

Title-chasing Shrews tame Hatters

KEEPER LOGAN SAVES HARFORD'S INEXPERIENCED SIDE FROM A THRASHING AFTER HORROR SHOW

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE TWO
SHREWSBURY 3
Murray 4, Davies 76m Holt 86

LUTON TOWN 0
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HALLOWEEN may be over for another year but there's still plenty for Luton fans to be scared of after this shocker in Shropshire.

Manager Mick Harford's injury-ravaged squad included two YTS players, a schoolboy and a defender forced to play in midfield. They didn't stand a chance against promotion-chasing Shrewsbury who cruised to the win with goals from Paul Murray, Ben Davies and Grant Holt.

Hatters midweek game against Bournemouth fell victim to the weather and in all honesty the best hope Luton had of getting something would have been another snow storm to cancel the fixture until they get some of their players back to full fitness.

The key to Luton's win last weekend at Bury was a bold start that caught the home side cold.

That tactic went out of the window after just four minutes at the Prostar Stadium. An innocuous cross appeared to have been dealt with by Keith Keane's defensive header that reached Murray on the edge of the box.

The midfielder followed the crowd's instructions to shoot through a crowd of Luton players who were still too frozen from Tuesday night to close him down.

Rocked by the early setback Hatters looked like they were there for the taking against the division's top scorers. Conrad Logan's blushes were spared when Richard Walker beat Luton's goalkeeper to the ball 17 minutes in.

Logan came off his line to claim the ball by going over the top of the Shrews' striker whose header went just wide of the empty net.

Moments later Kevin McIntyre burst through the middle and sprung the Hatters' offside trap. Only Logan's vigilance prevented the winger getting a clear sight of goal as he spread himself to block the shot.

Shrews captain Davies thought he'd grabbed his side's second when he curled the ball around Logan but it went inches wide of the far post.

It took sluggish Luton until the half hour mark to make an impact in the Shrewsbury half. The hard-working Paul McVeigh tried to spur his teammates on by warming Glyn Garner's gloves with a fierce long range effort that had to be tipped over the bar.

That was as good as it got before the break for Mick Harford's threadbare side. Such is the lack of available players there wasn't much the manager could change and the half-time team talk couldn't provide any answers on how to tame



the Shrews as the home side continued to carve open Luton.

Two minutes in Chris Humphrey's cross went right through the penalty area to Davies whose volley was again blocked by Logan.

The shot-stopper on loan from Leicester City was again called into action when he saved low down from Michael Jackson's header as Hatters began to crumble under the pressure.

A second goal was always on the cards the only surprise was that it took until the 76th minute for Shrewsbury to make sure of the points.

The build-up wasn't pretty as Davies bundled his way into the box from the left with the aid of a ricochet or three but the finish was sublime.

The ball sat up for a right-footed volley and he smashed it into the top corner of Logan's net.

Sixteen-year-old striker Jordan Patrick was introduced in the closing stages and ran on in time to witness Shrewsbury's Holt cap the Shropshire side's day with a cheeky third on 86 minutes.

Walker delivered a cross and Holt

– Shrews' record £170,000 signing from Nottingham Forest in the summer – deceived Logan with a nonchalant back heel flick that dribbled over the line.

HIGH BALL: Chris Martin wins a header against Graham Coughlan

The stats

FOOTBALL LEAGUE TWO

Bournemouth	1	Chesterfield	1
Bradford	3	Barnet	3
Brentford	1	Rochdale	2
Dag & Red	0	Acc'ton St'ley	0
Exeter	2	Chester	0
Grimsby	1	Darlington	2
Lincoln City	0	Port Vale	1
Macclesfield	0	Gillingham	1
Morecambe	2	Aldershot	0
Notts County	0	Bury	1
Rotherham	0	Wycombe	0
Shrewsbury	3	Luton	0

THE SQUAD

Logan; Keane, Roper, Worley, Howells; Gnakpa (Patrick 86), Spillane, Jarvis, McVeigh; Martin (Andrews 61), Craddock. Subs: Brill, Beavan, Farthing

