



LUTON TOWN 2 WELLING 1

Gray 17, 79

Dyer 47

13/14



"We've been away for so long and done so many miles, but it's nice to be back home and today I thought the supporters were absolutely fantastic."
TERRY HARRIS,
Luton assistant manager



"We've come a long way as a club, but we're nowhere near the same level as Luton and they've got players who can change games, like Gray did."
JAMIE DAY,
Welling manager

PRAISE FOR LORD GRAY AS HATTERS MARCH ON

Andre's double sees off Welling

By **STUART HAMMONDS**

VERDICT: A game Luton would have lost last year, but the ominously obscure Hatters remain unbeaten at Kenilworth Road.

Luton fans' prayers were answered by their 'Lord', Andre Gray, as the in-form England C striker scored twice to clip Welling's wings at Kenilworth Road.

The Hatters huffed and puffed for long parts of what looked like being a frustrating afternoon on their return to Bedfordshire after six weeks on the road.

But the home faithful's signature tune – 'Andre Gray, my Lord, Andre Gray' – rang out as his 79th-minute tap-in secured three points that had been threatened by Alex Dyer's equaliser, and the impressive Wings spurning a host of chances soon after.

The win extended Town's unbeaten run to 12 league matches, with just one defeat in their last 19.

Their only other loss in that time came against Jamie Day's Welling in the FA Cup first round, and relieved assistant-manager Terry Harris said: "We started well, but for an hour or so Welling were the better side."

"We made a couple of changes and threw Luke Cuttridge on in behind the front two, and for the last 20 minutes I thought we were in the ascendancy."

IT'S THERE! Andre Gray fires Luton's second goal and is mobbed by teammates. Inset: Goalkeeper

Goalkeeper



"We were just delighted to get the second goal."

"We've been away for so long and done so many miles, but it's nice to be back home and today I thought the supporters were absolutely fantastic."

Gray took his season's haul to eight by latching onto Paul Benson's flick in the 17th minute, then holding off Blaine Hudson to place a half-volley out of Lee Butcher's reach.

His ninth came when Alex Lawless exploited the space left by

Welling's impeccable right-back Loui Fanklerley having gone off injured, and the visitors not being able to get his replacement on quick enough.

Down to ten men, Lawless drove to the by-line down Luton's left and cut back for first Benson to send an effort goalbound, and then Gray to bundle it home as the Wings tried desperately to clear.

The 22-year-old's goals have come in his last nine starts, and Harris added: "He took his goals excellently."

"We work on finishing every day and Andre Gray can be anything he wants to be."

"He's got strength, power, pace. He's got things that we have to work on, but I'm delighted for him."

Benson missed a glorious chance to extend Luton's initial lead when Lawless played him clean through on 26 minutes, and Jim Stevenson saw a header saved by Butcher before the front duo extended the United stopper midway through the second half

with efforts from distance.

With Jake Gallagher winning virtually every ball in the engine room and captain Lee Clarke finding pockets of space to link midfield and attack, Welling should have been level well before they were.

Gallagher had shanked one first-half effort wide just after Luton keeper Mark Tyler had to react smartly to keep out a Ross Lafayette header that took a wicked deflection off his own defender, Alex Lacey.

Two minutes after the break, Joe

Healy was fouled in the box by Hatters captain Ronnie Henry and although Tyler saved brilliantly from Lafayette's spot-kick, Dyer was first react to tick the loose ball away.

Within moments of the goal, Tyler had to deny Lafayette again, Clarke sent a header inches wide and left-back Billy Cargill's cross-shot evaded everyone.

But with Cuttridge on, the Hatters gained control and eventually found their way through.

Welling's hard-rock story was

complete when Fraser Franks received a harsh straight red card in injury-time for a foul on Benson, when there seemed little contact and the Town striker still had a lot to do to score from 35 yards out.

Manager Day said: "I didn't think it was a red. He just got his arm across him, so we'll have a look and decide whether to appeal depending on cost."

"I thought we played well today, but again we come away from a big club with nothing."

"We've come a long way as a

MATCH STATS LUTON v WELLING

5	SHOTS ON TARGET	4
8	SHOTS OFF TARGET	7
5	CORNERS	8
1	OFFSIDE	6
16	FOULS CONCEDED	6
1	YELLOW CARDS	1
0	RED CARDS	1

STAR MAN: Loui Fanklerley (Welling)
AIF: 6.5/10

ENTERTAINMENT: *****
REF RATING: Brett Mutton 6.5/10

LUTON: (4-4-2) Tyler 8, Henry 6, McSherry 8, Lacey 6, Griffiths 7, Whalley 6, Cuttridge 5.3, 7, Parry 6, Stevenson 6, Robinson 5.3, 6, Lawless 7, Gray 7, Benson 6, Lacey 6, Dyer 7, Lafayette 7. Subs not used: Hurrell, Cullen, Jeffries.

WELLING: (4-5-1) Butcher 7, Fanklerley 8, Hughes-Mason 8.0, St. Francis 7, Hudson 6, Cargill 6, Quinlan 6, Gallagher 6, Clarke 7, Dyer 7, Healy 7, Lafayette 7. Subs not used: Turner, Wicks, Corrie, Evans.

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"You get what you pay for, but we'll regroup, take the positives from it and look to bounce back."