





OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME • £2 • ISSUE 8 v BRIGHTON & HA U21

Luton TOWN

TUESDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2025 7PM

Vertu TROPHY

CAPITAL SKY LTD.

Jack WILSHERE

Good evening and welcome to Kenilworth Road for this Vertu Trophy fixture against Brighton.

I'm writing this before Saturday's game at Northampton so, with that in mind, I'd like to start by thanking everyone for the support given to me so far. I feel privileged to have been given such a helpful and welcoming start, and I was blown away by the reception when I was introduced to the crowd before the Mansfield game. It was a proud moment for me and meant the world, so thank you.

In the lead-up to the game I also had the pleasure of welcoming two new members of my new backroom staff in David Bridges and Tim Corcoran who join us as first team coaches.

I have known David for years, and he got me through my coaching qualifications while at Arsenal. He's a good person and incredibly knowledgeable. Tim joins us from Arsenal, where he became an integral part of Mikel Arteta's first-team coaching staff. He's someone who will help us move forward and give the place a lift because of the type of person he is.

As for the game against Mansfield, it was a very eye-opening introduction to League One football. Of course, we wanted to win but I must recognise the efforts of the players given the limited time we had at The Brache.

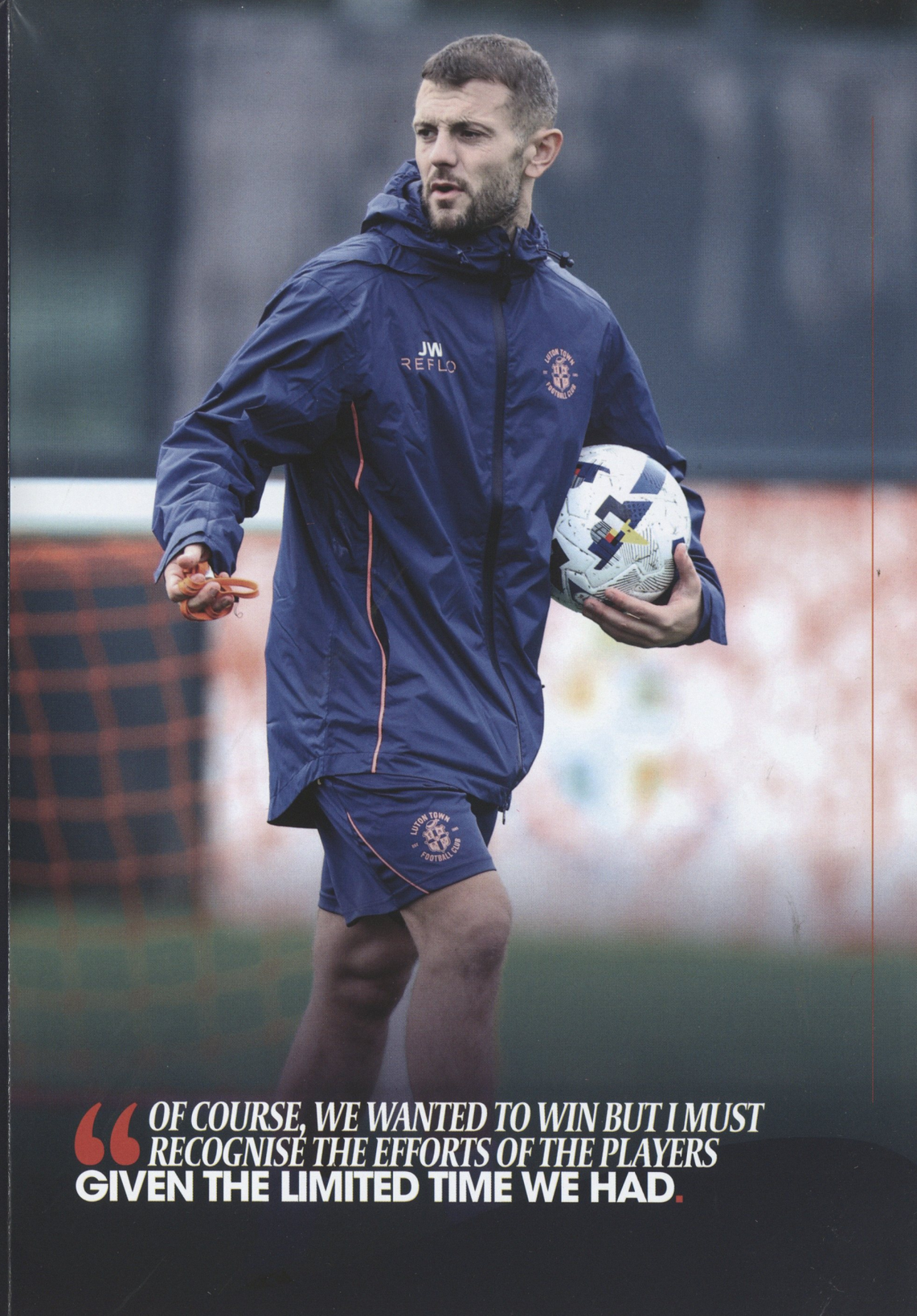
The players' response has been incredibly encouraging. We gave the players some ideas in the few days we had before the game but we knew it was a short time frame. However, I'm under no illusions that it might take some time to instil our philosophy and methodology. We can't fix it all in one session but I made it clear that the players are the ones making decisions on the pitch.

