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PHIL WHITEHEAD |

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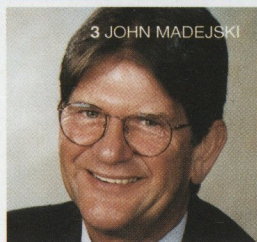
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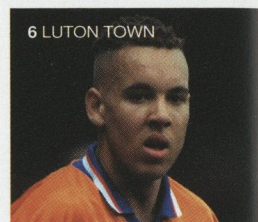
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safe pair of hands

PHIL WHITEHEAD TALKS ABOUT LIFE WITH THE ROYALS

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PLEASE NOTE MADEJSKI STADIUM OPERATES A NO-SMOKING POLICY IN THE SEATING BOWL AREA



SEASON'S GREETINGS |

CHAIRMAN JOHN MADEJSKI OBE, DL

A very warm welcome to Madejski Stadium for our last home fixture of 2000. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and let's hope that we will all be able to celebrate some good results for the Royals over the festive period. I would also like to thank my co-Director Ian-Wood Smith, Chief Executive Nigel Howe and all of the Club's dedicated staff for their tireless efforts throughout the past 12 months.

2000 has been another eventful year for Reading Football Club. When I wrote my last Christmas message this time last year, we were struggling towards the foot of the table and our only prospect for the remainder of the season was a battle against relegation. Twelve months later on, and we are comfortably placed within the play-off positions with our sights firmly set on achieving promotion. It

has been a remarkable turnaround, and Alan Pardew, who was just three months into his managerial career last Christmas, deserves an immense amount of credit for his achievements so far.

There is no doubt that the acquisition of players such as Matt Robinson, Martin Butler, Sammy Igoe, Adie Williams, Adi Viveash, Jamie Cureton and Tony Rougier has strengthened our squad beyond all recognition. The arrival of Martin Allen as Alan's assistant in January seemed to breathe fresh life into our team, and we are fortunate to have a young and ambitious management team that is already highly respected within the game.

Our Academy has also continued to thrive, with the very capable Nicky Hammond taking on a new role as Academy Director to further enhance our development of young

footballers. More and more home-grown players are challenging for first team places, and last month nearly 9,000 of you watched our youth team more than hold their own against the might of Manchester United in the FA Youth Cup.

Off the field, too, we have continued to make great strides with the opening of the Millennium Madejski Hotel in May, and the Royal Berkshire Conference Centre within the Stadium complex has further developed its reputation as an outstanding venue.

The high esteem in which the Stadium itself is held was further enhanced with the staging of Rugby Union's Tetley Bitter Cup and Heineken European Cup Semi-Finals, along with the Rugby League World Cup fixture between New Zealand and the Cook Islands. So we have a lot to be proud of, but let's not congratulate ourselves

too much. As I mentioned earlier, Alan Pardew's achievements to date have been remarkable and he has without doubt moulded a squad that has the potential of gaining promotion. Now that potential has to be fulfilled. We have come a long way in the last twelve months, but there is still a long way to go and we cannot afford to be complacent even for one second.

As always, I would urge you, the fans, to play your part by giving the team your full encouragement. Confidence is such a vital element of success, and you can play a huge role in boosting our players by getting behind them all the way.

Thank you for all your support over the last twelve months, and once again a very Merry Christmas to you all.

**Best wishes,
John Madejski**

'We are very conscious of our away form and our goals against record, and we're doing everything we can in training to improve that.'

PICTURE ZAC JOSEY

WHEN SATURDAY COMES |

PARDS LOOKS AHEAD TO THIS AFTERNOON'S GAME WITH LUTON TOWN

ROYALS V LUTON TOWN |

Let me start by wishing everybody a Merry Christmas, and I hope all Reading fans get what they want. You are probably wishing for the same presents as me - a trip to Leicester and 12 points, so in some respects I suppose I am playing Santa.

Our defeat at Notts County was very hard to take. Conceding a winning goal in the last five minutes is always a huge blow, and the fact that our away record is poor made it even more galling.

In our post-match discussions we have reflected on a second-half which we totally dominated, and for the first time in three or four weeks we resembled the side that got us to the top of the league, playing progressive high-tempo football.

This resurgence of form coincided with the re-introduction of Darren Caskey. My criticisms of him and his lack of involvement were because I felt that he had let his standards slip, and his decision to respond in the correct manner has made him trimmer and more mobile. In

many ways, a good season is determined by your key players, and of course he is one of those. If he hits the form that he did in the back end of last season, it will go a long way in taking us where we want to go.

Tony Rougier's return to full fitness was also very evident at Nottingham. He has fantastic ability, and with Tony as well as Jamie Cureton and Martin Butler we are blessed to have three top strikers of their calibre. I hope now with Tony's return to fitness that they can drive each other to new heights.

We are now carrying seven defeats from our programme, and we cannot afford to lose too many more. It's essential that we go now on an unbeaten run. We are very conscious of our away form and our goals against record, and we're doing everything we can in training to improve that.

A win today is essential, there's no escaping that, and I suppose it's ironic that our next away fixture is Bristol Rovers, who haven't won at home all season, for that is where our season turned around last year in the Auto Windscreens

Shield. Let's hope that these next two games can kick-start a promotion push.

These notes are being written prior to the FA Cup encounter with York, and the mood of today's game will be greatly affected by that result. You can't help feeling that our season somewhat hinges on this Christmas programme in terms of a straight promotion. We have some fantastic players, and I can only think of two matches this year when we seriously underperformed. Our results have not been reflected in the commitment we're showing, but I'm confident that situation will change if we apply ourselves in the same manner for this second part of the season.

With a very big squad, I applaud the players' commitment to both me and Martin, who as young coaches need the co-operation of senior players, and the application and attitude of everybody in training has been fantastic.

Keep positive today - we need your help as much as ever.

Come on you Rrrrs!

Pards

AP

Luton Town

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Luton's Mark Stein |

It has been a difficult start to the season for Luton Town, who currently find themselves facing the possibility of dropping into the bottom division for the first time since 1968. Former midfield star Ricky Hill was appointed manager to replace

Lennie Lawrence at the beginning of the season, but Hill was unable to bring back the glory days of his playing years and lasted just four months in the hot-seat, with another ex-player, Lil Fuccillo, taking over. Fuccillo has inherited a talented but also young and inexperienced squad, and while the Hatters have a bright future if they can hold on to their impressive youngsters, they also face a desperate short-term future as they battle to avoid the drop.

The season started badly with a 1-0 home defeat against Notts County and a 2-1 loss at Wigan. The Hatters then rallied, gaining their first victory of the season when a Matthew Spring penalty earned a 1-0 victory over Bournemouth, and followed that with 1-1 draws at Wycombe and Rotherham. But this proved to be a false dawn as Hill's side went eight League games without a win, including home

defeats against Swindon, Millwall and Northampton. Relief came with a 3-1 home win success against Brentford in the middle of October, but any confidence gained was soon shattered in the next fixture when Luton threw away a 3-0 lead with half-an-hour remaining and allowed Wrexham to claim a remarkable 4-3 victory. A fortnight later Bristol City earned an easy 3-0 win at Kenilworth Road, and within five days Hill had been replaced by Fuccillo.

The new manager's first League game was a disappointing 3-0 defeat at Port Vale, but then the Hatters shocked the division with a stunning 3-1 victory at promotion-chasing Stoke City. Their last League outing was a home clash with Colchester last Saturday, when the Hatters crashed to a 3-0 defeat, while they also faced a Second Round FA Cup replay against Darlington on Tuesday.

LIL FUCCILLO |

RETURNING OLD BOY

44 year-old Lil Fuccillo was appointed Luton manager on 16th November following the sudden departure of Ricky Hill, and Fuccillo has not been given an easy task as he attempts to guide a talented but inexperienced team way from relegation danger.

Fuccillo is certainly well-acquainted with the club and the area having been born in Bedford and going on to play for Luton for 10 years, helping the club win promotion to the old First Division in 1982. After leaving Kenilworth Road, he played briefly in the United States before returning to this country to develop his

coaching career. As well as coaching jobs at Sheffield Wednesday and Barnet, Fuccillo has gained managerial experience with Peterborough between 1992-93, taking the Posh to their highest ever position of 10th in Division One. He returned to Luton in September, firstly as chief scout, then as assistant manager and now of course as manager. Fuccillo's assistant is John Moore, who has been involved with Luton for almost all the past 35 years since he arrived as a player from Motherwell in 1965. He played for Luton for eight years and was also manager between 1986-87.



LIAM GEORGE |

RISING STAR

Pre-season rumours of a million-pound move to Burnley, Wolves or Sheffield Wednesday came to nothing, but interest throughout the summer months in Luton's 16-goal top scorer surprised nobody. Still aged just 21, the former Luton youth trainee has made nearly 100 appearances and nobody knows more about his ability than Reading fans, who saw George strike three goals in two games as Luton completed the double over the Royals last season.

Full of pace and nimble footwork, the dangerous striker was a regular member of the successful Republic of Ireland squad that progressed to the European Youth Championships Final in the summer of 1998, and has

since become a Republic of Ireland Under 21 international. He made his League debut for the Hatters against Bristol City in September 1997, and went on to start the 1998/1999 season as an established first choice. But he broke a leg at Wigan early on in the campaign and the season was nearly over by the time he had recovered.

George re-established himself in 1999/2000, playing mainly just behind the front two, where he has more freedom to run at defenders. At his best, he is a dazzling dribbler of the ball coupled with the vision to set up team-mates. This season has not been as fruitful so far, with just four goals to his name, but there is promise of plenty more to come.

THE HATTERS FACTFILE |

LUTON TOWN HISTORY FACTFILE

1 | Luton were formed by an amalgamation of two leading clubs at a meeting in Luton Town Hall in 1885.

2 | The club first joined the Football League in 1897 but were de-elected three years later and then stayed in the Southern League until 1920.

3 | Luton first climbed into the First Division in 1955, staying in the top flight for five years, and returned for a more prolonged spell in 1982.

4 | The Hatters reached the FA Cup Final for the only time in 1959, but suffered a 2-1 defeat against Nottingham Forest.

5 | They enjoyed Wembley success against Arsenal in 1988, beating the Gunners 3-2 in the League Cup Final.

6 | The club's most-capped player is Mal Donaghy, who made 58 Northern Ireland appearances whilst with the Hatters before joining Manchester United.

PICTURE ACTION IMAGES

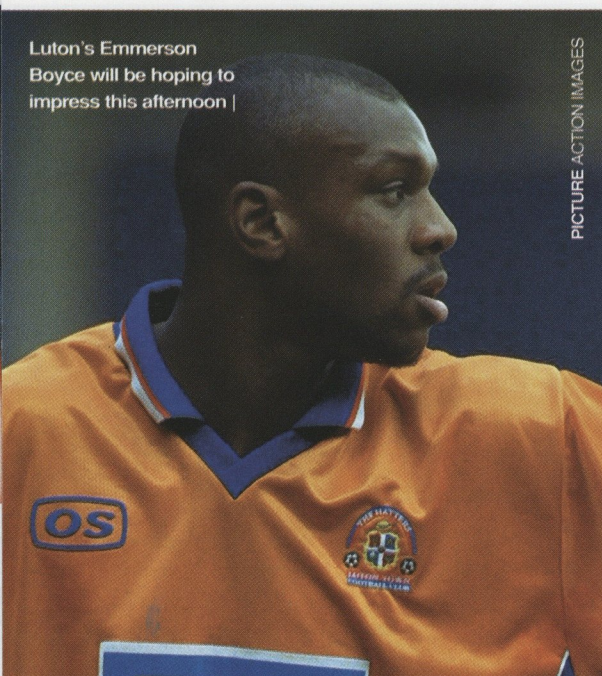


squad

LUTON TOWN KEY MEN 2000 | 2001

captain

MARVIN JOHNSON



PICTURE ACTION IMAGES

Luton's Emmerson Boyce will be hoping to impress this afternoon |

JULIAN WATTS |
AGE | 29
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

Central defender who started his career with Rotherham, and then joined Sheffield Wednesday. Before long he was off to Leicester and then Bristol City, but moved to Luton when his career stalled at Ashton Gate. Has been a virtual ever-present since joining the Hatters 15 months ago.

ADRIAN WHITBREAD |
AGE | 29
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

Lil Fuccillo snapped up this centre-half on loan from Portsmouth in November to add more experience to his defence. In four years at Fratton Park he had been a popular captain before recently being out of favour. Began his career at Orient, and has also played for Swindon and West Ham.

EMMERSON BOYCE |
AGE | 21
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

A strong and intelligent defender, Boyce has a very bright future ahead of him. One of the many to come through from Luton's youth system, he signed on the YTS in 1995 and after graduating to the first team squad made his debut in January 1999. Can play right wing-back or centre-back.

STUART FRASER |
AGE | 20
NATIONALITY | SCOTTISH

Stylish defender and former youth team skipper, Fraser was given his League debut on the final day of the 1997/98 season and soon became a regular, beginning the 1999/2000 season as first-choice right wing-back. Started the 2000/2001 season mainly on the bench but still highly-rated.

PAUL MCLAREN |
AGE | 24
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

The midfielder was taken on by Luton as a schoolboy, and was offered pro terms while still only 17. Forceful and always ready to back up attacks, he soon became a regular after a 1994 debut. Has now developed into a cultured and tenacious midfielder, with good vision and a strong tackle.

MATTHEW SPRING |
AGE | 21
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

Luton's main playmaker and midfield driving force, Matthew Spring has had to bear a great weight of responsibility during his 150 appearances despite still only being 21 years old. A competitive midfielder who is a tough tackler and an inspired passer, he also possesses a fierce shot.

TRESOR KANDOL |
AGE | 19
NATIONALITY | ZAIREAN

Kandol is a lanky striker who came to Luton in the summer of 1997. His first team debut was in the Auto Windscreens Shield in January 1999 and he made his full League debut a month later. He has been on the fringes of the first team ever since.

PETER THOMSON |
AGE | 23
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

One of Ricky Hill's first moves was the signing of 6ft 3in striker Peter Thomson. Began his career with home town club Bury, but dropped into non-league football before joining Dutch club NAC Breda, who later accepted an offer of £100,000 from Luton.

