

U'S REVIEW



OFFICIAL MATCHDAY MAGAZINE OF COLCHESTER UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

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inside....

ALAN WHITE

On defensive duties in 2003/04

SCOTT MCGLEISH

Aiming for a personal best

CHRIS COYNE

Hatters' defender on Boxing Day challenge

B O B B Y

BOWRY

on the changing role of the U's midfield



COLCHESTER UNITED V LUTON TOWN

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE SECOND DIVISION - FRIDAY 26TH DECEMBER 2003 - KICK-OFF 3.00PM - PRICE £2.50



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INSIDETODAY...

Welcome to this afternoon's game against Luton Town - we hope that, despite being full of Christmas food, you'll be at full volume when you back the lads today!

This match is the final fixture of what has been a memorable 2003 for Colchester United and we hope that you have enjoyed the rapid progress the club has made. Let us take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Enjoy the game!



THE REGULARS



P4 Boss Phil Parkinson looks back at the U's recent results in the league, as well as answering YOUR questions on life at Layer Road.

P8 Colchester United climbed back into the play-off spots with a 2-1 win over Oldham Athletic last week. The best of the action shots are here!

P10 It's been a season of quiet progress for Luton Town this season, with recent results lifting them into the play-off race. We speak to defender Chris Coyne and take a look at the rest of the Hatters squad here.



TODAY'S FEATURES



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P25 The game against Barnsley on January 10th has been nominated as a 'Mate's Day'. We see what this entails and how you can get involved!



P26 One of the U's midfield dynamos this season, Bobby Bowry has been more than impressed with the club's improvement in 2003. But how does he think his part of the team has functioned?



P48 Despite the influx of fresh strikers to the club during the summer, Scott McGleish has still banged in ten goals already in 2003/4. What does the top scorer for the past two seasons think of the front line's contribution this season?



P64 Two away trips follow today's match - one in the league and one in the cup. Check out how you can get to arguably the biggest games of the season so far.

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Winners 1938/39
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PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR



PHIL PARKINSON - WATCHES THE ACTION AGAINST OLDHAM

PHIL PARKINSON'S PAGE SPONSORED BY

five lakes

Well I hope that you are all having an enjoyable Christmas period and that you are looking forward to this afternoon's Division Two match against Luton Town.

The last two games have seen us get our league form back on track after two defeats. Our last home game saw us beat Oldham Athletic 2-1 but, in the first twenty minutes, we were off the pace. I felt that the LDV Vans Area Quarter Final game against Wycombe Wanderers, which went into extra time, was certainly affecting us.

Even though Oldham had a lot of possession during that time, I didn't think they really hurt us and their chances stemmed from us giving the ball away too cheaply in our own half. I always felt that, if we raised our game in the second half, we had enough in us to go on and win the game. In patches, we did lift the tempo and two excellent goals saw us get all three points.

Character

In the week leading up to our trip to Hartlepool, we worked on our system to go up to the North East and get a result. We also spoke about the sort of character that would be needed to get something from one of our hardest away trips of the season. However, after three minutes, all of our planning had gone out of the window when Alan White was sent off.

Although Alan's challenge was rash, I thought that a yellow card would have been sufficient punishment on this occasion. I have seen goalkeepers pull players down outside of the penalty area and escape with a booking, so Alan can consider himself very unlucky to have been dismissed.

However, the character we spoke about was there in abundance and to come away with a point after being

down to ten men for 87 minutes is again an example of the tremendous spirit that is running through the club. It certainly made the trip home an enjoyable one.

Fantastic

Our travelling army of supporters were once again fantastic and I hope that the way that the lads played during the match sent everybody home with a smile on their face.

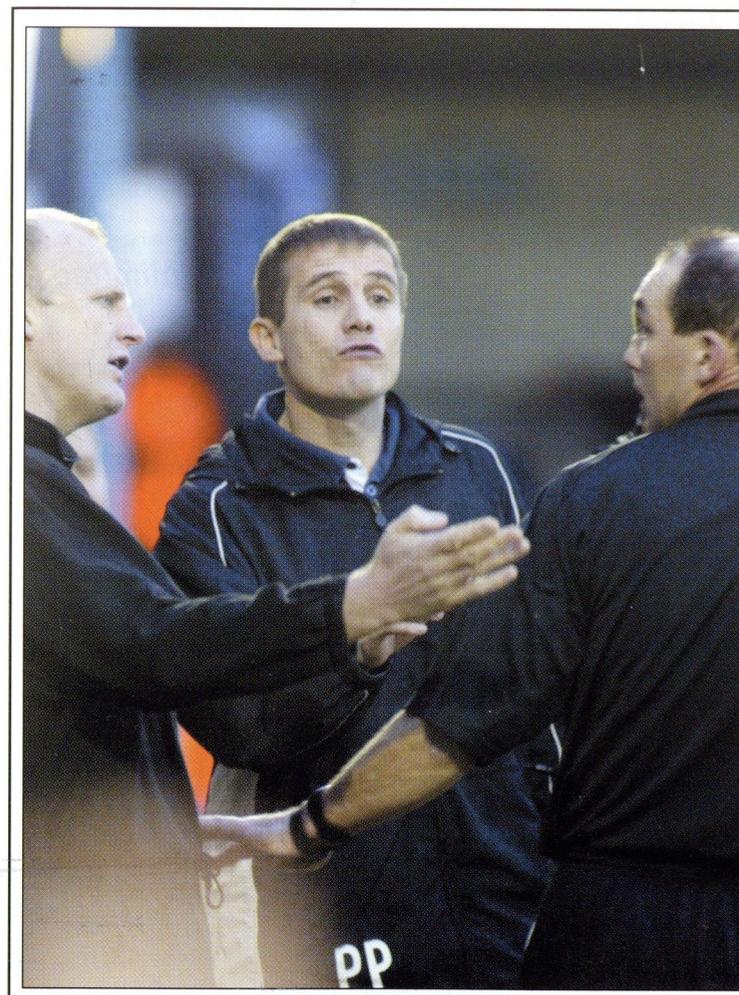
Today sees us right in the middle of the Christmas period and it is a time

where players have to be extremely disciplined and make those little sacrifices that will hopefully make us a successful team.