In League One you have to go through tough moments but when you're under pressure, you can't give away goals. You have to defend your box, stick together and win second balls – it's the basics. I thought we did that in the first 10 minutes – even though we weren't really imposing ourselves. We started to take control and see some of the things we'd worked on but we gave a goal away and the confidence dipped.

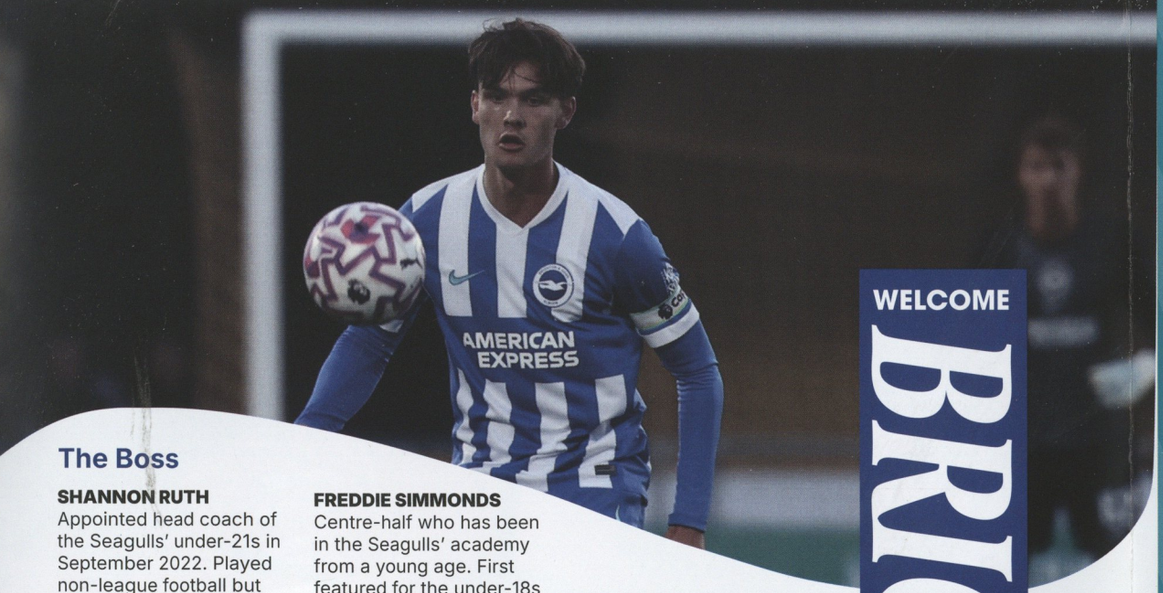
When a team sits on the edge of the box like Mansfield did, it takes courage to be brave – to drive at them, draw defenders out, put the ball wide, put the ball in the box. There's work for us to do on that, but I can see areas we can focus on and improve. Naturally, we would have liked to do that with a win, but even if we had won, there would have been things I would still want to work on but there's plenty to be encouraged by moving forward.

Turning attention back to tonight, we will be aiming for a victory that would seal our place in the knockout stages of this competition, so we will be treating the game and our opponents with the utmost respect. I know how much this competition means to this club and what it meant to lift the trophy at a time when the club were battling to stay in the Football League in 2009.