MATTHEW TAYLOR |
AGE | 19
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

Left wing-back who was given his chance when still only 17 due to the club's dire financial situation. Impressive performances saw him leap from youth team to first team and he soon became a regular with attacking runs and fierce shooting promising a great future. Ever-present this season.

ADAM LOCKE |
AGE | 30
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

A well-travelled midfielder who joined Luton on a free transfer from Bristol City to add greater experience to a predominantly young squad in the summer of 1999. He began his career with Crystal Palace and moved on to Southend, Colchester and Ashton Gate before joining the Hatters.

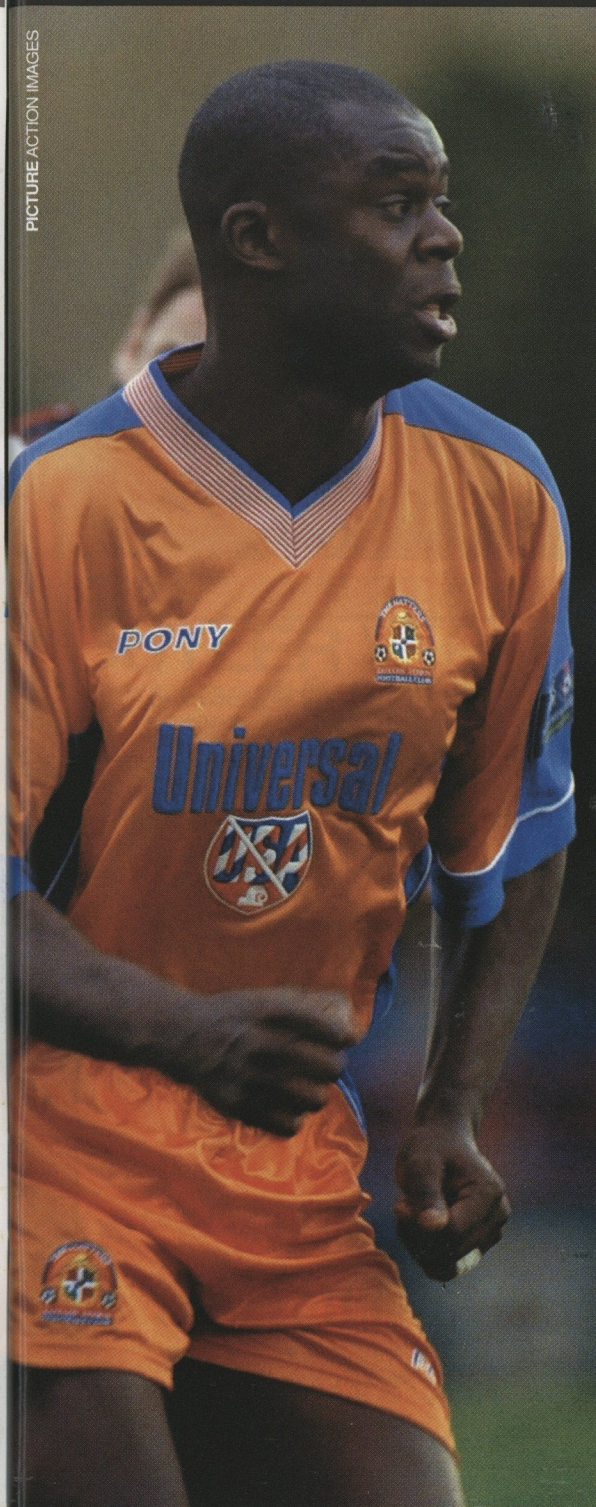
LEE NOGAN |
AGE | 31
NATIONALITY | WELSH

Started at Oxford and developed a goalscoring reputation with more than 100 goals in a career which took in spells with Brentford, Southend, Watford, the Royals, Notts County, Grimsby and Darlington. Well remembered by Royals fans for his superb Wembley play-off goal.

ANDREW FOTIADIS |
AGE | 23
NATIONALITY | ENGLISH

Fotiadis completed his A-Levels before becoming a full-time pro. He won England Schools caps at U15 and U18 level, and developed a style to worry opposing defences as an old-fashioned striker with good physique, power, and determination to score goals.

PICTURE ACTION IMAGES



MARVIN JOHNSON

LONG-SERVING DEFENDER

Luton Town skipper Marvin Johnson is by far the club's longest-serving player, having started his career as an 18-year old apprentice with the Hatters as long ago as 1986, back in the days when Luton were still in the top flight with a plastic pitch and players such as Ricky Hill, Brian Stein, Mick Harford and Steve Foster making life difficult for all and sundry.

A lot has happened in the 14 years since he joined the club, but Johnson remains a stalwart in the heart of defence and has now made more than 400 appearances for his only club. Now club captain, he has been in and out of the side this season but has been a regular in the last few weeks as new manager Lil Fuccillo looks to guide his side away from the relegation zone.

Johnson will have particular memories of playing against Reading, because he was a late substitute on that special day at Wembley in the spring of 1988 when Martin Hicks lifted the Simod Cup trophy following a spectacular 4-1 win for the Royals. See Alan Sedunary's article on page 46 for more recollections of a day that was memorable for both the Royals and Johnson, who made a piece of history despite being on the losing team and only playing for a few minutes!

Although he was a regular throughout the vast majority of the season to follow, Johnson was absent from the Luton team on that landmark occasion in August 1998 when Madejski Stadium opened its doors, and perhaps his presence in the

centre of defence may have made it more difficult for the Royals to record their 3-0 victory.

The London-born defender would have made far more appearances than the 400 plus that he has managed if he had received better luck with injuries, but he has been a highly consistent and committed figure throughout his time with the club. It was no surprise when he was handed the captain's armband following the departure of Steve Davis to Burnley two years ago, and he did much to keep morale high as a young team went through the trauma of receivership the following summer.

Johnson has not scored many goals - in fact just nine in 14 years! - but all Luton fans will remember his dramatic injury-time winner in the Worthington Cup against Ipswich in 1998, just minutes after a Davis own-goal would have seen Luton go out on away goals. Statistics would suggest it is unlikely that he will be a goalscoring hero this afternoon, but if selected his ability to deal with the Second Division's top scorers at home will surely play a key part in deciding the outcome of the game.

While Johnson is the club captain at Kenilworth Road, he has not appeared in every game this season and when he has been absent the captaincy has been given to young midfielder Paul McLaren, one of the many products of the Luton youth system who have become regular fixtures in the side over the past few seasons.

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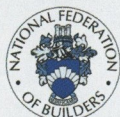
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FULL NAME MARTIN BUTLER | BIRTHPLACE DUDLEY |

DOB 15.9.74 | HEIGHT 5FT 11 | WEIGHT 11ST 9 |

POSITION STRIKER | PREVIOUS CLUB CAMBRIDGE UNITED

FULL NAME NATHAN ABBEY | BIRTHPLACE ISLINGTON |

DOB 11.7.78 | HEIGHT 6FT 1 | WEIGHT 12ST 1 |

POSITION GOALKEEPER | PREVIOUS CLUB NONE

BUTLER VERSUS ABBEY

MARTIN BUTLER GOES HEAD TO HEAD

Reading's top scorer **Martin Butler** will be hoping to add to his considerable goal tally for the season this afternoon, and most probably the man he will have to beat will be Hatters keeper **Nathan Abbey**, who has so far been successful in keeping big-money summer signing Mark Ovendale on the bench.

Butler has faced Abbey just once before, when previous club Cambridge took on the Hatters last November, and the omens are good for the Royals as the striker scored his side's opening goal in a 3-1 victory on that occasion. Royals supporters will certainly be hoping that Butler enjoys more success than their side's strikers did against Abbey last season. The Islington-born keeper was outstanding as the Hatters chalked up an unexpected 2-1

success at Madejski Stadium in August 1999, and impressed again when Luton completed the double at Kenilworth Road in January with a comfortable 3-1 victory.

After a promising start to his Reading career last season, Butler has gone on to exceed all expectations so far, scoring regularly enough to become top scorer in the country at one point but also fulfilling an excellent role within the framework of the team.

A remarkably hard-working player, it sometimes seems as though Butler never stop running, and when you combine his overall team play with his goalscoring ability it is easy to understand why his value has already rocketed well above the £750,000 that the Royals paid for him.

Despite playing in the majority of Luton's games last season, it looked as though Abbey's future would lie away from Kenilworth Road when the Hatters signed Bournemouth keeper Mark Ovendale for £425,000. Ovendale had been an important member of the Bournemouth side, but although he started the season as first choice between the sticks for the Hatters, in October he lost his place to Abbey, who has remained in possession of the jersey ever since.

Abbey started his career with Luton and progressed through the youth ranks to make his debut as a 19 year-old against Colchester in the Worthington Cup in 1997. An excellent shot-stopper, he looks to have a bright future but his first priority will be to further cement his place in the Luton side.

nationwide news

A ROUND-UP OF NEWS FROM THE NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

CRYSTAL PALACE | SMITH BLASTS RED CARD RUDDOCK

Crystal Palace manager Alan Smith criticised defender Neil Ruddock for his dismissal in the Eagles' clash with Crewe last Saturday. The veteran centre-back was given his marching orders by the referee for abusive language in the 1-1 draw to the disappointment of his manager. Smith said: "I'm not happy with the sending off of Neil at all because you can't go around swearing at refs. I'm as ferocious as anyone and nobody wants to win more than me, but abuse to refs is something we have to stamp out in this country."

FULHAM | WE'RE JUST TOO GOOD CLAIMS BOA MORTE

Luis Boa Morte believes Fulham are already a Premiership side - but still have

to reach their target. The First Division leaders remain well clear of the chasing pack after a 3-1 home win over Tranmere last weekend. And Boa Morte, aiming to clinch a permanent deal with Jean Tigana's men after unhappy spells at Arsenal and Southampton, is hoping they will stay there. He grabbed two goals against Tranmere and confidently said: "We are already a Premiership side. We can compete in the top division with the players we have. We play more technically than the teams in this division and that sets us apart."

HUDDERSFIELD | MACARI IN HOT WATER

Huddersfield Town boss Lou Macari could face a touchline ban and disciplinary action from the Football Association after being dismissed in his side's 1-1 draw at Portsmouth. Macari was sent from the dug-



Neil 'red card' Ruddock |

PICTURE ACTION IMAGES

out amid allegations that he shoved fourth official Barry Wade. The pair remonstrated in the manager's coaching zone in the 52nd minute with Town 1-0 up through Jon Dyson's goal and referee Paul Rejer ordered Macari into the stand. Macari denied he had made any contact with Wade and he said: "I went into the coaching area to pass on instructions to the team and I was told that I should not be in there. The fourth official told me to get back to the dug-out and that I had no right to be there. But I don't remember making any contact with him."

WATFORD | TAYLOR ADMITS CONFUSION

Watford manager Graham Taylor was confused as much as pleased with his side's performance in the 3-3 draw at Vicarage Road against West Brom. Leading by two goals, the Hornets then trailed 3-2 before equalising just eight minutes from time, leaving Taylor scratching his head. He said: "Games like this are not easy to explain. Nobody could have predicted the way the game went but I asked for our

players to work hard and be prepared to battle and we did that. Having lost a two-goal lead and found ourselves behind we kept at it and won a point. However we battled and deserved something from this game."

BOURNEMOUTH | DEFOE DELIGHTS CHERRIES BOSS

On-loan West Ham star Jermaine Defoe added to his growing reputation with his sixth goal in five games to seal Bournemouth's seventh successive victory and send Swansea further into trouble at the bottom of Nationwide Division Two. Goals from Defoe and Scottish Under-21 international Richard Hughes, who had no trouble in dispatching his spot-kick for his third goal of the season, gave the Cherries a deserved 2-0 win at Dean Court. Delighted Bournemouth manager Sean O'Driscoll said: "To go seven games unbeaten is not unusual but to win seven matches on the trot is quite remarkable. We haven't changed anything but the players have remained very

positive and have worked hard in training. Jermaine's goal shows what a fantastic prospect he is and it is now important that he is handled in the right way."

COLCHESTER | CONLON SEES U'S FUTURE

Barry Conlon has admitted that he would prefer not to go back to York City after finding form in his loan spell with Colchester United. The 22-year-old striker, who impressed in Colchester's 1-0 win at Madejski Stadium recently and scored in the 3-0 triumph at Luton last weekend, is currently enjoying his season-long a loan spell at Layer Road and claimed that he would rather stay with the U's than return to Bootham Crescent, where he struggles to hold down a place. "I can't see myself playing for York again," he said. "I've just started the second month on loan and hopefully this is my shop window. Hopefully, I can do enough to stay here. I like it."

SWINDON | WOAN IS KING

Swindon Town rocked high-flying Rotherham United last weekend, owing much to former Nottingham Forest winger Ian Woan, who was described as 'the best player in the division' by his manager Andy King. After the 2-1 win at the County Ground King said: "There is only one player in this division who is Premiership quality and that's Ian Woan. He was fantastic this afternoon but I wouldn't say his free-kick was a fantastic goal. Their keeper made a mistake for that one. The supporters were fantastic today, they came to be entertained and they showed their appreciation at the end."

WALSALL | SADDLERS BOSS REMAINS UPBEAT

Despite succumbing to a defeat by Millwall that dislodged Walsall from the top of Division Two last weekend, Saddlers boss Ray Graydon remained in upbeat mood. Graydon insists that if his side show as much creativity and invention in the coming weeks they can return to the dizzy height of the pinnacle of the table. "If we can create as many chances as we did against Millwall in the remaining games between now and the end of the season then we will not have any problems," he said. "We created so many chances and looked so lively that even though we lost a goal early on, it seemed to me to be only a matter of time before we pulled one back."

LINCOLN | IMPS BOSS PRAISES KEEPER

Lincoln City grabbed a valuable point with a 1-1 draw with Rochdale last weekend and manager Phil Stant was full of praise for on-loan goalkeeper Chris Day. The Watford stopper made a string of vital saves to keep the Third Division strugglers in the game, and won praise from the Imps boss on the final whistle. "Chris is a good, experienced keeper, which is what we need but can't afford," said Stant. "We have to thank Graham Taylor for helping us out with his wages."

