

Flying full-back pays tribute to team show

by Mark Wood

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Blue Square Bet Premier

Kettering Town 0 (0)
Luton Town 5 (2)

STANDOUT performer Greg Taylor hailed Hatters team performance as they destroyed Kettering Town 5-0 for the second game running at Nene Park on Sunday.

It was only the second time Luton have ever won away on New Year's Day, the last against Coventry City in 1987, and also equals their biggest-ever margin in an away victory.

Town were in irresistible form throughout as first half strikes from Jake Howells and Adam Watkins were followed by a straight red card for Phil Ifil for a lunge on Taylor, while Janos Kovacs, Taylor and substitute Stuart Fleetwood all netted in the second half to cap a great day for Luton.

Taylor, playing against his former club, said: "It was nice to get the win first and foremost, and I thought my performance was OK. I was happy with it, but the main thing is the team performance and the three points.

"It is a great confidence boost, but coming into this game we were a little bit wary.

"We beat them 5-0 the previous week and it's always difficult coming into the away game and it's difficult to beat them two games on the bounce. We did start off a little bit sloppy, but had a 10-minute period where we did press and got our joy from it.

"We dug in, stuck to our game-plan, saw it through and the same happened again, so I'm really



WHOLEHEARTED:
James Dance shone
against his former
club Kettering Town

pleased for the lads."

Illness sidelined Danny Crow and a back problem Dan Gleeson, so in came Curtis Osano and ex-Poppy James Dance.

Town took the lead with their first attack on four minutes when Howells produced a brilliant dummy and surged goalwards. He fed Aaron O'Connor and, although his shot was parried, Howells was on hand to thump home.

Laurie Walker turned another Howells effort around the post on nine minutes, but it was merely a stay of execution as Watkins curled home a wonderful effort from a clever short corner.

Town looked dangerous every time they went forward and came close again on 15 minutes when O'Connor played in the onrushing Taylor but his deflected effort

was well beaten away by Walker.

Dance should then have had a penalty when he was hauled down off the ball in the box while trying to get on the end of a Watkins break.

Walker beat away a thunderous Alex Lawless effort before Howells' dangerous cross was turned into his own net by Djoumin Sangare on 21 minutes, only for it to be ruled out for offside.

A superb 20-yard drive by Taylor cannoned off Walker's near post, before Ifil seemed to react to a strong challenge from Dance by flying in late on Taylor and was promptly shown a straight red card by referee N Kinseley with five minutes remaining.

On the stroke of half time an O'Connor effort deflected off a defender and on to the bar, while

Kovacs headed a corner wide.

Dance had an effort blocked and then flicked just wide at the start of the second half, before Luton finally sealed victory on 62 minutes when Watkins whipped in a corner and Kovacs planted home his header from close range.

The lively Dance burst past three players but his low drive was easily saved by Walker, while he could only hit the bar from a couple of yards out after Taylor had put it on a plate for him on 72 minutes.

Luton did not net from the resulting corner as Kovacs powered Watkins' delivery against a post and Taylor drove home an unstoppable strike from the rebound.

Dance flashed a volley wide as the champagne football flowed, while substitutes Robbie Willmott and Fleetwood threatened.

A Willmott cross seemed to hit ex-Town star Stephen O'Leary's arm in the box but only a corner was given, while the woodwork again saved the Poppies with five minutes to go as Willmott's up-and-under cross drew a sublime first-time effort from Fleetwood that crashed off the post and out.

Ex-Hatter Sol Davis was substituted late on and received a rapturous send-off from the visiting faithful, while substitute Ryan Brunt was denied a late penalty when he was ruled offside.

A fantastic performance was capped in the third minute of injury time when Watkins played in Fleetwood and the striker beat Walker with a cracking finish.

Marna fired a late effort right at Kevin Pilkington as he was forced to make his only save in a match the Hatters dominated from start to finish.