	17	4	4	21	26	40
Leyton O	26	11	7	8	33	36	40
Yeovil	26	10	6	10	25	28	36
Brighton	24	9	7	8	31	28	34
Tranmere	26	9	7	10	28	28	34
Southend	25	10	4	11	34	35	34
Swindon	24	8	8	8	33	31	32
Oldham	24	8	8	8	26	24	32
Hartlepool	25	8	6	11	35	35	30
Gillingham	24	8	6	10	28	38	30
Hudders'f'd	25	9	3	13	25	41	30
Bristol Rvrs	23	7	8	8	25	26	29
North'ton	26	7	8	11	31	39	29
Crewe	24	7	7	10	25	38	28
Millwall	24	7	5	12	26	36	26
Cheltenham	24	6	6	12	19	35	24
Luton	24	9	6	9	26	27	23
Port Vale	26	5	5	16	23	39	20
B'mouth	25	5	5	15	27	45	20