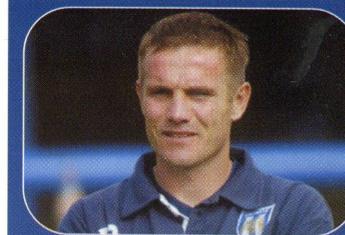
I would like to welcome Mike Newell and his Luton Town team here to Layer Road today. They are having an excellent season and this will be another very tight game.

Enjoy the game today and hopefully we will see as many of you as possible at Loftus Road in two days time.

Parkey



PHIL PARKINSON - GANGS UP ON THE FOURTH OFFICIAL WITH IAIN DOWIE



PARKY ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS...

If you could choose anything for Christmas this year, what would it be? (James Easton)

Parkey: A guaranteed place in the top six!

Last season at Oldham, we had a player sent off and lost 2-0. This time at Hartlepool, we got a draw. What proved to be the difference? (Kevin Painter)

Parkey: In all honesty, in that Oldham game last year, there were other factors that came into play. Gareth Williams went into the game with a slight injury that saw him eventually have to come off and Simon Brown shouldn't have started the game as he was also not fully fit. That day wasn't one where just one thing went wrong, everything went wrong.

On Saturday, Alan got sent off, but we were able to consolidate by going 4-4-1 and keeping things nice and solid whilst hitting them on the break.

Now pose your questions about today's events!

To pose your questions to U's boss Phil Parkinson about the match against Luton Town this afternoon email us at editor@colchesterunited.net or write to us at the club's address which is listed on page three.

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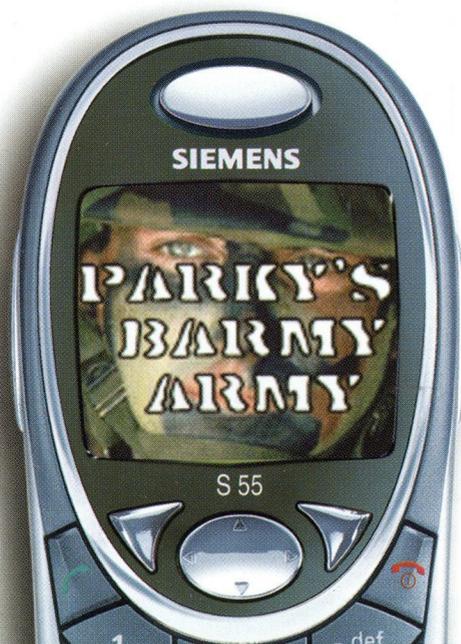
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RECENTLY AT LAYER ROAD

As the season continues to develop we will be keeping a comprehensive record of news affecting the U's in the matchday magazine just in case you have managed to miss something.

The official website - with all its associated products! - remains the best place to keep up-to-date with Colchester United's goings on, but we know you may not always be able to get to a computer.

The matches have been coming thick and fast during the past couple of weeks and, as usual, there's still been plenty going on at Fortress Layer Road.

13.12.03

Phil Parkinson is forced to make late changes to his side as left back Andy Myers is deemed unfit to play due to a swollen toe. Gavin Johnson steps in for his second 90 minutes for the first team in five days and shows his class throughout the game.

Colchester United record their third win in a week as they take all three points from the Division Two match against Oldham Athletic. Former U's trainee Ernie Cooksey returns with the Latics but Iain Dowie's side leave empty-handed. After a drab, goalless first half, a 25-yard left-footed goal from Karl

Duguid sets the match alight early in the second half.

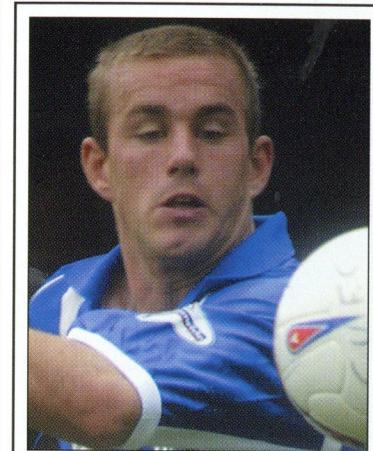
The Latics come back with a curling free-kick from David Eyres but it is Rowan Vine, for the second Saturday running at Layer Road who seals the victory. With the ball bouncing towards the Portsmouth loanee from a corner, Vine unleashes a thunderous volley into the back of the net for a 2-1 win.

15.12.03

While some of the U's players are enjoying themselves at a Casino Night put on at Route in Colchester town centre, their opponents in the third round of the FA Cup are doing battle in Lancashire. Having secured a replay at the Fitness First Stadium, Accrington Stanley hold AFC Bournemouth to a 0-0 draw at the Interlink Express Stadium and go on to beat the Cherries 5-3 on penalties to secure a tie against Colchester United on January 3.

16.12.03

Gavin Johnson insists the draw to play at Accrington will prove very tough. Speaking to U's World, the versatile veteran is delighted to be back in first team action after a lay-off lasting 15 months since suffering a broken left leg at Port Vale early in 2002/3. Johnson believes he has done



ROWAN VINE - WINNING GOAL

enough to stay in the side but he is not taking anything for granted after so long on the sidelines.