MACCLESFIELD | SILKMEN FACE BARKER BATTLE

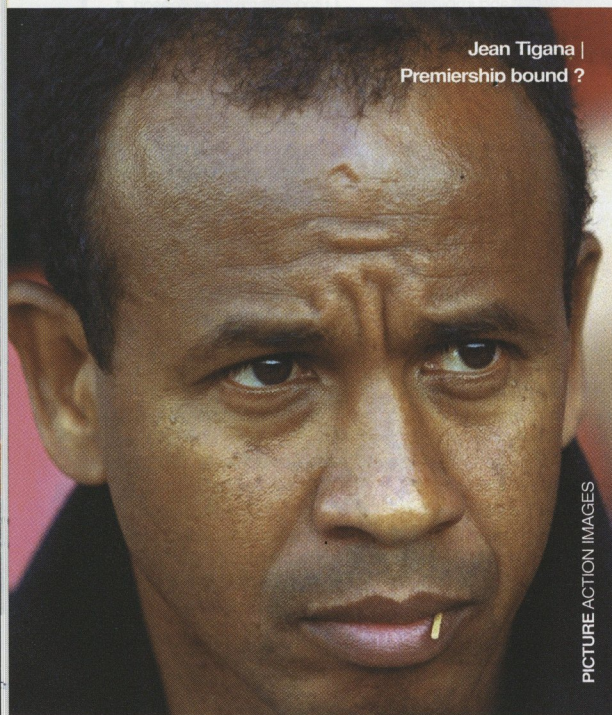
Macclesfield are reluctantly preparing themselves for the eventual loss of star striker Ritchie Barker. The 25-year-old netted in the Silkmen's 1-0

victory over struggling Carlisle at Moss Rose last Saturday, taking his total to the season to eight. Barker is attracting the interest of a whole host of higher division clubs, and manager Peter Davenport said, "Nobody wants him to leave, but we have only got so much money for wages."

PLYMOUTH | PITCH SPOILS PILGRIMS

Recently appointed Plymouth Argyle boss Paul Sturrock was delighted with his side's

performance on a difficult surface in last week's 1-0 home win against York. A Craig Taylor goal on three minutes separated the two teams but Sturrock had keeper Jon Sheffield to thank for all three points. "The pitch was not conducive to good football and I was pleased with the rearguard performance of our team," admitted Sturrock. "The conditions seemed to suit York's style better than ours. I thought we controlled the game in the first half hour and created several chances."



Jean Tigana | Premiership bound ?

PICTURE ACTION IMAGES



Ian Woan |

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quiz time

AND ALL THE YOUNG ROYALS TRAVEL DETAILS

FILL THE GAPS I

Can you complete the gaps in the Royals starting line-up in the 2-2 FA Cup draw at York?

?????????
Ricky Newman
?????????
Adi Viveash
?????????
Phil Parkinson
Keith Jones
Sammy Igoe
?????????
Martin Butler
Jamie Cureton

WHICH ROYAL I

- 1 made his Reading debut against Watford in September 1996?
- 2 joined the Royals from Barnet?
- 3 scored our opener 2-2 FA Cup draw at York?
- 4 started his career with Portsmouth?
- 5 scored his first Reading

goal in last season's defeat at Colchester?

6 has made a total of 88 career appearances, scoring twice?

7 wears the squad number seven?

8 scored in five successive games earlier this season?

9 has scored a total of 4 career goals in 104 appearances?

10 was born on 30th September 1971 in Lambeth?

WHICH TEAM?

Which Second Division team do the following players star for?

Karl Duguid | Dave Carroll
Nick Cusack | Matthew Tipton | Darren Ferguson
Paul Powell

ANSWERS I
FILL THE GAPS I
Phil Whitehead
Matt Robinson
John Mackie
Lee Hodges
WHICH ROYAL? I
1 | Darren Caskey
2 | Lee Hodges
3 | Ricky Newman
4 | Sammy Igoe
5 | Nicky Forster
6 | Chris Casper
7 | Graeme Murty
8 | Martin Butler
9 | Stuart Gray
10 | Neil Smith
WHICH TEAM I
Karl Duguid | Colchester
Dave Carroll | Wycombe Wanderers
Nick Cusack | Swansea City
Matthew Tipton | Oldham Athletic
Darren Ferguson | Wrexham
Paul Powell | Oxford Utd

WHICH ROYAL | QUESTION 1



YOUNG ROYALS
SPONSORED BY
SELWAY MOORE

young royals

AWAY TRAVEL I

The Royals are on their travels twice during the busy Christmas period for the big games against Bristol Rovers and Swindon. The Young Royals are running coaches to both games, but all the places have already been taken - we can put your name on the waiting list if you haven't been able to book a place. Our discounted travel is on modern, comfortable coaches and the travel fare includes match tickets. For more information or to make a reservation please call Grace Kearney on 0118 968 1310.



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January, February and March of next year is a very important time for some of our players, when places for scholarships are up for grabs and decisions have to be made |

ROYALS UNDER SEVENTEENS |

UNDER 17 COACHES BRIAN McDERMOT AND BRENDAN RODGERS



**SATURDAY 16TH
DECEMBER**

**BRISTOL CITY 6
READING 1**

It was a disappointing day for our under 17's as a game we should have been winning comfortably at the end of the first half saw us totally fall away in the latter stages and lose by a very heavy margin.

There were no signs of the problems ahead in the opening stages. Despite not having played for a month due to waterlogged pitches, we started very sharply and dominated the game. Leon Bird put us 1-0 in front and we should have gone on to score more goals.

Simieon Howell and Tom Hodgekiss came close to

adding to our tally with good attempts, and with Darren Campbell causing havoc on the right wing, things looked very good for Reading.

Unfortunately, just before half time, Bristol City broke and scored what looked like an offside goal to make it one apiece at the break.

The second half was a totally different story with Bristol City scoring twice very early on. At this level, we are always looking at the reaction of the players when things start to go wrong and obviously question marks were raised. Our shape and discipline disappeared and the Bristol side enjoyed a very rewarding second half.

If, as we believe, results are not the be all and end all at this level, it was at least

pleasing for us to have the best player on the pitch, in Darren Campbell, so we can take that as consolation from the game.

January, February and March of next year is a very important time for some of our players, when places for scholarships are up for grabs and decisions have to be made.

I, for one, hope we all learn the lessons from this game and take them on board in the coming months.

TEAM | Sims, Stevens, Stanley, Middleton, Theo, Norman (Lucas), Campbell, Howell, Hodgkiss (Soares), Bird, Awbery (Samuel)

26 AUG	CREWE ALEX	0-3
02 SEP	MIDDLESBROUGH	0-3
09 SEP	COVENTRY CITY	0-4
23 SEP	TOTTENHAM	0-1
30 SEP	MILLWALL	3-0
07 OCT	Q.P.R	1-0
21 OCT	CHARLTON ATHLETIC	0-0
26 OCT	BIRMINGHAM CITY	1-3
28 OCT	SOUTHAMPTON	2-1
PSTPND	CRYSTAL PALACE	(A)
PSTPND	WIMBLEDON	(H)
18 NOV	FULHAM	2-4
25 NOV	WEST HAM UTD	1-4
PSTPND	ARSENAL	(H)
16 DEC	BRISTOL CITY	1-6
13 JAN	WEST HAM UTD	(A)
20 JAN	FULHAM	(H)
27 JAN	ARSENAL	(A)
03 FEB	BRISTOL CITY	(H)
10 FEB	WIMBLEDON	(A)
17 FEB	CRYSTAL PALACE	(H)
24 FEB	SOUTHAMPTON	(A)
03 MAR	WATFORD	(A)
10 MAR	IPSWICH TOWN	(H)

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Nathan Tyson scored the equaliser just before half-time.

ROYALS UNDER 19'S |

COACH KEVIN DILLON

SATURDAY 16TH
DECEMBER

QPR 1-1 READING

This was our first Academy game for more than a fortnight so the players were really up for it after their enforced break due to adverse weather conditions.

Thanks to the help of Roland Ford, Chairman of Reading Town FC, I introduced a young goalkeeper called Paul Struddley who is currently playing for them. Paul did very well, and Nicky Hammond and I will be taking a closer look at him in training over the next week.

With my old team-mate Warren Neil in charge, QPR are having a very successful spell in the Academy League at the moment, and I was expecting a tough game. We started very brightly with Nathan Tyson and Darius Henderson causing

problems for the Rangers defence with their pace and strength.

But we needed Struddley to come to the rescue on two occasions, making excellent reflex saves.

We had to shuffle the pack after 15 minutes when Michael Tonna injured his back, so Alex Haddow moved to left back and Scott Williams came on at left wing. Before long QPR took the lead with a wickedly deflected shot from outside the penalty area.

We soon got back into the game though, with Adam Campion looking dangerous on the right flank, and we eventually equalised after 45 minutes after good work by Henderson gave Tyson a chance which he took with a cool finish.

We started the second half superbly, with Campion, Tyson and Henderson making life

very difficult for the Rangers defence, and probing from Joe Gamble and Matt Birnie in midfield created two good goalscoring chances for Tyson and Campion, but we were unable to find the winning goal.

This was certainly one of the best Academy matches I have witnessed. The passing, commitment and enthusiasm from both teams were superb.

I was particularly pleased with Adam Lockwood and Ricky Allaway in the centre of our defence, who looked very solid and physically strong against a lively QPR forward line.

TEAM 1

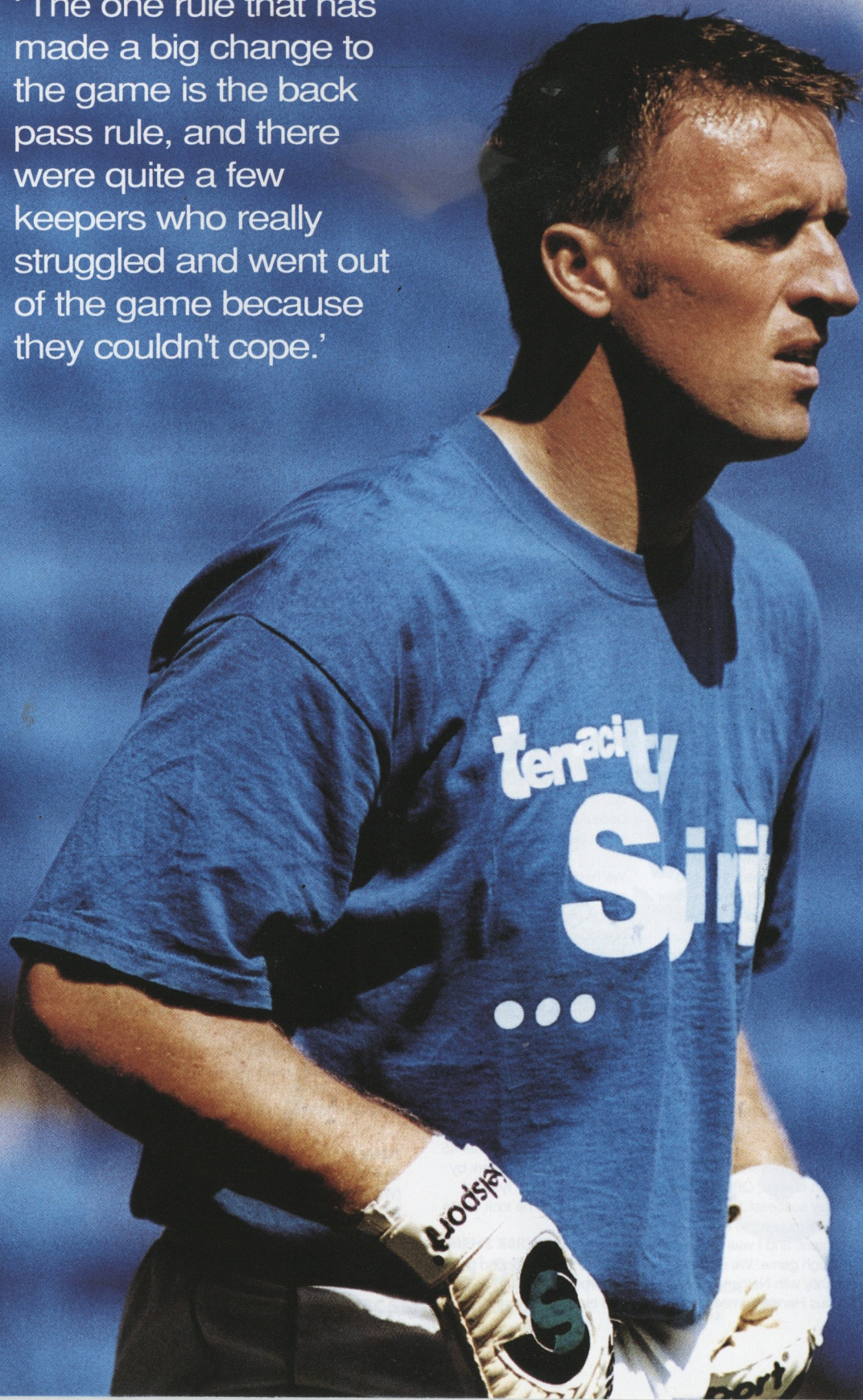
Struddley, O'Hara, Tonna (Williams) (Stransberg), Birnie, Allaway, Lockwood, Campion (Alcott), Gamble, Tyson, Henderson, Haddow

UNDER 19 FIXTURE LIST

26 AUG	CREWE ALEXANDRA	2-4
02 SEP	MIDDLESBROUGH	3-2
09 SEP	IPSWICH TOWN	0-3
PSTPND	MILLWALL	(H)
23 SEP	WATFORD	(A)
30 SEP	PETERBOROUGH UTD	2-1
07 OCT	NORWICH CITY	1-2
20 OCT	ARSENAL	1-3
28 OCT	WIMBLEDON	1-2
04 NOV	CRYSTAL PALACE	3-3
PSTPND	WEST HAM UTD	(H)
18 NOV	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	2-4
PSTPND	BRISTOL CITY	(A)
PSTPND	FULHAM	(H)
16 DEC	Q.P.R	1-1
13 JAN	SOUTHAMPTON	(H)
20 JAN	CHELSEA	(A)
27 JAN	BRISTOL CITY	(H)
03 FEB	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	(A)
10 FEB	Q.P.R	(H)
17 FEB	FULHAM	(A)
24 FEB	CHELSEA	(H)
03 MAR	SOUTHAMPTON	(A)
10 MAR	WIMBLEDON	(A)
17 MAR	CRYSTAL PALACE	(H)
24 MAR	WEST HAM UTD	(A)
07 APR	COVENTRY CITY	(H)
21 APR	CHARLTON ATHLETIC	(A)



'The one rule that has made a big change to the game is the back pass rule, and there were quite a few keepers who really struggled and went out of the game because they couldn't cope.'



