

Dismal run shows no sign of ending

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE

LUTON 0 07/08
Be
LEYTON ORIENT 1
Ibehre 26

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A **TOOTHLESS** performance saw Luton slip to their sixth defeat in seven games under manager Mick Harford.

Jabo Ibehre's 26th minute goal was enough to gift Orient three points in a game that saw more fights than Luton efforts on target.

Form and history were with Luton, suggesting the ideal opportunity to register Luton's first win under Harford.

The Os had lost their last seven games on the road and had not beaten Luton at Kenilworth Road for 15 games, stretching back to 1962.

But the Hatters never looked like scoring as it took them over an hour to trouble keeper Stuart Nelson.

How they could have done with the Gillingham fog to descend around Kenilworth Road, or better still, the pitch to open up and swallow them just to put an end to this sorry campaign.

The chances to save themselves from the drop are now falling away fast and it's starting to dawn that reality looks like fourth-tier football next season.

Harford made two changes from the 4-1 defeat to Bournemouth, handing 17-year-old George Beavan his first start and replacing an injured Darren Currie with striker Calvin Andrew.

A frenetic first ten minutes showed more life and more fight than the whole of the Hatters' previous 90.

That fight threatened to manifest itself for real minutes later when Lewis Emanuel appeared to head butt Jason Demetriou.

A melee ensued but it was the Leyton player who inexplicably saw yellow when the Hatter probably should have seen red.

The midfielder got his own back



ALL IN VAIN: Dean Morgan drives forward late in the game

on 25 minutes supplying the final ball after a one-touch move that scythed open Luton's defence.

Sol Davis failed to deal with the cross and Ibehre pounced to stab in off the bar.

Orient shaded a half that was fast and furious but lacked any quality, and worryingly for Luton, with top scorer Paul Furlong on the bench, no sign of a breakthrough.

Leyton's Demetriou, who had been finding his range in the first half, was given all the time in the world to size up a 25 yard curler which Brill did well to hold.

Former Hatter Adam Boyd was sniffing a rebound and a chance to embarrass his former employees.

Goalscorer Ibehre almost grabbed a second on the hour with a powerful header that was cleared off the line by a combination of Robinson and Davis.

At the other end Luton were no closer to finding the net, because to do that you have to get a shot on target, a task that on more than one occasion, Matthew Spring and Dean Morgan couldn't manage.

The first shot on target on 65 minutes was a speculative 30 yard Andrew effort that smacked of frustration.

David Bell clearly hadn't come out from the break with the rest of his team-mates and was duly replaced by Furlong.

He introduced himself by nearly converting their best and only chance of the game in the 78th minute, but his diving header went straight to keeper Stuart Nelson who would have been glad of something to do in the freezing cold weather.

With ten minutes to go there was just no urgency from the Hatters until an off the ball incident saw handbags at dawn again with most players joining in a scuffle that saw Robinson and Samuel Oji booked.

It saw five minutes added to a game that just prolonged the agony for Hatters' fans who with a healthy dose of gallows humour had taken to singing "That's why we're going down."

stats corner

MAN OF THE MATCH



Keith Keane

Wore his heart on his sleeve and put his body in where it hurts

THE SQUAD

Brill, Morgan, Bell (Furlong, 68), Parkin, Robinson, Emanuel, Andrew, Keane, Spring, Davis, Beavan
Subs: Goodall, Perry, Talbot, Beresford

MATCH FACTS

CORNERS

LUTON 2 LEYTON ORIENT 7

OFFSIDE

LUTON 1 LEYTON ORIENT 2

SHOTS ON TARGET

LUTON 2 LEYTON ORIENT 5

SHOTS OFF TARGET

LUTON 7 LEYTON ORIENT 3

BOOKINGS

LUTON

Emanuel 86, Robinson 89

LEYTON ORIENT

Demetriou 15, Gray 74, Oji 88

REFEREE

PHIL JOSLIN (NOTTINGHAM)

ATTENDANCE

6,412

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Cheltenham	1	Hartlepool	0
Luton	0	Leyton Orient	1
Northampton	4	Gillingham	0
Nottm Forest	1	Swindon	0
Oldham	3	Yeovil	0
Port Vale	0	Swansea	2
Southend	2	Bournemouth	1
Tranmere	2	Millwall	0

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swansea	31	20	7	4	59	25	67
D'caster	31	16	8	7	48	28	56
Nott'm Forest	31	14	11	6	46	23	53
Carlisle	30	15	7	8	44	31	52
Tranmere	33	14	9	10	38	30	51
Walsall	32	12	13	7	38	27	49
Leyton O	33	13	10	10	39	43	49
Southend	32	14	5	13	49	46	47
Leeds	32	18	7	7	51	28	46
Oldham	31	11	10	10	34	28	43
Swindon	31	11	10	10	40	35	43
North'ton	33	11	10	12	41	42	43
Yeovil	33	11	8	14	29	39	41
Hartlepool	32	11	7	14	48	47	40
Bristol Rvrs	29	10	10	9	33	32	40
Huddersf'd	30	12	4	14	31	44	40
Brighton	29	10	9	10	36	32	39
Cheltenham	32	9	8	15	25	43	35
Crewe	32	8	10	14	30	48	34
Millwall	31	9	6	16	31	47	33
G'illingham	31	8	8	15	30	49	32
Luton	31	9	7	15	32	44	24
B'mouth	33	9	5	19	42	59	22
Port Vale	33	5	7	21	31	55	22

Big match reaction... Big match reaction...

HATTERS boss Mick Harford (pictured): "The club is on a bit of a downer and these results seem to happen.

"I've said to the players that we'll battle on, we won't drop our heads. We'll stick our chests out and get on with it.

"I've had some massive challenges in my short managerial career but this is the toughest one.

"It's the hand we've been dealt and hopefully the future will pan out into a good one but at the moment it's difficult for everyone.

"The effort was first class! Just at the moment things aren't going our way. We made one mistake and it cost us a goal.

"We didn't create a lot. We are bitterly disappointed, but overall it was an improvement from last week."

Keith Keane (pictured) said:

"As long as the points are still there I will believe we can get out of relegation.

"I thought we played well, in fact I thought we played better than them.

We lost the game from their only real shot of the game.

"We're making too many defensive mistakes at the minute. Sol (Davis) doesn't make many mistakes but it cost us today.

"I wouldn't blame him for it because these things happen, we've just got to get over it.

"We need to create more chances going forward and it is one of the things we are working on because we seem to do more of our work outside the box."