18.12.03

Defender Alan White is looking forward to a journey to his homeland. The man from Darlington tells U's World that people from his town hate Hartlepool and he will have a small army of friends at the ground. Whitey thinks Pools enviable home record could be due to the fact that most visitors to the town are not used to the cold.

19.12.03

Colchester United travel to the North East ahead of the match at Hartlepool United. Pools have a long unbeaten record at home but Parky is able to choose from a fully fit squad as Craig Fagan returns from his three-match suspension.

20.12.03

Alan White's return to his homeland quickly becomes a nightmare when he is sent off after just two minutes of the match in front of his family and friends at Hartlepool United. Many regard the dismissal for a professional foul as harsh but the ten men remaining on the pitch for the U's battle against the odds to record a superb 0-0 draw. Parky knew that his side would need to show character and they certainly did that with some outstanding performances throughout the team, Simon Brown making some great saves and some vital clearances and last-ditch tackles deservedly earning Colchester a point in the North East.



ALAN WHITE - UNHAPPY RETURN TO NORTH EAST



COLCHESTER UNITED 2 OLDHAM ATHLETIC 1

Rowan Vine was again the hero as Colchester United put in a dogged performance against a spirited Oldham side. Despite their lowly league position, the Latics tested the home side's resolve in the first half, but a Karl Duguid goal early after the break gave the U's a much needed lead.

The visitors pulled level through a fantastic David Eyres free kick but Fortress Layer Road again proved to be a difficult place for a visiting side and a late Vine thunderbolt from the edge of the box gave the home side all three points.

FROM THE MANAGERS...

Phil Parkinson: "I thought in the first half we looked very heavy legged and they looked sharper all over the pitch than us. I said to the players that they needed to raise their game all over the pitch and we raised it just enough to get a result. We are a good side, but only when we are at our best. In the second half, we raised our game to reach that level."

Iain Dowie: "Colchester have probably had three shots on target in the whole game. One's a great strike, but we should do better with the others. Our attacking play was good and bright and I thought that we defended well. But we've got to crack on. There's no point moping about it. You've got to be tough and strong and take it on the chin."

U's: S. Brown, Stockley, Chilvers, White, Johnson, Duguid, Izzet, Pinault, Vine, Andrews (Cade, 80), McGleish

Subs not used: McKinney, Keith, Fitzgerald, Bowry

Yellow cards: Izzet, Pinault

Goals: Duguid 48, Vine 72

Oldham Athletic: Pogliacomini, Clegg, Hall, Haining, Griffin, Murray, Johnson, Boshell (Eyres 61), Cooksey, Eyre (Vernon 60), Zola

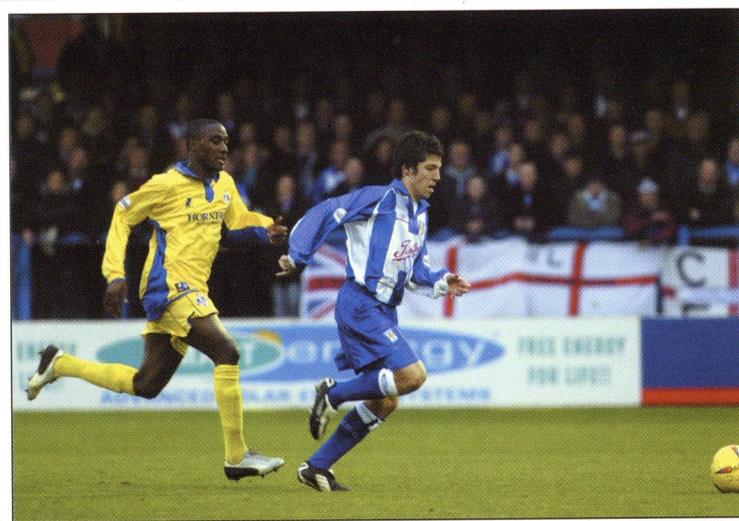
Subs not used: Westwood, Beharall, Holden

Yellow cards: Boshell, Cooksey, Hall, Griffin, Johnson

Goal: Eyres 66

Attendance: 2,897

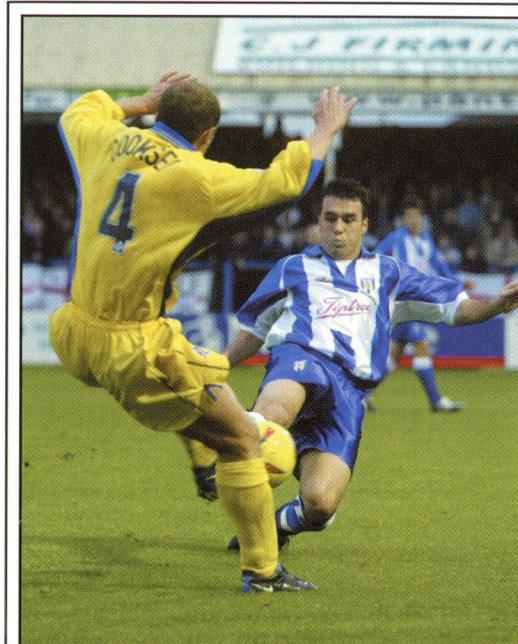
**Photos by Rob Sambrook
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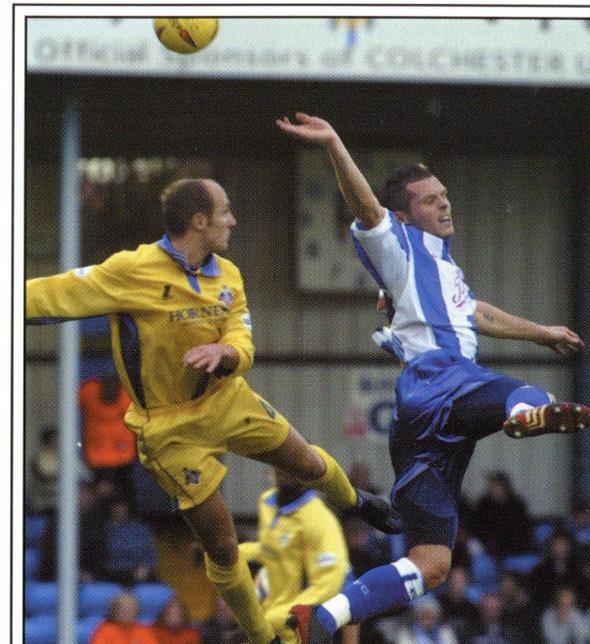
KEMIZZET - BURSTS THROUGH THE MIDDLE