IN SAFE HANDS |

PHIL WHITEHEAD ON HIS SIDE'S START TO THE SEASON

ARE YOU HAPPY WITH YOUR RECENT FORM? |

Overall I'm quite pleased. I thought I was playing better earlier on in the season when the team was doing so well, but as a side we've been going through a bit of a sticky patch recently. It's by no means a disaster, and even though we've had a couple of dodgy results we've managed to stay in touch with the leaders and we've got a game in hand as well. But hopefully we've had our sticky run and we can start climbing the table again now.

IS IT DIFFICULT FOR A GOALKEEPER WHEN THE BACK FOUR IN FRONT OF YOU CHANGES SO FREQUENTLY? |

I think we've got 22 or 24 first team players, and we could really field two sides, so although ideally it would be better to have a settled side that doesn't always happen, and it doesn't matter who comes in because we all know our jobs.

WHY DO YOU THINK WE HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING AWAY FROM HOME? |

It's something we have spoken about and I think away from home you've got to be more cagey. You're not going to steamroller teams away like we have been doing at Madejski Stadium, and sometimes you've

got to make sure your first priority is not losing, while at home you go out to win at all costs. It's better to get some sort of result even if it's only a draw and we do need to start picking up some more points away from home. But we should have won at Wigan and Peterborough, and got something at Walsall, so I think it's fair to say that we've been a bit unfortunate.

IF WE ARE WINNING EASILY, HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR CONCENTRATION WHEN THE ACTION IS AT THE OTHER END? |

You never know when you're going to be called on, so you've just got to concentrate for the full 90 minutes. Even when we were beating teams three, four and five nil there were still saves to make at some point in the game. You've got to concentrate the same wherever the ball is, because if you're attacking you can easily get caught short at the back if teams break on you. But it is easier if you can keep involved although I'm not sure what the manager would say about that, he'd probably prefer it if the goalkeeper had no involvement whatsoever!

HOW DIFFICULT HAS IT BEEN FOR YOU TO ADAPT TO THE DIFFERENT RULE CHANGES OVER THE YEARS? |

At one stage there was a new rule every season, and for the first two or three months everyone thinks it's a great innovation but after that it all settles down. The new one now is that goalkeepers can run with the ball, which everyone thought was a massive change but it hasn't made much difference, and really it's just taken us back to the old days when you could run with the ball if you bounced it.

The one rule that has made a big change to the game is the back pass rule, and there were quite a few keepers who really struggled and went out of the game because they couldn't cope. But I like to think I coped reasonably well, and it was a few years ago so I'm used to it now. I'm looking forward to the end of the season to see what new rule they've got for goalkeepers this time!

DO YOU MIND HAVING SO MANY GAMES OVER CHRISTMAS? |

It would be nice to be able to spend some time with the family but I've had a few years of doing this so I know it just won't happen! It seems that this year there's more games in a short space of time than ever before, there probably aren't but it just feels that way - maybe after the New Year games we might get a day off!



ON THE SPOT |

PHIL WHITEHEAD STEPS UP

BIGGEST INFLUENCES ON YOUR CAREER: |

My parents. They still live in Halifax and can't make it down to as many games as when I was playing further north, but they still go to all the away games up north.

There have been a few on the coaching side - Joe Corrigan at Barnsley was one of the first goalkeeping coaches I worked with, and there has also been Paddy Roach, Tony Parks and Gerry Peyton. I've picked up things from all of them.

FAVOURITE PLAYER TO WATCH |

Goalkeeping-wise I'd say Peter Shilton. I had the pleasure of training with him towards the end of his career when he was trying to keep fit and find a club for his 1000th game.

He was a friend of Denis Smith at Oxford so he came to train with us there. He was 46 or 47 then, but he still had all the attributes. He was a very hard worker and it put it into perspective for me because he was only a few years younger than my dad and I couldn't

imagine him doing all the things that Shiltons was!

WHAT IS THE BEST STADIUM YOU'VE PLAYED AT? |

Probably Sunderland's Stadium of Light, I played there for WBA in the season that Sunderland won the Championship. There were 42,000 spectators inside, and these modern stadiums are great when they're full, but if you go to places like Wigan they tend to rattle around a bit.

BEST FOOTBALLER PLAYED WITH? |



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The best player would be Matt Elliott, who I was with at Oxford before he joined Leicester. He was an excellent player and he's gone on to prove it by doing so well in the Premiership and at international level.

MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT |

There's a lad at Watford called Tommy Mooney and I don't know why but wherever he's played he seems to score past me! So hopefully the next time we play Watford he'll be sitting in the stands!

FAVOURITE FOOTBALL PUNDIT |

Probably Andy Gray. He's played the game and he talks a lot of sense, unlike some pundits who just like to try to be controversial.

OTHER SPORTS PLAYED |

I used to play cricket, but the summer break seems to be getting shorter so I don't get much chance to play these days. I was a batsman and because I'm a Yorkshireman obviously Geoffrey Boycott was one of my heroes, although I

probably play a few more shots than him!

FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION |

Anywhere hot with a beach where either my parents or my wife's parents could look after the kids for a couple of weeks!

FAVOURITE MUSIC |

A bit of anything really, apart from garage and all that malarkey that Sammy Lgoe brings into the dressing room!

PRE-MATCH MEAL |

Just the usual sort of thing, chicken and scrambled eggs.

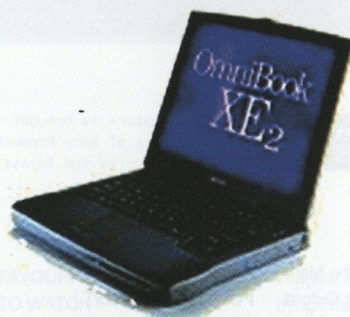
WHAT IRRITATES YOU |

Too many things to mention!





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ROYALS PASTMASTER |

RAY REEVES

Ray Reeves was a solid left-back who was nicknamed 'Bomber' because of his powerful shooting. Never was a description more aptly applied, because anyone who got in the way of one of his clearances or drives at goal, or even more dangerously, one of his bone-shuddering tackles, really would feel as though they had been bombed and left with craters all over them.

Reeves was Reading-born and had an outstanding career as a young player. He was a member of the Berks & Bucks team that did so well in the FA County Youth championship, and was also selected for the FA Youth XI which toured Holland. These performances brought him to the attention of the Reading management and he signed as a groundstaff lad for his hometown club in 1947.

He worked his way up through the minor, youth and reserve

sides before making his debut for the first team away to Shrewsbury Town on November 29th 1952. He played left-back, enabling Stan Wicks to move to centre-half, and stayed as a regular in that position for the next nine years.

Occasionally he was chosen to play centre-half himself, and sometimes, if the team was losing, he would be sent upfield to lend his presence and not inconsiderable bulk to the attack in an attempt to recover the deficit.

He totalled thirty-one goals for Reading, twenty-two of them from the penalty spot, which makes him the club's most successful penalty taker. Most of the remainder came from free kicks outside the area, which he struck with great velocity through any defensive wall foolhardy enough to get in the way. But he was a capable defender too, and frequently

used his body to block shots off the line when Reading's 'keeper had been beaten.

'Bomber' played over three hundred games for Reading, captaining the side on many occasions, before joining Brentford in 1961. He played mainly in that club's Football Combination team, adding just five League appearances to his total with Reading. After leaving Brentford in 1962 he played for Dover for a year, then signed for Burton Albion, with whom he spent a further season.

He returned to Reading to become a milk dairy manager, and play in occasional charity games. Ray now lives in Emmer Green, and although he attends reunions of former Reading players, his sporting activity is confined to a game of bowls for the Island Bowling Club.

DAVID DOWNS |

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top man

MAN OF THE MATCH PRESENTATIONS

ROOSTER UP TO THIRD PERCH |

Matt Robinson picked up his third Man of the Match award of the season in the last League fixture at Madejski Stadium, when the Royals saw off the challenge of Cambridge three weeks ago.

Matt was returning to the team after an injury lay-off, and there was no doubt that his solid defending and dangerous attacking surges had been missed. His performance impressed the Madejski Stadium Suiteholders who named him their Man of the Match, and Matt is pictured here receiving his bottle of champagne from Associated Asphalt's Howard Cooke.

The other Man of the Match award on the day went to Phil Whitehead - his first of the season - after an extremely impressive performance between the sticks.

Phil made three superb saves to keep the clean sheet when Cambridge were threatening to get back in the game early in the second half, and he was rewarded with the Man of the Match award from match sponsors Hicks Holdings. He is pictured here (right) with Steve Hicks.

Martin Butler and Tony Rougier are still joint top of the season's total, with four awards apiece, and Robinson has now joined Jamie Cureton in joint third with three awards.

MAN OF THE MATCH LEAGUE TABLE |

CURRENT LEADERS |

MARTIN BUTLER 4

TONY ROUGIER 4

JAMIE CURETON 3

MATT ROBINSON 3



Phil Whitehead and Steve Hicks of Hicks Holdings |

Matt Robinson collects his award from Howard Cooke from Associated Asphalt |

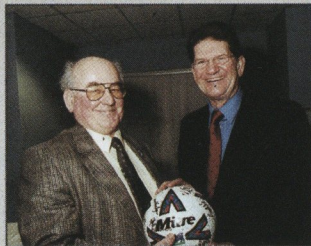


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THANKS TO OUR MATCH SPONSORS

The last League fixture at Madejski Stadium, against Cambridge United three weeks ago, was sponsored by **Hicks Holdings Ltd**, and we hope they enjoyed their day. Like all our match sponsors, they received a memento of the day, and Steve Hicks is pictured here receiving an engraved crystal souvenir from Reading FC Chairman John Madejski. Our thanks to Hicks Holdings for their support and we hope to welcome them back again soon.



The matchball was sponsored by the **Supporters' Club** on the occasion of their 70th birthday. Chairman John Madejski is pictured here presenting a signed matchball to Francis Howell, who has been on the Supporters' Club Committee since 1966! We hope everybody in the Supporters' Club party thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

BOOK YOUR PLACE FOR THE RFC GOLF DAY !

The ever-popular Golf Day is returning to our events calendar early next year. The first will take place on Wednesday 28th March 2001 at Sandford Springs

Golf Club in Wolverton, Hants, and is sponsored by Reading Sporting Club.

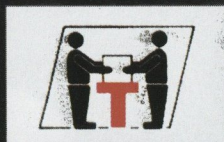
Alan Pardew and Martin Allen, along with a number of first team players, are looking forward to joining teams on the day. The cost of entering a team of four will be **£350 (including VAT)**. This includes 27 holes of golf, light lunch, three-course dinner, prize presentation and auction. It may be a few months away, but places are strictly limited and are being taken up quickly, so for more information or to book your team's place, don't delay in calling the Commercial office (contact details below).

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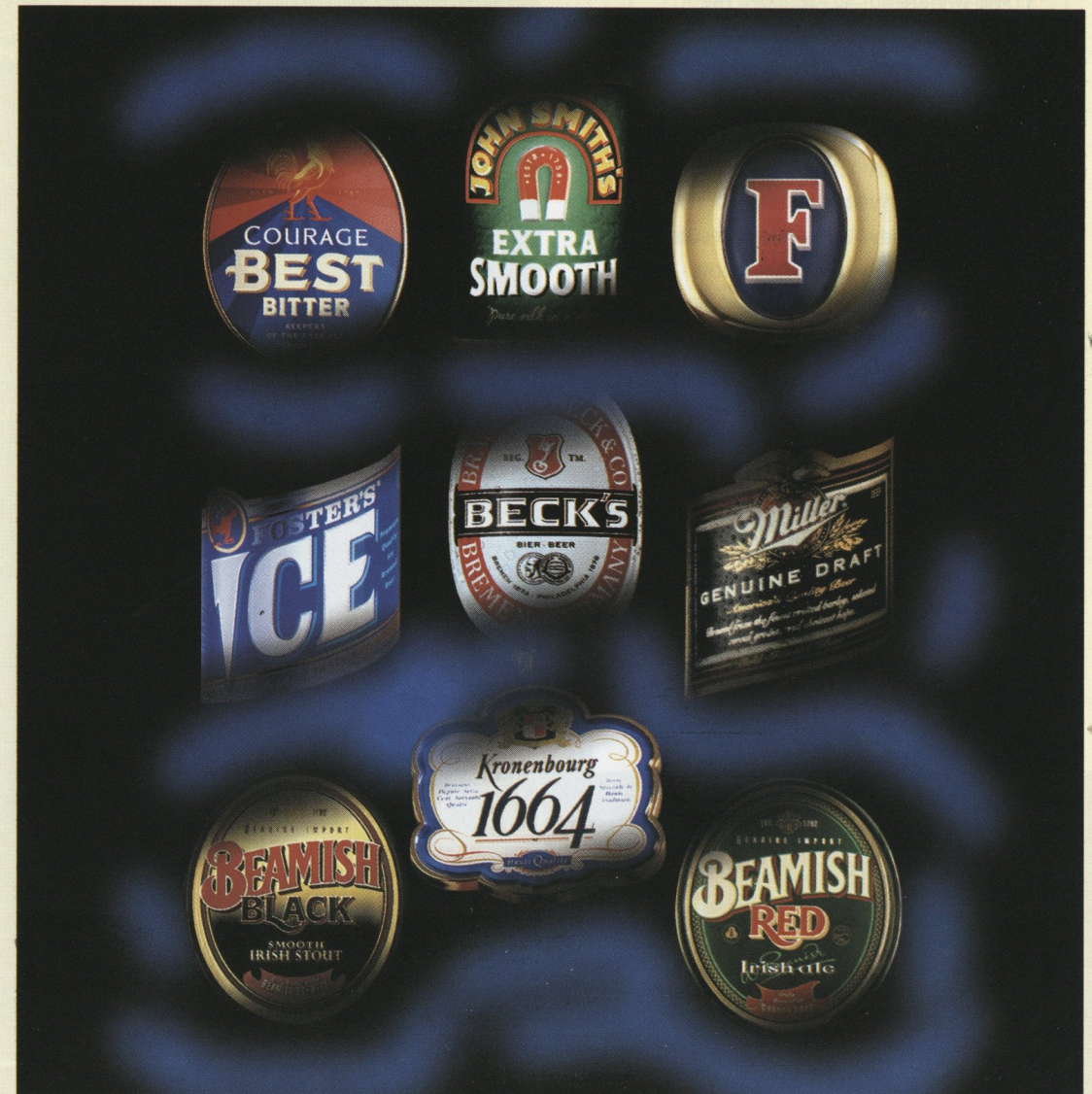
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Today's Line-ups