Please get behind the players and enjoy the game.



"OF COURSE, WE WANTED TO WIN BUT I MUST RECOGNISE THE EFFORTS OF THE PLAYERS **GIVEN THE LIMITED TIME WE HAD.**



WELCOME BRIGHTON U21

The Boss

SHANNON RUTH
Appointed head coach of the Seagulls' under-21s in September 2022. Played non-league football but began his coaching career at Chelsea before spells at Aldershot and Reading.

Goalkeeper

NILS RAMMING
London-born Swedish youth international goalkeeper who joined the Seagulls in the summer from German side Eintracht Frankfurt.

Defenders

NOEL ATOM
German Under-17 international left-sided defender who put pen to paper at the American Express Stadium in 2023. Started his career with Hertha Berlin before moving to RB Leipzig.

BEN BARCLAY
Experienced defender who returned to Brighton this summer to become the Seagulls' 'overage' player and act as a mentor for the group. Came through the ranks at the club before spells at Accrington, Stockport and Carlisle.

CHARLIE TASKER
Right-back Charlie came through the ranks having been in the academy since he was six. Signed professional terms this summer and made his senior debut in the EFL Cup in August.

FREDDIE SIMMONDS
Centre-half who has been in the Seagulls' academy from a young age. First featured for the under-18s as a 15-year-old before becoming a regular in Premier League 2 and has appeared on the first team bench in the Premier League.

SEAN KEOGH
Republic of Ireland under-19 international defender who signed for the Albion this summer from League of Ireland side Dundalk.

Midfielders

HARRY HOWELL
Another academy product, Harry joined the Seagulls as a seven-year-old and made his debut for the under-18s when 14. An England youth international, he made his Premier League bow against Liverpool in May and signed pro forms this summer.

KOFI SHAW
Teenage midfielder with plenty of Football League experience having come through the ranks at Bristol Rovers. Also enjoyed a loan spell at Yeovil and joined the Seagulls in August.

JOE KNIGHT
Ultra-competitive central midfielder who can also operate in defence. Stepped up to the Under-21s last term where he has been a regular.

JOSH ROBERTSON
Midfielder Josh joined the Seagulls on a three-and-a-half-year deal in February 2024 from Sunderland for an undisclosed fee. Had been with the Black Cats since he was nine. Scored the Seagulls' goal in the 1-1 draw with Barnet.

ZANE ALBARUS
Calm and disciplined teenage central midfielder who has made the transition through under-16 and under-18 football. Put pen to paper on his first pro deal in April 2024.

SHANE NTI
Versatile midfielder who can also operate on the left wing or in attack, Shane made one start for the under-21s last term and was prolific in front of goal for Albion's youth teams.

Forwards

NEHEMIAH ORIOLA
Teenage winger or frontman who was on the bench for the Seagulls' first team win over Newcastle in the Premier earlier this month. Joined Albion's academy from Manchester United in September 2023.

JOE BELMONT
Wales Under-19 striker who has been among the goals this season in Premier League 2. Joined the Seagulls from Liverpool in 2023.

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OFF *to* WEMBLEY *in a* SEASON OF GLOOM

Club historian **Roger Wash** looks back on the campaign that saw the Town win the Johnstone's Paint Trophy under the arch



Celebrations in the home dressing room

At the start of the 2008/09 season the Town had been docked 30 points for supposed 'financial irregularities', which meant that the campaign was always going to be an impossible struggle.

The only bright spot was a long run in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy during which Brentford, Walsall and Colchester had been seen off, leading to a two-legged semi-final against Brighton from the division above.

Just before the first leg on 20th January the Hatters had got rid of the minus tag in the League Two table and were now on nil points. They then spoilt this achievement by losing 5-1 at Darlington, leading to five changes being made to the side for the JPT clash at the Withdean.

Admittedly, three of the players who turned out at Darlington were cup-tied but it was a very makeshift side that appeared in front of the 511 Luton supporters in a crowd of 6,127.

The game itself was, in truth, a turgid affair as a disciplined Luton defensive performance nullified a Brighton attack which threatened periodically but could not find a way past a Hatters central defensive partnership of Keith Keane and Michael Spillane.