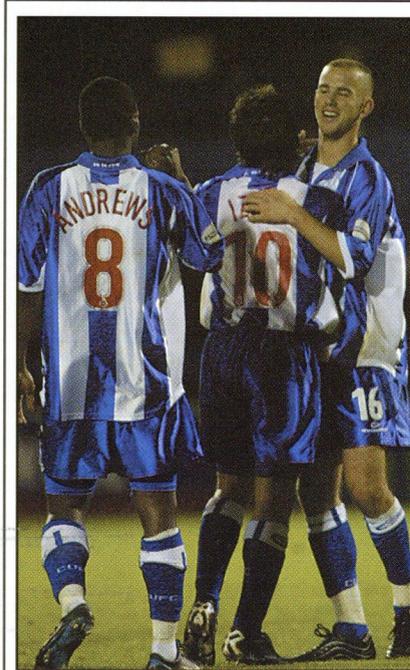
JAMIECADE - BATTLES FOR THE BALL



SCOTTMCGLEISH - TACKLES FORMER U'S MAN ERNIE COOKSEY



SAMSTOCKLEY - CHALLENGES IN THE AIR

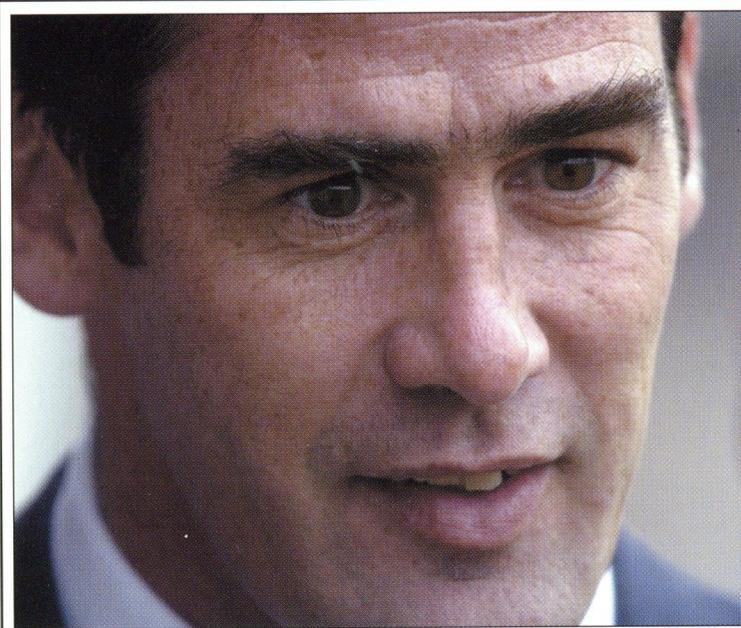


ROWANVINE - ALL SMILES AFTER HIS WINNER



KARLDUGUID - TAKES ON HIS MAN





MIKE NEWELL - SEASON OF SUCCESS SO FAR

Given the summer turmoil that affected their club, everyone associated with Luton Town must be delighted with how the second half of a roller coaster 2003 has turned out.

Having just missed out on the play-offs in 2002/3, hopes were high that the Hatters could continue their progress in the following season and make a real push for promotion back to Division One after seven years in the lower divisions. However, the arrival of John Gurney as Chief Executive after long time chairman Mike Watson-Challis stepped down saw Luton become the focus of many column inches during the summer months.

Gurney's arrival saw a series of events unfold that Hatters supporters found increasingly difficult to believe, events that would fill the pages of this matchday magazine on their own!

Popular management duo Joe Kinnear and Mick Harford departed, plans for a Formula One track were mooted as a possible addition on the land of Town's new stadium and the opportunity was given for supporters to vote for a new manager in a Pop Idol style telephone poll. Rarely a day

passed where some incident of note was occurring at Kenilworth Road.

After two months that no-one associated with Luton would forget, Gurney departed and, once the dust had settled, the reality of the situation began to set in. The summer's events had been played out against a more serious background of the club slipping into administration and, upon his arrival as boss, it was clear that Mike Newell had a difficult job on his hands both on and off the pitch.

Success

Yet, despite the problems he has faced, former Luton striker Newell has had a season of success to date. The Hatters have gone about their work quietly and efficiently this season, so much so that the recent win against Blackpool saw the Hatters sneak into the play-off spots for the first time since August.

Newell's brand of attractive football has won over the supporters who had originally reacted strongly to the departure of the popular Kinnear and, going into the New Year, things are looking far brighter for Luton than they did six months ago.