REFEREE | MR SG TOMLIN

ASSISTANT REFS MR SL GAGEN, MR MT MCCOY

4TH OFFICIAL MR K BARNES

ROYALS SQUAD 2000|01

1 PHIL WHITEHEAD	22 JIM MCINTYRE
2 JOHN POLSTON	23 JOHN MACKIE
3 MATT ROBINSON	24 DARIUS HENDERSON
4 KEITH JONES	25 RICKY NEWMAN
5 ADRIAN VIVEASH	26 STUART GRAY
6 BARRY HUNTER	27 NATHAN TYSON
7 GRAEME MURTY	28 CHRIS SMITH
8 DARREN CASKEY	29 ADRIAN WILLIAMS
9 MARTIN BUTLER	30 ALEX HADDOW
10 NICKY FORSTER	31 JAMIE ASHDOWN
11 LEE HODGES	32 RICKY ALLAWAY
12 JAMIE CURETON	33 ADAM LOCKWOOD
13 KEITH SCOTT	34 GUILLAUME NORBERT
14 SAMMY IGOE	37 TONY ROUGIER
15 SEAN EVERS	
16 PHIL PARKINSON	
17 NEIL SMITH	
18 ANDY GURNEY	
19 JOE GAMBLE	
20 CHRIS CASPER	
21 SCOTT HOWIE	

TEAM MANAGER | ALAN PARDEW

ROYALS FACTS |

SOME QUICK FACTS ABOUT READING FC

MANAGER | Alan Pardew |
since September 1999

RECORD ATTENDANCE |
33,042 v Brentford, 1927

BIGGEST WIN |
10-2 v Crystal Palace, 1946

ALL-TIME LEADING
LEAGUE SCORER |
Ronnie Blackman 158

ALL-TIME LEADING
LEAGUE APPEARANCES |
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since 1998

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Cricket Ground, Elm Park



ROYALS TEAM 4|4|2



GOALKEEPER

1 | PHIL WHITEHEAD

DEFENCE

25 | RICKY NEWMAN 23 | JOHN MACKIE 5 | ADI VIVEASH 3 | MATT ROBINSON

MIDFIELD

37 | TONY ROUGIER 16 | PHIL PARKINSON 4 | KEITH JONES 11 | LEE HODGES

ATTACK

9 | MARTIN BUTLER 12 | JAMIE CURETON

11 | LIAM GEORGE 31 | LEE NOGAN

ATTACK

15 | MATTHEW TAYLOR 8 | PAUL MCLAREN 4 | MATTHEW SPRING 12 | ADAM LOCKE 30 | PETRI HELIN

MIDFIELD

5 | JULIAN WATTS 40 | ADRIAN WHITBREAD 6 | MARVIN JOHNSON

DEFENCE

16 | NATHAN ABBEY

GOALKEEPER

LUTON TOWN TEAM 3|5|2

LUTON TOWN SQUAD 2000|01

1 MARK OVENDALE	23 JUDE STIRLING
2 GAVIN MCGOWAN	24 SCOTT WARD
4 MATTHEW SPRING	25 DEAN STANDEN
5 JULIAN WATTS	26 FRIEDRICH BREITENFELDER
6 MARVIN JOHNSON	28 ROCKY BAPTISTE
7 PETER THOMPSON	29 KENT KARLSEN
8 PAUL MCLAREN	30 PETRI HELIN
9 STUART DOUGLAS	31 LEE NOGAN
10 MARK STEIN	40 ADRIAN WHITBREAD
11 LIAM GEORGE	
12 ADAM LOCKE	
13 STUART FRASER	
14 ANDREW FOTIADIS	
15 MATTHEW TAYLOR	
16 NATHAN ABBEY	
17 EMMERSON BOYCE	
18 TRESOR KANDOL	
19 JAMES AYRES	
20 PETER HOLMES	
21 ANDRE SCARLETT	
22 DEAN BRENNAN	

MANAGER | LIL FUCCILLO

HATTERS FACTS |

SOME QUICK FACTS ABOUT LUTON TOWN

MANAGER | Lil Fuccillo
(since November 2000)

RECORD ATTENDANCE |
30,069 v Blackpool
(FA Cup), 1959

BIGGEST WIN |
12-0- v Bristol Rovers,
Division Three, 1936

ALL-TIME LEADING
LEAGUE SCORER |

Gordon Turner (243),
1949-64

ALL-TIME LEADING
LEAGUE APPEARANCES |
Bob Morton (494), 1948-64

GROUND | Kenilworth
Road, 1905

PREVIOUS GROUNDS |
Dallow Lane,
Dunstable Road

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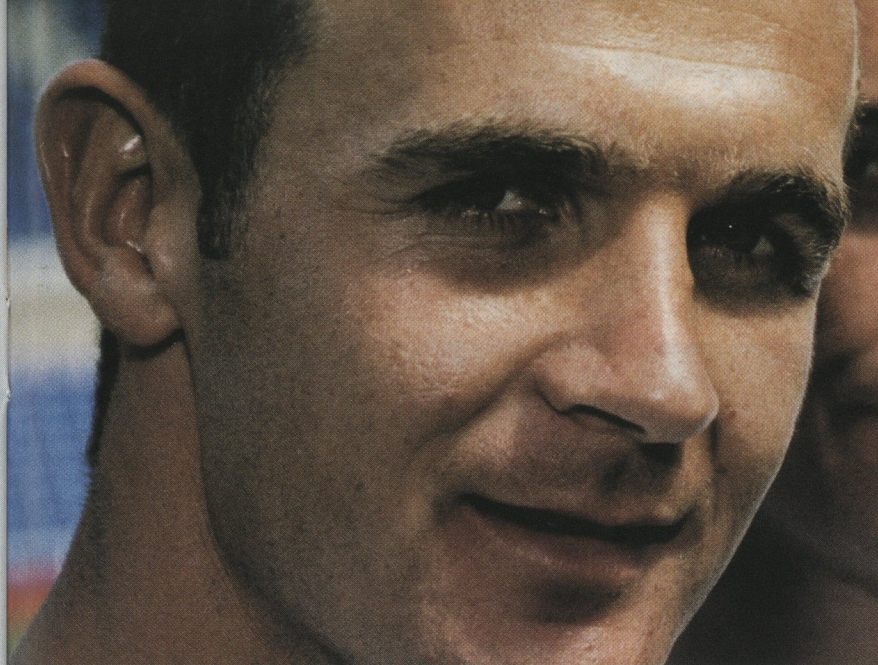
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Jim McIntyre was among the scorers on the opening day of Madejski Stadium as Luton were defeated 3-0 |

HISTORY BETWEEN THE TEAMS |

ROYALS VERSUS LUTON TOWN

Luton Town were not good opponents for the Royals last season. Our second home game of the season was against the Hatters, and the visitors ran out 2-1 winners with a late strike by Liam George after Andrew Fotiadis had opened the scoring. Reading's goal was scored by Martin Williams, and the only bright spot of the day for the Royals was a lively debut appearance by Nicky Förster as a second half substitute.

There was another disappointing afternoon when the Royals visited Kenilworth Road for the return fixture in January, a game which turned out to be John Gorman's last League fixture as Alan Pardew's assistant. Luton completed the double over us with a 3-1 victory, their goals being scored by Julian Watts and a brace for George. Darren Caskey scored the Reading goal.

Reading fans would prefer to forget those fixtures and recall instead the previous season's home clash with the Hatters - the first ever game at Madejski Stadium on 22nd August 1998.

On such a momentous day there was only ever going to be one winner, and the Royals duly obliged with goals from Grant Brebner, Jim McIntyre and Robert Fleck to end up 3-0 winners.

Before last season's meetings the Royals had enjoyed much the better of recent fixtures with Luton, and you have to go back as far as 1970 to find the Hatters' previous League victory over Reading. The overall League record between the teams could not be closer with the Royals and the Hatters both having enjoyed 17 victories each, with six games drawn.

Luton Town are actually one of our oldest adversaries as we frequently met during our Southern League days, and both clubs joined the Football League at the same time (1920) to continue the rivalry. The Hatters had the better of our early Football League meetings, doing the double over us with a pair of victories in the space of four days in the 1920/21 season, back when 'double-headers' were still the norm.

Luton have inflicted a few heavy defeats on the Royals over the years, most recently with a 5-0 thrashing in 1970.

By contrast, Reading have never managed to win by more than three goals against any Luton team, our best spell against the Hatters being 1932-33, when we beat Town by four goals to one twice in the space of less than twelve months.

THE LAST TIME WE MET |
NATIONWIDE DIVISION TWO

LUTON TOWN 3
WATTS 18, GEORGE 69,90
READING 1
CASKEY 60

22ND JAN 2000, KENILWORTH ROAD | ATTENDANCE: 6,044

LUTON | ABBEY, DOHERTY, WATTS, JOHNSON, BOYCE, LOCKE, MCGOWAN, SCARLETT, GRAY, DOUGLAS (FOTIADIS), GEORGE

READING | HOWIE, BERNAL (M WILLIAMS), POLSTON, PRIMUS, GRAY (NICHOLLS), GURNEY, PARKINSON, CASKEY, SMITH (EVERS), FORSTER, SCOTT

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2/12/2000 NATIONWIDE DIVISION TWO | PICTURES | EDDIE GREVILLE | READING EVENING POST



sliding in

NEIL MUSTOE ATTEMPTS TO LEAP OVER PARKY'S CHALLENGE

After two consecutive League defeats and the disappointment of the previous week's postponement at Bournemouth, the Royals got back into winning ways with an ultimately convincing victory over Cambridge United.

Alan Pardew made just two changes to the side that had beaten Grays in the last outing, both at full-back as Andy Gurney came in at right-back to replace the suspended Ricky Newman, and Matt Robinson returned for Stuart Gray on the other flank.

The Royals got off to the best possible start with the quickest ever goal at Madejski Stadium. Cambridge old boy Martin Butler was fouled by Andy Duncan, and Sammy Igoe's free-kick was headed home at the far post by a stooping Adi Viveash, giving the home side a lead after just 40 seconds. Cambridge were in disarray,

and with two minutes on the clock Jamie Cureton nearly made it two with a superb shot on the turn, but U's keeper Lionel Perez got down well to his left and made a diving stop. The visitors soon began to settle down a bit, but the goalscoring threat was still from Reading, and after 12 minutes Cureton burst down the left, crossed low to the near post but Butler's sliding effort was directed straight at Perez.

As the opening period went on the visitors were playing some nice football without unduly troubling the Reading defence, and when they were called upon stout defending by John Mackie and Adi Viveash kept the ball away from Phil Whitehead. The Royals still looked more likely to score, and a second goal arrived after 35 minutes, when Butler fed Robinson on the left wing, who whipped in a dangerous cross to the near post, where



Dreyer header over the bar, and when the keeper was finally beaten by Mustoe's curling shot from 20 yards, the post came to his rescue as the ball cannoned away to safety.

Torquay man's first goal at Madejski Stadium. That goal killed the game off, and the final 20 minutes were played completed without further addition to the scoreline.

It had been a shaky spell for the Royals, but they weathered the storm and with 20 minutes remaining the game was finally put out of Cambridge's reach when Andy Gurney fired an unstoppable 25 yard free-kick past Perez - the former

The Royals had never been at their best, but they defended well with Mackie and Viveash both outstanding, and of course Whitehead made three crucial interventions when the visitors were threatening to get back into the game.

Royals back in winning ways |

skipper Phil Parkinson arrived to send a perfectly placed glancing header past Perez and into the right hand corner.

It had been a very pleasing first half for Pardew's side, and they nearly had the perfect start to the second period when Jamie Cureton was tripped as he ran towards goal and the penalty was awarded. Cureton himself stepped up to take, but although his spot kick sent Perez the wrong way, it also went the wrong way of the left-hand upright and the Us were off the hook. That let-off seemed to give Cambridge

fresh hope, and they went on to enjoy their best spell of the game as Reading were only able to keep a clean sheet thanks to some heroic goalkeeping by Phil Whitehead. First the big Yorkshireman smothered the ball on the goal-line after a dangerous cross by Ian Ashbee, and seconds later he made a stupendous left-handed save as Neil Mustoe crashed in a shot from eight yards.

The U's continued to press, and Whitehead made another superb stop to tip a John



THE LINEUP |

- 1 Whitehead
- 18 Gurney
- 3 Robinson
- 5 Viveash
- 23 Mackie
- 4 Jones
- 16 Parkinson
- 11 Hodges
- 14 Igoe
- 12 Cureton
- 9 Butler

- 8 Caskey | 4
- 17 Smith | 11
- 37 Rougier | 14

ATTENDANCE 9,601



close attention

JOHN MACKIE GETS TO GRIPS WITH PAUL CONNOR

notts county 3 royals 2

16/12/2000 | NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIV 2 | PICTURES | EDDIE GREVILLE

READING EVENING POST



all smiles

PARKY IS DELIGHTED AFTER NETTING THE EQUALISER

Royals slip up after stirring comeback

and finish well with a neat lofted shot over Whitehead to give County a 1-0 lead.

It looked bleak for Reading when the Magpies added a second goal less than five minutes from the interval - Mark Stallard was brought down inside the penalty area by John Mackie, and Stallard himself stepped up to fire the resulting penalty low past Whitehead. But the Royals were given fresh hope just two minutes later when County defender Ian Richardson put through his own net under pressure from Adi Viveash

following a Keith Jones corner to reduce the deficit to 2-1 at half-time.