By the time of the second leg four weeks later, the Town had crept up to two points but the realisation had now set in that relegation to non-league was a certainty. What better way to go out with a bang than to have a day out at Wembley?

> *"THE SECOND PERIOD BECAME ATTACK VERSUS DEFENCE BUT THE TOWN COULD NOT BREAK THE DEADLOCK.*


Celebrations as the winning penalty goes in

This meant that the second period became attack versus defence but, try as they might, the Town could not break the deadlock leading to an immediate penalty shootout.

Step forward new hero, Derby loanee goalkeeper Lewis Price, making his second and last appearance for the Town. His diving saves to spot-kicks from Jason Jarrett and Chris Birchill meant that the Hatters went through to the final Wembley where, in front of 42,000 supporters, they saw off another League One side, Scunthorpe, 3-2.

A bittersweet end to a dismal season.

A pumped-up Luton crowd under the lights at Kenilworth Road saw five changes to the side that lost 2-1 at Dagenham in the previous game. They had hardly settled in their seats when a calamitous mix-up between Brighton goalkeeper Michael Kuipers and defender Adam Virgo on the edge of the box allowed Tom Craddock to slip through and slot the ball into an empty net.

For a time, Brighton were all at sea but came back strongly mid-way through the first half when Nicky Forster shot narrowly wide. The warning wasn't heeded as a minute later the same player finished well to leave the game on a knife-edge.

The Town were then handed an unlikely lifeline just before the interval when future Hatter Dave Livermore was sent off by referee Andy D'Urso for a late challenge on Spillane.


Tom Craddock has just opened the scoring

the TEAMS

LUTON TOWN

MANAGER **JACK WILSHERE**

1	JAMES **SHEA**
2	REUELL **WALTERS**
3	KAL **NAISMITH**
5	MADS **ANDERSEN**
7	MILLENIC **ALLI**
8	LIAM **WALSH**
9	JERRY **YATES**
11	ELIJAH **ADEBAYO**
12	ALI **AL-HAMADI**
13	MARVELOUS **NAKAMBA**
14	SHAYDEN **MORRIS**
15	TEDEN **MENGI**
16	HAKEEM **ODOFFIN**
17	NIGEL **LONWIJK**
18	JORDAN **CLARK**
19	JACOB **BROWN**
20	LASSE **NORDÅS**
21	NAHKI **WELLS**
22	LAMINE **FANNE**
23	GEORGE **SAVILLE**
24	JOSH **KEELEY**
25	ISAIAH **JONES**
26	SHANDON **BAPTISTE**
27	JAKE **RICHARDS**
28	CHRIST **MAKOSSO**
30	GIDEON **KODUA**
31	JOE **GBODÉ**
33	COHEN **BRAMALL**
37	ZACK **NELSON**
38	JOE **JOHNSON**
39	JOSHUA **PHILLIPS**
42	CHRISTIAN **CHIGOZIE**

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION U21

HEAD COACH **SHANNON RUTH**

44	SEAN **KEOGH**
46	NOEL **ATOM**
48	BEN **BARCLAY**
49	JOE **KNIGHT**
50	JOSH **ROBERTSON**
51	CHARLIE **TASKER**
52	ZANE **ALBARUS**
53	HARRY **HOWELL**
54	FREDDIE **SIMMONDS**
55	CHARLIE **PENMAN**
56	HARRY **MILLS**
57	YUSSIF **OWUSU**
58	NEHEMIAH **ORIOLA**
59	JOE **BELMONT**
60	AIDAN **WEST**
61	STEVEN **HALL**
62	NILS **RAMMING**
63	LORENZ **FERDINAND**
64	SEB **JENSEN**
65	MICHAEL **DIKE**
66	CALLUM **MACKLEY**
67	JACOB **VICKERS**
68	SHANE **NTI**
70	KOFI **SHAW**
71	TYLER **SILSBY**
72	DARIUS **LANE**
73	TATE **FERDINAND**
75	JESSE **MIDDLETON**
76	HENRY **KASVOSVE**
79	YOUNES **IBRAHIM**

The Officials

REFEREE **ALEX CHILOWICZ**
ASSISTANT REFEREE **CONALL BARTLETT**
ASSISTANT REFEREE **RYAN McILRAVEY**
FOURTH OFFICIAL **DECLAN O'SHEA**

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