And it is not only on the pitch that affairs have turned out to be far better than the anxious Luton fans of half a year ago could have imagined. Administrative receiver Barry

The last ten years:

1993/94 Div 1, 20th
1994/95 Div 1, 16th
1995/96 Div 1, 24th (relegated)
1996/97 Div 2, 3rd
1997/98 Div 2, 17th
1998/99 Div 2, 12th
1999/00 Div 2, 13th
2000/01 Div 2, 22nd, (relegated)
2001/02 Div 3, 2nd (promoted)
2002/03 Div 2, 9th

Last time at Layer Road

21.04.03, Division Two
U's v Luton 5

A day to forget for U's goalkeeper Richard McKinney as, after a string of excellent performances, he has a personal horror show. There is no such misfortune for Hatters favourite Steve Howard, however, as he reaps the rewards of the U's generosity to score a hat-trick.

Last time at Kenilworth Road

14.12.02, Division Two
Luton 1 U's 2

The U's pick up their second successive away win as Karl Duguid - playing his first game since August - and Dean Morgan grab the goals to guide Steve Whitton's men to a valuable three points, having originally fallen behind to an Andrew Fotiadis goal.

Luton's last five Division Two results

15.11.03 W3-2 v Wrexham
22.11.03 D0-0 at Sheffield Wednesday
29.11.03 W1-0 v Chesterfield
13.12.03 W1-0 at Blackpool
20.12.03 L0-1 v Barnsley

Ward has been given permission to sell the club to former Luton general manager Bill Tomlins.

Tomlins' consortium, which includes previous board members and new investors who are also Hatters supporters, was the preferred bid of Ward and - after some delays to the original schedule - it is hoped that the takeover will be completed in the New Year.

Best of all, Tomlins has also indicated that there would be a role for supporters group Trust in Luton, who performed such a pivotal role in making sure that their football club would live to fight another day during those tumultuous summer months.



Luton Town's last starting eleven

(lost 0-1 at home to Bury)



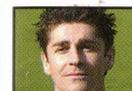
MARLON BERESFORD The 34-year-old is a vastly experienced goalkeeper with over 400 appearances under his belt and he joined the Hatters at the end of October 2003 on a short term contract. Marlon started his career at Sheffield Wednesday and spent loan spells with Bury, Crewe Alexandra and Northampton Town (twice) before a switch to Burnley in 1992 and he made nearly 300 appearances at Turf Moor. Then he was off to Middlesbrough followed by York and Bradford before his move to Kenilworth Road.



MATTHEW SPRING There was relief all round when the competitive midfielder accepted a new contract at Kenilworth Road in the summer of 2002. Spring has been at Luton since he was a schoolboy and has developed into a very consistent midfielder, always willing to drive forward and look for goals. His long-range shooting is particularly admired by the Hatters fans, and a thirty-yard cracked against Watford in the Worthington Cup last season was the runaway winner for their award for goal of the season.



ADRIAN FORBES After considerable First Division experience, and with an England youth cap to his credit, Forbes was a surprise inclusion on Norwich City's list of players available for transfer in the summer of 2001. Luton were delighted to pay £75,000 for a right winger to add width to his attacking formation. Forbes is noted for his ability to run at and past defenders, either to deliver crosses from out wide, or to cut in and have a crack at goal.



STEVE ROBINSON Looking to add experience to a young midfield department, Luton snapped up a man who had earned respect wherever he played. They paid £50,000 to Preston North End in the summer of 2002 for a player who had been capped five times by Northern Ireland. He had made his name at Bournemouth after joining the Cherries on a free transfer from Spurs. He failed to make much of an impact at Deepdale, and jumped at the chance to get his career moving again when Luton came in for him.



SOL DAVIS It was a huge disappointment to Swindon Town, and a coup for Luton, when the highly-rated defender decided to leave the County Ground after his contract expired at the end of the 2001/02 season. Swindon boss Andy King failed in attempts to persuade him to sign a new deal, and Luton swooped for the tough-tackling left back. Davis had joined Swindon as a trainee in the summer of 1998, and made rapid progress through the ranks to become a regular in the Nationwide League.



EMMERSON BOYCE One of the many to come through from Luton's schools and youth development programme, the defender was signed as a YTS boy in the summer of 1995, and made the breakthrough to the League squad at the age of 19 midway through the 1999/2000 season after occasional appearances following a debut in the Auto Windscreens Shield in January 1999. He became a regular at right back, with a liking to attack on the overlap, and signed a new contract in the summer of 2002.



CHRIS COYNE Came to the notice of Harry Redknapp, then manager of West Ham, while playing for Australian U17's. Coyne signed for the Hammers as a teenager, but Premiership chances were few and far between, and after loan spells at Brentford and Southend, Coyne went to Dundee. A £50,000 cheque persuaded the Scottish Premier League club to let the defender move to Kenilworth Road in September 2001 and Coyne rapidly became a crowd favourite in the promotion run that followed.



LEE MANSELL The young midfielder is hoping to make the permanent breakthrough into Luton's first team this season, after making a dramatic surprise debut. Because of injuries, he had to make the transition straight from the youth squad to the first team in January 2001, and was less than a minute into his debut against Queens Park Rangers when he scored. His dramatic emergence at Loftus Road led to him being rewarded with a full professional contract, but he went into this season still fighting for a permanent place.



AHMET BRKOVIC Believing a move would be good for his career, the midfield playmaker refused new terms at Leyton Orient in the summer of 2001, to join Luton on a Bosman free transfer. Orient had signed him on a free from HNK Dubrovnik in the autumn of 1999. He was bitterly disappointed when Orient failed in the play-offs to win promotion to the Second Division, and decided to join Luton. Playing a valuable role, mainly on the right flank, he helped Luton return to the Second Division at the first attempt.



STEVE HOWARD Rarely can £50,000 have been better spent in football than the fee Luton paid Northampton on deadline day in March 2001 to prise the bustling striker away from the Cobblers - Howard has a one goal in every two appearances ratio in his Hatters career so far. He has been Luton's leading marksman in each of the past two seasons and is a huge favourite at Kenilworth Road - he was the fans player of the year in 2002, and the players' player of the year 12 months later.