Alan Pardew introduced Darren Caskey in place of Jamie Cureton at the interval and the side reverted to their more customary 4-4-2 formation, with Rougier going up front alongside Butler and Caskey slotting into the midfield. The Royals made an excellent start to the second period, forcing County onto the back foot for long periods. They eventually got the reward that their pressure deserved after 63 minutes when more

The Royals were defeated by an 87th minute winner at Meadow Lane last Saturday afternoon despite battling back from two goals down and looking the most likely victors for the majority of the second half.

Alan Pardew made one change to the side that had drawn at York the previous weekend, bringing in Tony Rougier to replace Sammy Igoe. Rougier played as a left-sided attacker, with Jamie Cureton on the right and Martin Butler in the middle to create a 4-3-3 formation which could also see the two wider attackers drop back to complete a five-man midfield when necessary.

The game started slowly, with the Royals creating the first opportunity when Cureton threaded a well-weighted pass from the right wing through towards Rougier after ten minutes, but County keeper

Darren Ward pounced on the ball as the Trinidad and Tobago international prepared to shoot. At the other end, Phil Whitehead made a comfortable save from an Anders Jacobsen header following County's first corner.

Cureton and Rougier combined again five minutes later, when Rougier crossed from the left and Cureton's glancing header flashed wide of the post. After 25 minutes the former Port Vale winger did well to get in another cross from the left, and again it was Cureton who reacted quickest to fire in a right-footed shot but it lacked power and Ward was able to save easily.

The Royals were looking comfortable with County offering little threat, but after 34 minutes Cureton conceded possession to Mark Stallard, who found Danny Allsopp and the Manchester City loanee was able to race into the area



THE LINEUP |

- 1 Whitehead
- 25 Newman
- 3 Robinson
- 5 Viveash
- 23 Mackie
- 4 Jones
- 16 Parkinson
- 11 Hodges
- 37 Rougier
- 12 Cureton
- 9 Butler

- 8 Caskey | 12
- 17 Smith | 4

ATTENDANCE 5,106

excellent work by Rougier created danger inside the County area, and skipper Phil Parkinson popped up to send a header just inside the post for the leveller. Two minutes later Allsopp made a good run, and produced a shot to match but Whitehead saved well with his legs to keep the scores level.

Rougier was causing havoc all afternoon as the County defence struggled to contain him, and with twenty minutes

remaining he came close to giving his side the lead as the Royals continued to press forward in search of a winner, and again it was Rougier who came close after a jinking run with 75 minutes on the clock.

But with time running out and a draw looking inevitable, it was County who got the all-important goal as Allsopp pounced for his second of the afternoon when he poked the ball home in a goalmouth scramble following a corner.



on the ball

TONY ROUGIER CREATED PROBLEMS FOR THE COUNTY DEFENCE ALL AFTERNOON

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By popular demand the East and North Stands will be unreserved seating unless otherwise indicated by the Club.

The ticket office is open between 9 and 5.30 Monday-Friday, and season tickets can either be purchased in person or by telephoning 0118 968 1000.

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BRISTOL ROVERS V READING |

Nationwide League Division Two, Tuesday 26th December, kick off 1pm, Memorial Stadium.

Tickets are on general sale. This game is all-ticket for Reading supporters, and tickets are priced: Adults £15, Seniors/Students £8, Juniors £4, Disabled £5. We have been allocated 1,188 covered seats, 2,129 uncovered seats and five disabled and helper seats.

HOW TO GET THERE |

NEAREST RAILWAY STATION | Temple Meads (two miles).

BY CAR | Exit M32 at Junction 2 then take third exit at the roundabout (signposted Horfield) into Muller Road. Continue for approximately 1.5 miles, then turn left into Filton Road and ground is immediately on left.

SWINDON TOWN V READING |

Nationwide League Division Two, Saturday 30th December, kick off 3pm, County Ground. Tickets are on general sale. This game is all ticket for Reading supporters, and tickets are priced: Adults £15, Seniors/Students £8, Juniors £4, Disabled £5. We have been allocated 1,188 covered seats, 2,129 uncovered seats and five disabled and helper seats.

HOW TO GET THERE |

NEAREST RAILWAY STATION | Swindon (0.5 mile).

BY CAR | Exit M4 at Junction 15 and take A345 into Swindon along Queen's Drive. Take the third exit at 'Magic Roundabout' into County Road.

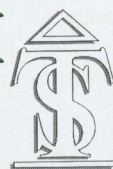
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Look out for our sellers around Madejski Stadium, and if you miss the half-time draw you can also check the winning numbers in the following day's Reading Evening Post. Good luck!

Our winner when the Royals faced Cambridge United three weeks ago was Mr P Morgan from Tilehurst, who went home with a cheque for £800 after his Golden Gamble ticket number was drawn by our guest for the day, former Reading star Ollie Kearns. Mr Morgan is pictured below receiving his cheque from Ollie, programme seller Cissie Platten and Promotions Manager Mike Kearney.

The runners-up prize of a signed RFC matchball was won by Alan Loveridge from Crowthorne.

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Supporters'

CLUB NEWS WITH CHAIRMAN ROGER TITFORD

LOOK BACK AT 2000 |

This is our last home game of the year 2000, the year we've got used to and settled into the Madejski Stadium. The equivalent fixture last year was 'Pants Day' - the culmination of two years of dreadful results. Our home form has been completely transformed over the past 12 months and, despite the recent set-backs, our away form is much improved too. At home, our League record in 2000 up to today is won 15, drawn 4, lost 2 - which resembles the promotion form of old. Our crowds have risen accordingly to the point where five figure gates are the norm not the exception - for the first time in a generation.

The atmosphere is better, whether there's a band or theme or not, and the rapport with the players has grown. The area around the stadium is no longer a wasteland, the hotel is up and serving hooped shirts pre-match and the car-parks are busy throughout the week.

LOOK BACK AT LUTON |

Luton fans here today will notice the changes more than most. The Hatters were, of course, the first visitors to the Madejski Stadium, then only accessible by car via Bennet Road and the back of Island Road. There was no B&Q, no Green Park and no dual carriageway; it were all fields.

The Reading team for that day, less than two and half years ago, makes interesting historical reading: Van der Kwaak (in his only home game); Bernal, Primus, Kromheer, Gray; Houghton,

Brebner, Caskey, Reilly; McIntyre, Sarr. Eight of that team have left the club and five have left the country!

LOOK BACK AT CHRISTMAS |

The question why don't we play at home on Boxing Day was asked at the recent Fans Forum. It's true this will be the third year in a row we have not been at home on the 26th December but in both 1996 and 1997 we were at home to West Bromwich while Luton were our visitors in 1994. The club will ask for a home Boxing Day match next season but looking back down the years at home Boxing Day matches they don't seem that much fun; 1-0 Quinn (and he was playing for Swindon), 1-0 Senior, 1-0 Kearney, 1-0 Murray etc. One favourite was the 3-1 win over Aldershot on their last League visit in 1988.

There was a time, from 1920 to 1958, when it was customary to play the same opponents home and away on Christmas Day then Boxing Day. In our case we often played Swindon or Bournemouth which wouldn't be too bad on the travelling but sometimes the Football League 'abacus' picked out a right awful pairing. Imagine going to Bradford City

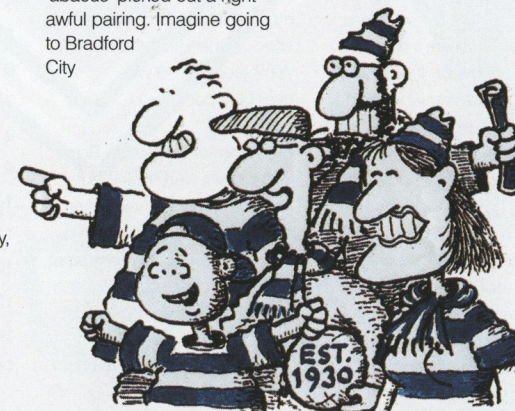
away on Christmas Day 1929 - and losing 1-0 and having to get back to play them kick-off 2.15pm the next day. Perhaps one of our best Christmases was 1928, drawing 2-2 at White Hart Lane and winning the return 4-3 in front of 24,000 at Elm Park.

DIDCOT TRIANGLE |

As usual, results are going with home advantage. Three of the six matches have been played: Reading 2 Swindon 0, Reading 4 Oxford 3 and Swindon 2 Oxford 1. Victory at Swindon in a week's time would give us the Triangle for this season, which would be a good way to end the year.

SEASON'S GREETINGS |

From all at the Supporters' Club we wish you a Happy Christmas and a successful New Year. If you've come to the game instead of doing that last minute shopping, never fear. Pop down to the Football Shop and choose from our narrow range of gifts, ideal for the, er, Reading fan in your life. Open after the match too. Happy Christmas.



AWAY TRAVEL |

30 December: Swindon dep
Stadium 12.30pm, Garrard
St 12.45pm £8

RFSC members only. Note
this match is all-ticket for
Reading fans.

BAND PLAYERS |

Fans who are able and willing
to play musical instruments at
home matches, particularly
brass, would be very welcome
to get in touch with either the
Supporters' Club or Boyd
Butler at the Football Club.

MATE COMPETITION |

The winner of the RFSC 'Bring
a mate' competition was Paul
Gotta of Burford who was a
guest of RFSC's match ball
sponsorship team at the
Cambridge game.

blast from the past

BY ALAN SEDUNARY

1987-88 |

Having featured a relegation season in our last League programme, we feature another that also has a silver lining, although this one was gold and, remarkably, includes what many Royals fans consider to be the club's greatest moment.

The 1987-88 season started off reasonably well for Reading with seven points from our first four games but then a run that saw us win just one game in the next 20 put us firmly in the Second Division relegation zone. Ian Branfoot broke the club transfer record twice in quick succession by paying £150,000 for Keith Curle and then £250,000 for Steve Moran but, apart from a run of three consecutive wins after Christmas, we were always close to the foot of the table. Our last game of the season saw us needing to win to have a chance of finishing third from bottom and go into the play offs with third, fourth and fifth clubs in the Third Division. As it was, the game against Hull was a truly dismal 0-0 draw and Reading's two year stay in the upper flight was over.

What made this season remarkable was that while Reading could only win 10 of our 44 Second Division games, we managed no less than six victories over First Division clubs. The cup fun began in the second round of the League Cup when Chelsea, including Kerry Dixon, came to Elm Park and were well beaten

3-1. Michael Gilkes, playing a rare game as a striker, scored twice while Martin Hicks at last got one of his thunderous free kicks on target for our other goal. The second leg was much closer but two goals from the much maligned Colin Gordon gave us an aggregate win, the 3-2 reverse at Stamford Bridge surely being our greatest defeat!

Our League Cup run ended four games later at Bradford and when a Matt Le Tissier goal put us out of the FA Cup we only had the Full Members (Simod) Cup left. Even a shock away win on QPR's plastic had not given any indication of what was to follow. But three floodlit wins in a month, over First Division Oxford and Forest plus a battling victory over our old adversaries, Bradford, saw us through to the semi-finals against FA Cup holders, Coventry. After a kick off delayed to get the 15,000 plus crowd in, Reading took the lead through Neil Smillie's first goal for the club but Coventry levelled the scores and extra time could not separate the sides.

So came Elm Park's first penalty shoot-out. It started badly for Reading when Keith Curle (crossing the halfway line for the only time in his Reading career according to some cynics!) had his kick easily saved. Then, Stuart Beavon, Jerry Williams with his only penalty for Reading and Dean Horrix with his last Reading goal scored while Steve Francis pulled off two great

stops to leave Gilksie with the simple task of scoring to send us to Wembley! This, of course, he did, sending Ogrizovic the wrong way amidst scenes of great joy.

Four weeks later, on 27 March 1987, the town of Reading moved 40 miles eastwards as 40,000 travelled to Wembley for that greatest day. No-one at Reading, or Luton, needs reminding of how Reading outplayed and outfought their First Division opponents to come back from an early Mick Harford goal to win 4-1, thanks to goals from Michael Gilkes, a Stuart Beavon penalty, Mick Tait and Neil Smillie. The sight of Martin Hicks lifting the Simod Cup at Wembley was, for many Reading fans, ample compensation for the relegation that was to follow.

Luton were to overcome their disappointment within a month when the League Cup Final provided them the chance to become giant-killers as they beat Arsenal 3-2. The season ended with further Reading joy at Wembley as former Royals favourite Lawrie Sanchez made it a hat-trick of cup shocks when his header gave Wimbledon a 1-0 win over Liverpool.

Other former and future Royals in the news were Neil Webb opening his England scoring account against Turkey while, less happily Chris Woods was convicted of disorderly conduct following a punch up in the Rangers-Celtic game. The season ended with the

European Championships and, in the some-things-never-change department, England went out in a first round that included defeat by Eire that was due to goalkeeping heroics by Pat Bonner and a goal from Ray Houghton.

FANCY THAT | Back to Wembley and the Simod Cup Final obscure facts department. The 61,740 was the biggest crowd to watch Reading, although it has since been beaten by the play-off final, while Reading are the only club to have four different scorers in a major Wembley final. Just to keep our visitors happy, Luton became the first side to use 13 players in a Wembley Cup Final, Marvin Johnson beating Gary Peters by just three minutes to the honour. All of this and still no one knows what a Simod is!

LEAGUE TABLE |

POS	TEAM	PTS
1	Millwall	82
2	Aston Villa	78
3	Middlesbrough	78
4	Bradford City	77
5	Blackburn Rovers	77
6	Crystal Palace	75
7	Leeds United	69
8	Ipswich Town	66
9	Manchester City	65
10	Oldham Athletic	65
11	Stoke City	62
12	Swindon Town	59
13	Leicester City	59
14	Barnsley	57
15	Hull City	57

Academy winger Adam Campion displays the Simod Cup-winning kit!



