

Facts & figures

Blue Square Bet Premier	
Luton Town	5
Histon	1
Attendance: 5,963	10/11

» The line-ups	
	HISTON
JOE WELCH	6
JACK AINSLEY	4
REMY CLERIMA	6
CALLUM STEWART	5
ZAK MILLS	5
LEE SMITH	6
ERKAN OKAY	7
JIM STEVENSON	7
DANIEL SPARKES	7
ANTONIO MURRAY *	7

Substitutes:	
McCrave for Stevenson	
76), Taaffe (Smith 76)	
Lawton (Welch 89)	
Not used:	
D Mills, Alttwood.	

STAR MAN: Antonio Murray

LUTON TOWN

Tyler, Gnaka, Kroc, Pakington, Murray (Blackett, 46min), Drury, Keane, Lawless (Asadu-Ajayaye 66), Howells, Barnes-Homer (Alteno 54), J Walker. Not used: Poku, D Walker.

» In the book	
Referee: J Hopkins.	
Booked: Erkan Drury (foul) 47min, Histon: Okay (foul) 37, 2 Mills (foul) 63, Ainsley (foul) 69.	
» For the record	
1 Crawley	19
2 Histon	19
24 Altrincham	20
Results, table - page 24	

Talking point...

Can Jack Ainsley pick himself up and prove himself during his month with the Stutes?

Up next:

Histon v Bath City, Thursday (7.45pm)

LEADING THE LINE: Histon captain Antonio Murray gave Histon a sniff with a goal late in the first half



Luton Town Histon

By MICHAEL VAUGHTON



JACK Ainsley must have been hoping the fog which swirled above Kenilworth Road for most of the game would have swallowed him up.

The 20-year-old defender had the sort of debut nightmares are made of, with perhaps an own goal or a red card the only thing that could have made his first appearance in a Histon shirt even worse.

Ainsley has arrived on a month's loan from power Championship side Ipswich Town with a growing reputation, thanks to a handful of run-outs for Roy Keane's team and a successful spell with Rushden & Diamonds.

But the youngster, who played at right-back because of Laure Oyebanjo's troublesome calf, will want to wipe Saturday from his memory and start again when Histon host Bath on Thursday night.

Ainsley tried to play his way out of trouble near the touchline and got himself into even more of a hole with seven minutes on the clock. Jason Walker drew the foul and Andy Drury's inswinging free-kick was easily headed past Joe Welch by Claude Gnaka.

Indecision proved costly for Ainsley not long after, and Jake Howells was the beneficiary as he pinched the ball off him and calmly slotted into the corner.

The unwanted hat-trick was completed in the 69th minute when the defender was toyed with by the marauding Drury, before chopping his man down inside the box.

Drury dusted himself down to send the spot-kick past Welch and make it 4-1, putting the game beyond the visitors.

It was a shame to see Ainsley suffering such torment and he will no doubt be determined to show his true colours during the remainder of his spell at the Glass World Stadium.

It was also cruel on the Stutes' forward-thinking players, who showed great character and no little quality to give the

Luton defence plenty of problems. With captain Antonio Murray up front on his own, it was imperative Daniel Sparkes and Lee Smith got forward to support him.

They did exactly that and gave their skipper plenty of back-up to get their team moving forward with real purpose.

Sparkes was particularly dangerous and gave Gnaka a real problem down the left flank with his direct running. Lee Wootton also produced one of his best performances for the Stutes as he looked to get forward at every opportunity and went close with a couple of long-range efforts.

He was given the licence to get forward thanks to the double-strength security blanket provided by Erkan Okay and Jim Stevenson, who showed plenty of potential on his full debut.

Okay and Stevenson were often in the right place at the right time to nip Luton attacks in the bud and they helped the visitors pin their opponents back at the start of the second period.

The man ploughing a lone furrow in attack had to be on good form to fit the pieces of the jigsaw together and Murray

Hatters haunt Ainsley on debut

Defender' bow one to forget as Jack's errors prove costly



led the line confidently, producing a mature performance befitting of a man wearing the armband.

His display was capped by a fine goal two minutes before the break when he side-footed home from 12 yards following Wootton's buccaneering run down the left.

Murray's deserved strike made it 3-1 at half time after Walker had headed home Matthew Barnes-Homer's cross from virtually underneath the crossbar.

After Histon's bright start to the second period, Ainsley's foul on Drury and the subsequent successful penalty ended it as a contest, before substitute Taiwo Alteno made Lewis Taaffe pay for being sloppy in possession by lashing past Welch.

Despite the scoreline suggesting otherwise, there were positives to take from the game for manager David Livermore.

If Ainsley and his defensive cohorts can match the performance of their attackers, the fog-like gloom should quickly lift and Bath could be swallowed up come Thursday.

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TESTING TIMES: Jim Stevenson gave a good account in his first start for Histon, while another youngster, Lee Wootton (left) made a few good forays forward