KEVIN FOLEY Great things are expected of this cultured midfielder, who was promoted to the first team squad at the start of this season, despite still being eligible for youth football. He has been brought through the junior ranks at Kenilworth Road and in pre-season games was pitchforked into the first team because of injuries to other defenders. He settled in rapidly and is competing on merit for a regular place in the side.



the rest...

DAVID BAYLISS English, defender, DOB 8.6.76
Previous clubs: Rochdale
Total LTFC appearances: 39, one goal

ROBERT BECKWITH English, goalkeeper DOB 12.9.84
Previous clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: 19, no goals

DEAN BRILL English, goalkeeper, DOB 02.12.85
Previous clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: Five, no goals

DEAN CROWE English, striker, DOB 6.6.79
Previous clubs: Stoke City, Northampton Town, Bury, Plymouth Argyle
Total LTFC appearances: 75, 12 goals

IAN HILLIER Welsh, defender, DOB 26.12.79
Previous clubs: Tottenham Hotspur
Total LTFC appearances: 65, one goal

PAUL HUGHES English, midfielder, DOB 19.4.76
Previous clubs: Chelsea, Stockport County, Norwich City, Crewe Alexandra, Southampton
Total LTFC appearances: 79, seven goals

MICHAEL LEARY English, midfielder, DOB 17.4.83
Previous clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: 12, one goal

ALAN NELSON Welsh, defender, DOB 26.10.72
Previous clubs: Newcastle United, Southampton, Fulham, Grimsby Town
Total LTFC appearances: 46, one goal

KEVIN NICHOLLS English, midfielder, DOB 2.1.79
Previous clubs: Charlton Athletic, Wigan Athletic
Total LTFC appearances: 87, 12 goals

PARYS OKAI English, midfielder, DOB 23.11.84
Previous clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: Four, no goals

RUSS PERRETT English, defender, DOB 18.5.73
Previous clubs: Portsmouth, Cardiff City
Total LTFC appearances: 70, seven goals

ENOCH SHOWUNMI English, striker, DOB 21.04.82
Previous clubs: From non-league
Total LTFC appearances: Eight, one goal



KENILWORTHROAD

from the other side...

How have the last twelve months been as an Luton fan?
Pretty difficult. 2003 started off with a fair amount of optimism that we were going to reach the play-offs after an awful start to the season, unfortunately those hopes faded as we couldn't maintain our challenge. Then in the summer we went through something I wouldn't wish on any other club.

Having been taken over by a mystery consortium, Joe Kinnear and Mick Harford - our popular management duo - were promptly sacked. A month passed and still the consortium refused to reveal themselves and this led to strong fears that we wouldn't have a club to follow this season.

Thankfully a group of fans set about forming TrustinLuton, our supporters trust who in the six months since their formation have almost single-handedly saved our club. Having got through that things are beginning to look much better with talks of a takeover on the horizon. We have a new manager in Mike Newell who has us playing attractive football and we are now going well in the league.

What do you expect from the club in the rest of 2003/4?
It is difficult to know what to expect for the rest of the season. A lot would depend on if and when the club gets taken over, and if we are allowed to sign a couple of players. There is a chance that we could push on and consolidate a play-off spot, which would not be beyond us and maybe push for automatic promotion. However with a small squad we could be hit by injuries and suspensions and our hopes fade into a mid-table position, which given the summer events would still be acceptable.

Which player has impressed the most so far this season?
Until a few weeks ago I would say that loan signing Gary McSheffery had impressed the most this season but with his loan spell having finished I will go for a current player, and so Adrian Forbes has impressed the most. A natural winger, Adrian has been pushed up front due to injuries and has responded with 11 goals so far which is an excellent return. Keeper Marlon Beresford has also brought calmness to our defence, we are not leaking so many goals and are getting better as a result.

Which player do the fans relate to most in the squad?
Steve Howard is the fans favourite, having scored over 50 goals in two and a half seasons with us, including 24 in 2001/02 season which earned him the Division Three golden boot award. Other fans favourites include Emmerson Boyce and Adrian Forbes for their consistency and 100% effort.

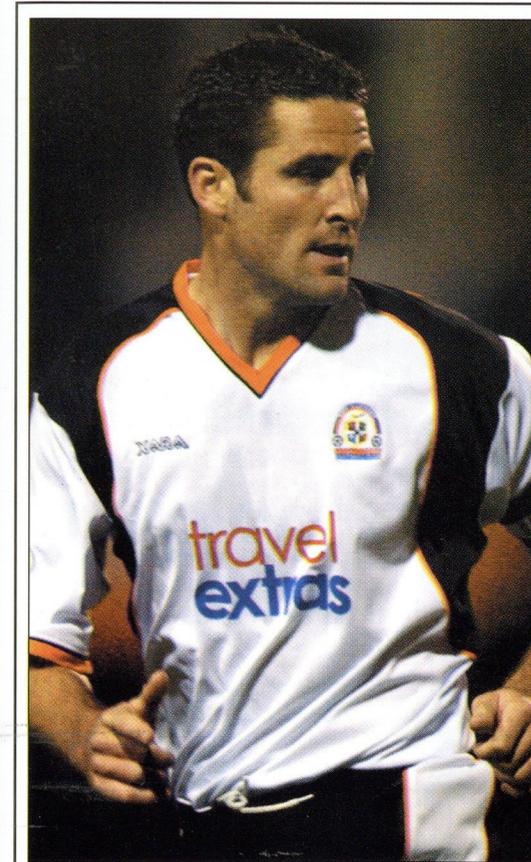
What do you expect from Colchester United and what is your score prediction for this afternoon?
Colchester are an improving side who are doing well to be where they are this season. They seem to be doing better at home than away, which would make it a difficult game for us especially given our inconsistent away form this season. That said we seem to be turning the corner away from home with good results at Bristol City, Sheffield Wednesday and Blackpool recently, so I am confident we can win the game. I'll predict a 2-0 win for the Hatters!