16	Plymouth Argyle	56
17	Bournemouth	49
18	Shrewsbury Town	49
19	Birmingham City	48
20	West Bromwich	47
21	Sheffield United	46
22	READING	42
23	Huddersfield Town	28

LEADING LEAGUE APPEARANCES |

1	Martin Hicks	44
2	Michael Gilkes	39
3	Tommy Tait	35
4=	Stuart Beavon	34
4=	Steve Francis	34
6=	Keith Curle	30
6=	Les Taylor	30
8=	Linden Jones	28
8=	Steve Moran	28
10	Steve Richardson	27

LEADING LEAGUE SCORERS |

1	Colin Gordon	8
2	Steve Moran	7
3	Billy Whitehurst	6
4	Michael Gilkes	4
5	Linden Jones	3
6=	Stuart Beavon	2
6=	Dean Horrix	2
6=	Francis Joseph	2
6=	Tommy Tait	2
6=	Les Taylor	2

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Driven by Passion



Tony Rougier is fighting fit after recovering from his ankle injury.

ROYALS RESERVES |

Monday 11th December

Avon Insurance Combination League Cup

Reading 1-1 Bristol Rovers

Tony Rougier is looking forward to the rest of the season after fully recovering from the ankle injury that ruined his first few months at Madejski Stadium. The gifted Trinidad & Tobago international was on target again for the reserves in their 1-1 draw with Bristol Rovers last week, and afterwards he vowed, "I'm fit and ready."

Rougier scored his first goals for Reading with a late brace to secure victory against Oxford at the end of October, but he says, "I wasn't fit then. But the reserve games have given me a chance to get back to full fitness and although I don't like

playing for the reserves I've been able to use the games in a positive way. It's been pleasing for me to get through 90 minutes unscathed, and I've also been able to learn the way the manager wants me to play for the team."

The former Port Vale man has now scored in each of the last three reserve games, and he is confident that he will be able to transfer that goalscoring form into first team football. "Anybody who saw me play when I first joined Reading in the three or four games before I got injured will have known that it was just a matter of time before I would score goals. Since then Martin Butler and Jamie Cureton have really done the business, but now I'm getting to full fitness so let's see if I can catch them! But whether I score 5 goals or 25

goals I just want to see what is best for Reading. I came here because I am very confident that we can gain promotion and my only purpose is to do everything I can to make that happen."

Rougier's goal against Rovers came with a cracking half-volley from French triallist Guillaume Norbert's cross in the second half, as the Royals came from behind to draw 1-1 with Bristol Rovers in the Avon Combination League Cup tie.

The Royals have now drawn their opening two group matches, having earlier tied 3-3 with Crystal Palace.

Team | Howie, Gurney, Haddow (Gamble), N Smith, Hunter, C Smith, Norbert, Caskey, Gray (Lockwood), Henderson, Rougier



15/08/00 NORWICH CITY (A)	1-1
23/08/00 CRYSTAL PALACE	3-3 LC
30/08/00 CHELTENHAM	0-1
13/09/00 COLCHESTER UTD (A)	2-1
20/09/00 SOUTHEND UTD	2-1
27/09/00 CAMBRIDGE UTD	1-1
02/10/00 P'BOROUGH UTD (A)	1-3
10/10/00 NORTHAMPTON (A)	3-0
PSTPND PORTSMOUTH (A)	TBA
01/11/00 LUTON TOWN	2-0
PSTPND BARNET (A)	TBA
15/11/00 MILLWALL	1-0
29/11/00 GILLINGHAM	1-0
06/12/00 LEYTON ORIENT (A)	2.00
11/12/00 BRISTOL ROVERS	1-1 LC
20/12/00 FULHAM (A)	1.00
03/01/01 BRISTOL CITY	7.00 LC
10/01/00 QPR	7.00
17/01/01 CRYSTAL PALACE (A)	7.30
31/01/01 BRENTFORD	2.00
07/02/01 BRISTOL CITY (A)	2.00
14/02/01 PORTSMOUTH	2.00
28/02/01 SWINDON TOWN (A)	2.00
14/03/01 OXFORD UNITED	7.00
21/03/01 WYCOMBE W (A)	2.00
28/03/01 BRIGHTON & HOVE	2.00
04/04/01 BOURNEMOUTH (A)	2.00
11/04/01 BRISTOL ROVERS	2.00

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royals on the ball

ALL THE LATEST ROYALS NEWS

VISIT THE ROYALS OFFICIAL WEBSITE @ WWW.READINGFC.CO.UK

AWAY CLASH AWAITS IN LDV |

Reading face a tricky trip west against non-league opposition in the Second Round of the LDV Vans Trophy. The Royals will face either Hereford United or current Conference leaders Yeovil Town, and the tie is due to be played week commencing 8th January 2001.

READING FOOTBALL CLUB CUSTOMER CHARTER |

Reading FC are publishing their commitment to supporters in the form of a Customer Charter. The Charter, which can be read on the official Club website - www.readingfc.co.uk - or seen in the Ticket Office, reinforces in writing the service already offered to Reading supporters.

The Club won the Nationwide Division Two Club of the Year last season for work in making Reading FC as customer-friendly as possible, and the Charter ensures that standards are maintained and improved where possible.

It covers in detail a number of areas including:

Accessibility: maintaining a broad range of prices and concessions to provide the widest access to matches for family groups, disabled supporters, junior and senior supporters.

Consultation and Information: spelling out the ways in which Reading Football Club listens to fans, sponsors and other interested parties and consults with them on important issues affecting the club.

Community Activity: the commitment of the club to recognise its important role in the community and set a positive example and interact with the community through a range of initiatives and projects.

Employment: Reading Football Club is an equal opportunities employer, whose staff have responsibility for implementing the Customer Charter.

Customer Service: Supporters are our customers and we are committed to them and will answer any complaints speedily and efficiently.

Merchandise: Ensuring supporters have the best quality merchandise available and have access to information

on replica kit changes.

Loyalty and Membership: Providing means by which season-ticket holders get the benefits for their loyalty.

Away Support: Dealing responsibly with the allocation of away tickets and ensuring that visitors from other clubs are dealt with fairly with respect to ticket prices.

Nigel Howe, Chief Executive of Reading Football Club said, 'Reading Football Club has grown considerably over the last few years and we are determined to put the best possible customer service in place whenever practicable. We are a club going places and it is only right that many of the things we do are put in stone so that they form a standard we must live up to.'

'The relationship between a club and its supporters is paramount and we are delighted that we have worked with the Supporters' Club, staff and others to put this Charter in place. We have also sent it to the Football League so that other clubs can follow and we hope that all clubs introduce Charters as it will benefit all football supporters throughout the country.'

XMAS OPENING HOURS |

Christmas may be a time of rest for most people, but it is a busy period for football clubs and the ticket office and Megastore will remain open on most days throughout the festive season. The opening hours will be as below:

Date	Ticket Office	Megastore
Sun 24th Dec	CLOSED	10-1
Mon 25th Dec	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tues 26th Dec	CLOSED	CLOSED
Wed 27th Dec	10-4	9-5.30
Thurs 28th Dec	10-4	9-5.30
Fri 29th Dec	10-4	9-5.30
Sat 30th Dec	9-3.45	9-3.45 & 4.45-6
Sun 31st Dec	CLOSED	CLOSED
Mon 1st Jan	10-3.45	10-3.45 & 4.45-5.30

ROYALS ON FILM |

You can relive all the action from the first four months of the current season with a new video available now in the Madejski

Stadium Megastore. Priced at £12.99, the action-packed video contains highlights from every League game from the beginning of the season until the end of November, including all the goals that made the Royals the highest scoring team at home in the country!

LAST CHANCE FOR HALF-SEASON TICKETS! |

Half-season tickets are still available for fans who want to make sure they don't miss any of the action as the Royals push for promotion in the New Year and save some money at the same time!

This season ticket (the ideal Christmas present if you are still shopping!) comes into effect from the next home game with Northampton Town on 1st January, taking in the final 12 League games of the season. The prices, which work out at less than £11 per game for adults (except Upper West) are:

Upper West: Adult £185, Concession £110, Young Royal £55

East, North and Lower West: Adult £130, Concessions £75, Young Royal £45

WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS! |

The Club would like to welcome the girls, parents and friends of Caversham Blues under 11 girls football team to this afternoon's match. We would like to wish them a very successful season and hope they enjoy their time with us. The girls would like to thank Dave and Anthony Turner of Caversham Car and Van Hire for their support and help in making this visit possible.

It is also a busy day as usual for the Community Department, who are welcoming the following groups to today's game: Sandhurst Town Colts Under 13's, Kennet Valley Under 10's, Woodley Wanderers U9's, Halyard High school 11-15 years and James Tinson's eighth birthday party group. We hope you all have a great day!

PROGRAMME SELLER OF THE MONTH |

'Programme Seller of the Month' is a new award designed to give more credit to our hard-working programme sellers, and also



to give you the chance to find out more about some of them! Our first winner is Colin Mace (left), who won the award for November.

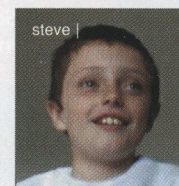
Colin is 51 years old, started watching Reading when he was nine and has hardly

missed a home game ever since. He is a member of the Supporters' Club and his son, Tony, is following in the family tradition as a Royals season-ticket holder! Colin lives in Whitley Wood and has been selling programmes for five years. Congratulations Colin and thanks for all your efforts.

JUST THE JOB |

Reading's top hotel, the Millennium Madejski, is looking for more people to join its successful team. The four star deluxe hotel would like you to join them if you have experience or fancy working as either Waiting/Bar staff or as a Hall Porter. For the right people there are excellent salaries and superb training. This is not an ordinary hotel - it is the best hotel! Working for the Millennium Madejski means that you have a career path as it is part of the worldwide Millennium Copthorne group. If you are interested please call Stephanie Norman on 0118 925 3802 or Mel Vincent on 0118 968 3803.

MAGIC MASCOTS |



The Royals will be led by two mascots this afternoon, **Steven Beake** and **Jamie Donaldson**. Steven goes to Greenmare Primary School in Didcot. He is eight years old and his favourite Royals player is Martin Butler. As well as football, Steven also enjoys his PlayStation and is hoping to join Didcot Casuals FC after Christmas. Jamie will be celebrating his 10th birthday tomorrow. He goes to St John's School in Reading, and is captain of the Lower Earley Predators. He is also a good swimmer and enjoys golf. He has supported the Royals for four years and his favourite player is Phil Parkinson.



VISIT OUR SHOWROOM

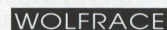
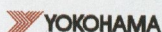
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Luton will present us with a stern test today. They have been through a lot of upheavals this season, but we know they possess some quality players |

CAPTAIN'S LOG

SKIPPER PHIL PARKINSON'S MESSAGE TO THE FANS

As we enter this busy Christmas period, I'm sure all the supporters are as aware as the players what an important spell this will be for us. I can't remember a Christmas with so many games in such a short space of time - four matches in nine days will be a true test of our character.

After this week, when the players paid a visit to the Childrens' Ward at the Royal Berkshire Hospital on Wednesday, and then all went with our families to see Cinderella at the Hexagon on Thursday, the festivities are well and truly over for the players, but let's hope we'll be celebrating with a very productive set of results. Any Reading supporters who

went up to the Notts County game last Saturday afternoon will no doubt vouch for the fact that our second half performance warranted a point at the very least. To lose the game in the last minute was a real kick in the teeth, but if we can continue in the same vein as the second half then I'm sure the results in the next few fixtures will be positive.

Luton will present us with a stern test today. They have been through a lot of upheavals this season, but we know they possess some quality players - one who could be opposing us today in Luton colours is Lee Nogan, who as I'm sure everybody will remember scored one of the most famous goals ever by a

Reading player in the play-off final at Wembley a few years ago. I'm fairly sure that Nogs has never been back to play against us since the day he left, so it will be good to see him today but hopefully he won't produce any magic like he did at Wembley that afternoon!

On behalf of all the players, I hope all Reading supporters have a fantastic Christmas, and stick with us because we'll be doing everything we can to make sure that the New Year is a successful one for Reading Football Club.

All the best
Parky

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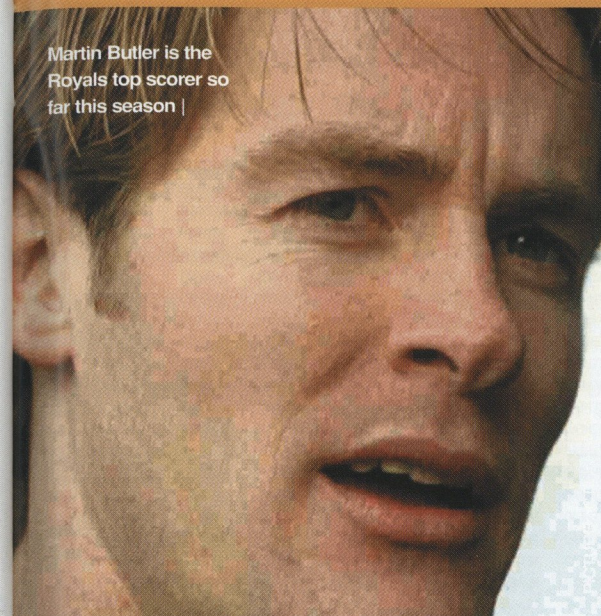
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THE ROYALS GO HEAD TO HEAD WITH THE HATTERS

Martin Butler is the
Royals top scorer so
far this season |



LUTON TOWN |

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JOHNSON
TAYLOR
LOCKE (FOTIADIS)
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MCLAREN
GEORGE
NOGAN

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ATT 4,791

THE LAST FIVE HATTERS MATCHES |

L 0-3 COLCHESTER (H)
D 0-0 DARLINGTON (A) FAC
L 0-1 P'BOROUGH (A) LDV
W 3-1 STOKE (A)
L 0-3 PORT VALE (A)

RESULTS AND ATTENDANCES |

BIGGEST WIN
3-1 STOKE (A)

BIGGEST DEFEAT
0-4 SWANSEA (H)

BIGGEST HOME ATT
7,059 - NOTTS CO

BIGGEST AWAY ATT
12,389 - STOKE

MQST APPEARANCES (STARTS) |

MATTHEW TAYLOR - 27
PAUL MCLAREN - 25
JULIAN WATTS - 25
MATTHEW SPRING - 25
EMMERSON BOYCE - 23
LIAM GEORGE - 22

THE TOP GOALSCORERS |

MARK STEIN - 4
TRESOR KANDOL - 4

READING |

THE LAST TIME THE ROYALS PLAYED |

WHITEHEAD
NEWMAN
ROBINSON
VIVEASH
MACKIE
PARKINSON 1
JONES (N SMITH)
HODGES
ROUGIER
BUTLER
CURETON (CASKEY)