LEAGUE TWO TABLE

		HOME						AWAY							
TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS		
1 DARLINGTON	15	4	2	1	13	6	4	2	2	14	8	13	28		
2 WYCOMBE	14	3	3	0	8	4	4	4	0	7	2	9	28		
3 BRADFORD	15	4	3	1	16	11	4	0	3	13	10	8	27		
4 EXETER	15	3	2	3	10	11	5	1	1	12	7	4	27		
5 SHREWSBURY	15	6	1	1	24	5	1	4	2	7	8	18	26		
6 ROCHE DALE	15	4	1	2	15	8	3	4	1	11	9	9	26		
7 BURY	15	3	1	3	8	7	4	3	1	14	9	6	25		
8 DAG & RED	15	4	3	1	18	5	3	0	4	10	11	12	24		
9 BRENTFORD	15	4	3	1	13	6	2	3	2	4	6	5	24		
10 GILLINGHAM	15	5	1	1	14	3	2	2	4	7	18	0	24		
11 LINCOLN CITY	15	3	3	2	11	8	3	1	3	7	7	3	22		
12 CHESTERFIELD	15	3	1	3	11	8	3	2	3	15	13	5	21		
13 PORT VALE	15	2	0	5	8	15	4	1	3	10	8	-5	19		
14 ALDERSHOT	15	4	3	0	13	9	1	0	7	7	20	-9	18		
15 NOTTS CITY	15	1	5	2	8	9	1	4	2	10	12	-3	15		
16 ACCRINGTON	15	2	1	4	8	10	2	2	4	7	10	-5	15		
17 MORECAMBE	15	2	4	2	10	10	0	3	4	6	15	-9	13		
18 BARNET	15	1	2	4	6	10	2	2	4	12	20	-12	13		
19 CHESTER	15	2	2	3	11	9	1	2	5	7	22	-13	13		
20 MACCLESFIELD	14	2	0	6	9	20	2	1	3	6	9	-14	13		
21 ROTHERHAM	15	4	2	2	14	9	3	3	1	8	5	8	9		
22 GRIMSBY	15	0	3	5	6	13	0	3	4	3	17	-21	6		
23 BOURNETHAM	14	2	3	3	7	7	1	2	3	8	13	-5	-3		
24 LUTON	14	1	2	3	8	10	3	2	3	8	10	-4	-14		

Post match...

LUTON TOWN manager Mick Harford outlined again the injury crisis that is threatening to derail Hatters' survival hopes.

The treatment room at Kenilworth Road is packed with players who would surely speed up Hatters rush to get to plus points before Christmas were they fit.

But the boss has had to borrow from the youth team and put square pegs in round holes just to put a team out and admitted: "We took 16 players here today – that's all we've got."

YTS players Jake Howells and Mark Farthing were joined by schoolboy Jordan Patrick, while defender Michael Spillane was forced to play in midfield. "It's not Michael's natural position but we had no other options," said Harford.

"We're short of bodies which is well documented. Players who want to play always get fitter quicker than those that don't.

"We wanted to win or at least draw here to use as a springboard before the two-week league break. In that time players like Kevin Nicholls, Kevin Watson, George Pilkington and Drew Talbot will be closer to getting off the casualty list. On that performance we need them."

Shrewsbury were never tested by the Hatters who looked pale imitations of the team that beat Bury the previous Saturday.

"I'm very disappointed. We had a spell in the first half but we weren't at the races today," said Harford.

"Shrewsbury were better than us today. We got what we deserved.

"At Bury we moved the ball around the pitch well but here we were average in every department. We couldn't pass the ball today and didn't even have a shot on target in the second half.

"It was a poor goal to concede so early. We warned the lads Paul Murray can hit them from all angles. It wasn't a great start."

Next up for the Hatters is a trip to Walsall in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy on Tuesday and Harford vowed: "We'll get the players in tomorrow and come out fighting again."

MAN OF THE MATCH



CONRAD LOGAN

But for the keeper it could have been a drubbing

MATCH FACTS

SHOTS ON TARGET
SHREWSBURY 11 LUTON 1

SHOTS OFF TARGET
SHREWSBURY 7 LUTON 6

BOOKINGS
SHREWSBURY: ????
Jackson 55, Tierney 90
LUTON: -

REFEREE: ANTHONY TAYLOR (Manchester)

ATTENDANCE: 6,188