■ Questions answered by Kevin Harper of the Luton Town Supporters' Trust - TrustinLuton. Set up during this summer, you can find TrustinLuton on the web at www.trustinluton.com

The fact that Luton Town arrive at Layer Road this afternoon in the thick of the play-off race may come as a surprise to some U's fans who haven't been keeping too close an eye on the Division Two table in recent weeks.

The Hatters have sneaked up towards the top of the league on the back of some good results - they were unbeaten in six going into last weekend's fixtures - and find themselves firmly in contention for a play-off push as the New Year approaches.

Some of the club's supporters had been worried that the Kenilworth Road outfit had spent much of the season in mid-table but, as the season gets into the crucial Christmas period, defender Chris Coyne is confident that his team-mates have what it takes to make a real go at staying in the promotion race.



CHRISCOYNE

He told the matchday magazine: "I had said at the start of the season to people that they shouldn't get too carried away with our early results, but to look at the table at Christmas time. It's proving to be that this is the time for a big push with a lot of points to play for - it gives us a chance to establish ourselves in the top six and push on for as high a place as possible."

Given the summer turmoil that engulfed the club, the Hatters season is turning out to be a far better one than their fans could have originally hoped for. Coyne admits to being impressed with the resilience that Luton have shown to overcome problems both on and off the pitch.

"We've got a bit of strength in depth, but not as much as the manager would have hoped to have had. It is obvious that the manager will want every one of his players available at all times, but considering the amount of injuries we have had, it's amazing how well we've done."

Coyne has been nearly ever present for Mike Newell's side this season, something of a rarity in a Luton camp which has had problems with injuries. The Australian's partner of late has been Emmerson Boyce and the duo have quickly struck up a relationship which has paid dividends for the Hatters.

Newell's men have kept a string of clean sheets in recent weeks - two of which have come away at home to strengthen what had previously been a below par away record - and that is something which Coyne admits has been a crucial factor in their steady rise up the Division Two table.

He continued: "Boyce is a good lad and we've been helping each other to get to the standards we want to be. We had a bad run where we were conceding a lot of goals, but we've consolidated of late and kept five clean sheets in the last six or seven games. It's something for us to build on."

The injuries suffered by



Luton have seen the younger players given a chance so far in 2003/4 and Coyne has been impressed with how some of the untried members of the squad have stepped up to the plate and filled the gaps in the team when required.

"The kids have come into the team and done well - Kevin Foley has been a revelation this year and I think we have acquitted ourselves well without really playing fantastic football. We've worked hard for each other and we've come off the pitch on occasions really pleased to have got the points."

And, whilst the team have picked up in recent weeks to mount an assault on the play-off places, Coyne is looking for consistency on a personal basis as the season enters its second half. The Aussie admits that he has not hit top form just yet, but is content that he has contributed to the recent successes.

Natural

"As far as my form is concerned, I am getting there," he said. "I haven't set the world on fire and I've had a couple of dodgy games. That's just natural and as long as I can keep playing consistently and the team keeps winning one nil, then that's my job done because we've kept a clean sheet. I believe I can do better, but it's not through a lack of effort - I'll keep plugging away and hopefully keep the results coming."

As well as his defensive responsibilities, Coyne will be looking to make an impact at the other end of the pitch. A regular at set pieces, he will be giving the U's defence something to think about this afternoon and the centre back - who turns 25 on Saturday - is hoping to mark his birthday weekend with a goal.

He added: "I said I wanted four or five at the start of the year and then got two early on. I should get more because I get my head onto a lot of things at the back stick from corners and free kicks and, going up for every set play, I have a chance. If I do get to my target this season, it'll be a bonus."

Coyne will be coming face to face with two footballing friends in the U's camp this afternoon, as he meets up with Joe Keith - who he spent time with at West Ham - and Sam Stockley, with whom he played junior football.

He will be hoping that his old friends give him a warmer reception than some of his current team-mates - being an Australian, Coyne confessed he has had a fair bit of banter off the Hatters players since England's Rugby World Cup win!

He said: "Yeah, I've taken some stick, but I'm going to keep wearing my Wallabies jumper otherwise the lads will think I've gone soft!"

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Andy Capp strip courtesy of Mirrorpix

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MARIEPARTNER

I would like to start by wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year and by thanking you all for your continued support of the U's - it is always appreciated.

In the last two seasons, we have enjoyed two entertaining local derby teams at Layer Road on Boxing Day: Peterborough United last year and Luton Town this. It certainly helps boost our gates, because the visiting supporters do not have to face an arduous journey and everyone gets the chance of getting out of the house over Christmas to get some Layer Road fresh air.

Reflecting on how things are compared to this time last year, a lot has changed. We were fourth from bottom then and, at the time of writing these notes, we are now joint fourth from top and are enjoying a well overdue nice little cup run.

Potential

Success on the pitch always creates so much more potential and ease in selling our commercial products. When you are winning, everyone in and around the club enjoys the right type of attention and everyone wants to be involved. At the moment, I am enjoying eating out in town without anyone approaching me, having a whinge and letting my meal get cold!

So a thank you must go to the management and the team, we are all enjoying the success, everyone is talking about us so keep it up lads!

A special thank you must also go to my backroom staff. They work long, hard hours and I have always preached that it is about a partnership and it takes a good team off the pitch as well as on the pitch to help bear the fruits of success. You have got to have blue and white running through your veins, which everyone of my staff have because, at the end of the day, we are all supporters!