16/12/00
(A) NOTTS CO
L 2-3
ATT 5,106

THE LAST FIVE ROYALS MATCHES |

L 2-3 NOTTS CO (A)
D 2-2 YORK CITY (A) FAC
W 3-0 CAMBRIDGE (H)
W 4-0 GRAYS (H) FAC
L 0-1 COLCHESTER (H)

RESULTS AND ATTENDANCES |

BIGGEST WIN
5-0 OLDHAM (H)

BIGGEST DEFEAT
0-4 BRISTOL CITY (A)

BIGGEST HOME ATT.
16,022 - OXFORD

BIGGEST AWAY ATT.
11,134 - BRISTOL CITY

MOST APPEARANCES (STARTS) |

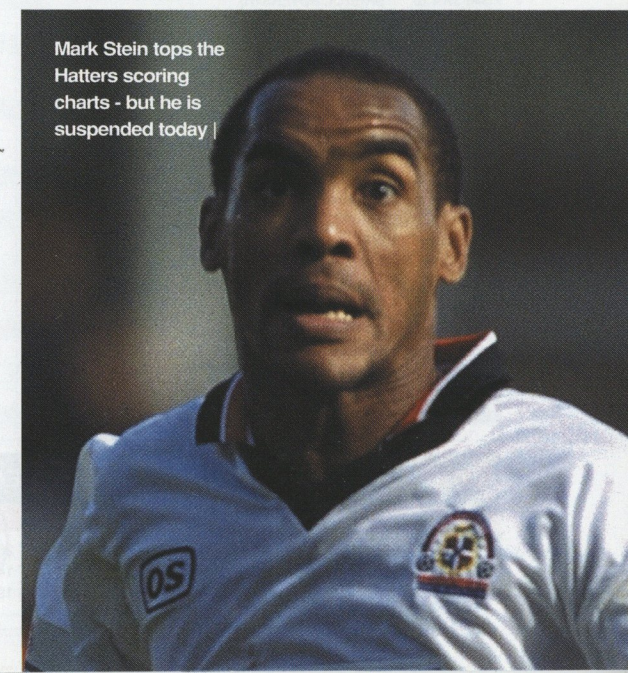
ADI VIVEASH - 24
PHIL WHITEHEAD - 24
RICKY NEWMAN - 22
MARTIN BUTLER - 22
LEE HODGES - 22
PHIL PARKINSON - 21
DARREN CASKEY - 19

THE TOP GOALSCORERS |

MARTIN BUTLER - 14
JAMIE CURETON - 11
DARREN CASKEY - 6

STATS CORRECT TO MONDAY 18TH DECEMBER

Mark Stein tops the
Hatters scoring
charts - but he is
suspended today |



Royals season so far

FRONT COVER | PHIL WHITEHEAD | PHOTOGRAPHY | ACTION IMAGES | ZAC JOSEY | JOHN HAWKEN | MARK EVANS | TIM REDGROVE

ROYALS FACTFILES

THE KEY

ALL HOME GAMES
IN BOLD

FAC | AXA FA CUP
WC | WORTHINGTON CUP

LDV | LDV VANS TROPHY

PLAYER IN BOLD
DENOTES SCORER

SYMBOL IN GREY DENOTES
PLAYER REPLACED

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
MILLWALL	21	13	3	5	40	19	42
WIGAN	21	11	9	1	29	17	42
WALSALL	21	12	5	4	37	21	41
ROTHERHAM	21	12	4	5	37	26	40
READING	20	11	2	7	42	25	35
BRISTOL CITY	21	9	7	5	34	19	34
STOKE CITY	20	9	6	5	33	23	33
WYCOMBE	21	8	6	7	21	20	30
WREXHAM	21	8	5	8	32	34	29
PBOROUGH	21	8	4	9	24	26	28
NORTHAMPTON	20	8	4	8	22	24	28
COLCHESTER	21	7	6	8	21	21	27
NOTTS COUNTY	20	8	3	9	24	33	27
BRENTFORD	19	6	8	5	22	30	26
BOURNEMOUTH	20	6	7	7	31	24	25
CAMBRIDGE UTD	21	6	7	8	30	31	25
BURY	20	7	4	9	19	28	25
BRISTOL RVRS	20	5	8	7	24	23	23
OLDHAMATH	20	6	5	9	23	32	23
SWINDON TOWN	21	6	5	10	21	38	23
PORT VALE	19	5	5	9	22	26	20
SWANSEA CITY	20	4	7	9	19	27	19
LUTON TOWN	20	3	6	11	20	36	15
OXFORD UNITED	21	3	2	16	22	46	11









FIRST TEAM APPEARANCES

PLAYER NAME	2000 2001 SEASON			ROYALS CAREER TOTAL		OVERALL UK CAREER TOTAL	
	LEAGUE APP	CUP APP	TOTAL GLS	TOTAL APP	TOTAL GLS	TOTAL APP	TOTAL GLS
RICKY ALLAWAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JAMIE ASHDOWN	(1)	-	-	(1)	-	(1)	-
MARTIN BUTLER	19	3(1)	14	40(1)	18	210(46)	83
DARREN CASKEY	18(2)	1	6	185(19)	41	220(33)	47
CHRIS CASPER	-	-	-	54(1)	2	83(5)	2
JAMIE CURETON	13(4)	4	11	17(4)	11	220(39)	96
SEAN EVERS	-	1	-	15(12)	-	73(21)	7
NICKY FORSTER	-	-	-	38(6)	10	264(69)	95
JOE GAMBLE	(1)	(1)	-	(2)	-	(2)	-
STUART GRAY	-	1	-	54(6)	2	92(13)	4
ANDY GURNEY	14(4)	2(1)	1	67(11)	3	271(19)	24
ALEX HADDOW	(1)	-	-	2(2)	-	2(2)	-
DARIUS HENDERSON	(3)	1	-	3(7)	-	3(7)	-
LEE HODGES	19(1)	3	3	67(20)	11	185(40)	43
SCOTT HOWIE	-	-	-	99(1)	-	228(1)	-
BARRY HUNTER	9	1	-	75(6)	5	197(10)	13
SAMMY IGOE	5(8)	4	2	12(11)	2	122(79)	13
KEITH JONES	10(1)	2	1	12(1)	1	546(37)	50
ADAM LOCKWOOD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JOHN MACKIE	6(3)	3(1)	-	9(4)	-	9(4)	-
JIM MCINTYRE	7(8)	(1)	3	56(33)	14	147(60)	36
GRAEME MURTY	1(4)	-	-	27(11)	-	158(23)	9
RICKY NEWMAN	19	3	1	26(3)	2	256(17)	11
PHIL PARKINSON	18	3	2	325(26)	19	480(39)	26
JOHN POLSTON	-	-	-	22(2)	1	288(27)	14
MATT ROBINSON	10(1)	3	-	33(1)	-	108(20)	1
TONY ROUGIER	6(4)	1(1)	2	7(5)	2	148(34)	23
KEITH SCOTT	1	-	-	25(19)	8	232(66)	70
CHRIS SMITH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NEIL SMITH	(11)	(1)	-	32(23)	1	346(51)	18
NATHAN TYSON	-	-	-	(1)	-	(1)	-
ADI VIVEASH	20	4	2	36	3	335(7)	22
ADIE WILLIAMS	5	-	-	258(5)	20	292(7)	21
PHIL WHITEHEAD	20	4	-	37	-	411	-

THIS SEASONS TOP SCORERS

THIS SEASONS TOP HOME GATES

LAST THREE GAMES

DATE	OPPONENTS	RES ATT								
SAT AUG 12	MILLWALL (A)	L 0-2 11,043 1,026 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	HUNTER	HODGES ‡	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT AUG 19	SWINDON TOWN (H)	W 2-0 14,134 3,340 AWF	WHITEHEAD	GURNEY	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	HUNTER	NEWMAN	PARKINSON	CASKE
TUE AUG 22	LEYTON ORIENT WC1 (A)	D 1-1 2,316 200 AWF	WHITEHEAD	GURNEY	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	MACKIE	NEWMAN	EVERS	IGOE
SAT AUG 26	NORTHAMPTON TOWN (A)	L 0-2 5,728 1,184 AWF	WHITEHEAD	GURNEY ‡	ROBINSON	VIVEASH †	HUNTER	NEWMAN	PARKINSON #	CASKE
TUE AUG 29	STOKE CITY (H)	D 3-3 10,668 1,221 AWF	WHITEHEAD	GURNEY ‡	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	HUNTER	NEWMAN †	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT SEPT 2	PORT VALE (A)	W 1-0 4,701 480 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	HUNTER	HODGES	PARKINSON	CASKE
TUE SEPT 5	LEYTON ORIENT WC1 (H)	L 0-2 4,337 471 AWF	WHITEHEAD	GURNEY	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	HUNTER ‡	HODGES	PARKINSON †	CASKE
SAT SEPT 9	BRENTFORD (H)	W 4-0 10,222 1,486 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY #	VIVEASH	HUNTER ‡	HODGES	PARKINSON †	CASKE
TUE SEPT 12	OLDHAM ATHLETIC (H)	W 5-0 7,768 196 AWF	WHITEHEAD †	NEWMAN	GURNEY	VIVEASH	HUNTER	HODGES	PARKINSON #	CASKE
SAT SEPT 16	PETERBOROUGH UTD (A)	L 0-1 5,767 896 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY	VIVEASH	HUNTER	HODGES	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT SEPT 23	SWANSEA CITY (H)	W 5-1 11,003 1,505 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY	VIVEASH	HUNTER	HODGES	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT SEPT 30	ROTHERHAM UNITED (A)	W 3-1 4,288 863 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY	VIVEASH	WILLIAMS †	HODGES	PARKINSON	CASKE
FRI OCT 6	WIGAN ATHLETIC (A)	D 1-1 7,021 603 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY	VIVEASH	WILLIAMS	HODGES	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT OCT 14	WYCOMBE WNDRS (H)	W 2-0 15,443 2,295 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY #	VIVEASH	WILLIAMS	HODGES ‡	PARKINSON	CASKE
TUE OCT 17	WREXHAM (H)	W 4-1 10,350 284 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN ‡	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	WILLIAMS	HODGES †	JONES	CASKE
SAT OCT 21	BRISTOL CITY (A)	L 0-4 11,134 2,011 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	WILLIAMS ‡	HODGES	JONES	CASKE
TUE OCT 24	BURY (A)	W 2-0 2,808 390 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	ROBINSON ‡	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES #	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT OCT 28	OXFORD UNITED (H)	W 4-3 16,022 1,447 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY #	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT NOV 4	WALSALL (A)	L 1-2 7,772 1,950 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY †	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES ‡	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT NOV 11	COLCHESTER UNITED (H)	L 0-1 11,549 397 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GURNEY ‡	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES	PARKINSON	CASKE
SAT NOV 18	GRAYS ATHLETIC FAC1 (H)	W 4-0 5,643 656 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	GRAY	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES ‡	PARKINSON	IGOE
SAT DEC 2	CAMBRIDGE UNITED (H)	W 3-0 9,601 665 AWF	WHITEHEAD	GURNEY	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES ‡	PARKINSON	IGOE
SAT DEC 9	YORK CITY FAC 2 (A)	D 2-2 2,926 362 AWF	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES	PARKINSON	IGOE
SAT DEC 16	NOTTS COUNTY (A)	L 2-3 5,106	WHITEHEAD	NEWMAN	ROBINSON	VIVEASH	MACKIE	HODGES	PARKINSON	ROUG
TUE DEC 19	YORK CITY FAC 2 (H) REP									
SAT DEC 23	LUTON TOWN (H)									
TUE DEC 26	BRISTOL ROVERS (A)									
SAT DEC 30	SWINDON TOWN (A)									
MON JAN 1	NORTHAMPTON TOWN (H)									
SAT JAN 6	MILLWALL (H)									
SAT JAN 13	STOKE CITY (A)									
SAT JAN 20	BRISTOL ROVERS (H)									
SAT JAN 27	LUTON TOWN (A)									
SAT FEB 3	PORT VALE (H)									
TUE FEB 6	AFC BOURNEMOUTH (A)									
SAT FEB 10	BRENTFORD (A)									
SAT FEB 17	PETERBOROUGH UTD (H)									
TUE FEB 20	OLDHAM ATHLETIC (A)									
SAT FEB 24	SWANSEA CITY (A)									
SAT MAR 3	ROTHERHAM UNITED (H)									
TUE MAR 6	WYCOMBE WNDRS (A)									
FRI MAR 9	WIGAN ATHLETIC (H)									
SAT MAR 17	WREXHAM (A)									
SAT MAR 24	BRISTOL CITY (H)									
SAT MAR 31	NOTTS COUNTY (H)									
SAT APR 7	CAMBRIDGE UNITED (A)									
SAT APR 14	BURY (H)									
MON APR 16	OXFORD UNITED (A)									
SAT APR 21	WALSALL (H)									
SAT APR 28	COLCHESTER UNITED (A)									
SAT MAY 5	AFC BOURNEMOUTH (H)									

THIS SEASONS TOP SCORERS

THIS SEASONS TOP HOME GATES

LAST THREE GAMES

PLAYER NAME	LEAGUE	CUP	TOTAL	DATE	OPPONENTS	ATTENDANCE	OPPONENTS	RESULT
MARTIN BUTLER	12	1	14	SAT OCT 28	OXFORD	16,022	NOTTS COUNTY (A)	LOST 2-3
JAMIE CURETON	9	2	11	SAT OCT 14	WYCOMBE	15,443	YORK CITY FAC 2 (A)	DREW 2-2
DARREN CASKEY	6	-	6	SAT AUG 19	SWINDON	14,138	CAMBRIDGE UTD (H)	WON 3-0

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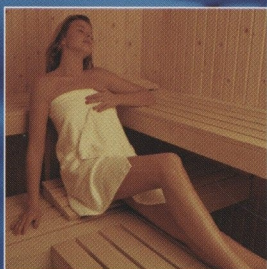
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