Although silence prevails regarding the new Community Stadium, it does not mean to say that everything has come to a halt. I am still regularly attending meetings in my capacity as Executive

Trustee on the Community Sports Trust Board and it allows a me to keep a very close eye on things and to keep a hand in on events.

Shouting

As soon as the Council are in a position to release any news regarding the submission of the applications to Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, I will be the first to be shouting from the

rooftops!

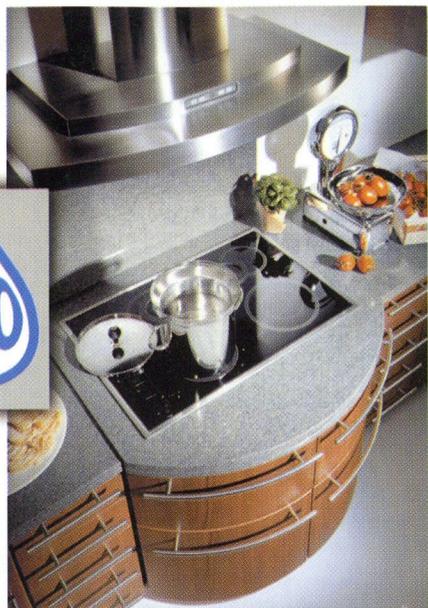
Enjoy the game today and, on the behalf of us all at the club, thank you again for every part you play, however small. You are all equally important and I for one would love to see you rewarded by a visit to the Millennium Stadium in the summer (no pressure Phil!)

Up the U's,

Marie Partner



MARIEPARTNER - LOOKING BACK AT A GOOD YEAR



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SCOTTFITZGERALD

Our last home game against Oldham was another where we have ground out a result where perhaps we have not quite been on top form.

That ability to get results on off days is what will keep you up the top of the table. There is no point playing well one week and awfully the next, you need to be able to keep the points ticking over and have a base to work off.

We know that if it's not going well, we have got the hard work ethic and then, coupled with the ability that we have in this squad, then we're hoping that that will take us in the right direction. At the moment, we are working extremely hard and now we just need to get the ability we have to show up more.

We've said every week that we want to start home games at a high tempo but, to be totally honest, Oldham came out of the blocks quicker than us. They had a good start and, from the kick-off, they ended up in our penalty box. That set the tone for the rest of the first half I thought and they played the ball around well and, despite having a young side, they showed they have some ability there.

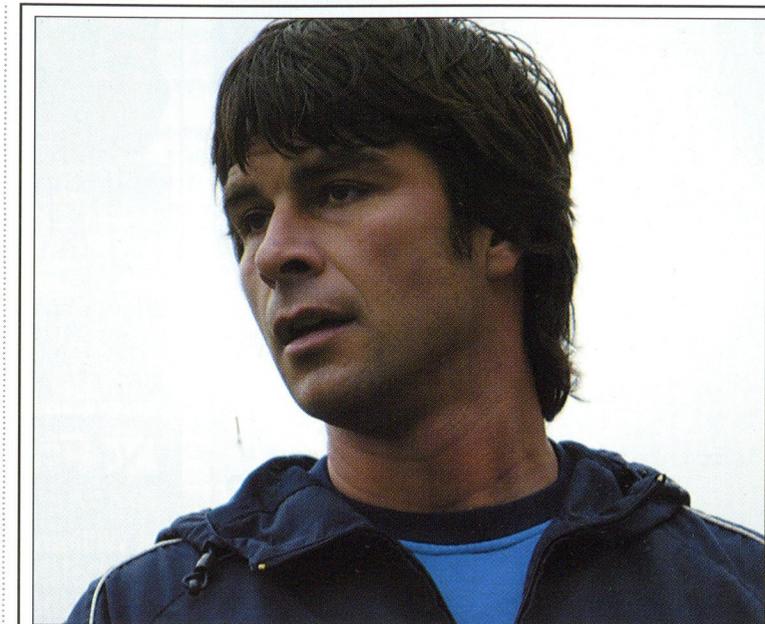
We never really got to grips with them in the first half and maybe the fact that we had had a long game on the Tuesday before at Wycombe had something to do with it. Going in at half time, the manager put things in people's heads in so much as what they should and shouldn't be doing in the second half and in the end we managed to get the victory, which we were aiming for.

Vital

The important factor in the game was the fact that Karl Duguid managed to put us into the lead just after half time. I've said before that goals change games and, at the moment, we are scoring goals at vital times in our matches. This can only help us in tricky and tight matches.

We also have players who are scoring goals regularly and, hopefully, by Christmas, we will have three players in double figures with Wayne Andrews and Scott McGleish already there and Rowan Vine not far behind. If we have that, it can only be a healthy situation for the club. I don't remember too many times in previous seasons that we have had that and hopefully, with a few others chipping in, we should be in good shape going into the New Year.

We come into this afternoon's game after a good draw at Hartlepool. Getting Alan sent off so early in the game was a big blow to us, especially with Hartlepool's excellent home



SCOTTFITZGERALD - PLEASED WITH OLDHAM WIN

record. We knew it was going to be tough playing against them with eleven men, so to come away with a point after having ten men for nearly all of the game is a really good result for us.

You don't get on that often as a centre half when you are on the bench, other through injury or a sending off as on this occasion. It was a bit of a shock to get called upon so early, but the lads did tremendously well on Saturday.

The manager said it was the most impressive point of the season and I agree with that 100%. With us having an eye on getting into the play-offs, that point could turn out to be a massive point for us by the time the end of the season arrives.

Christmas is a traditionally a tough period and I know that people do say at different points during the season that there are spells of fixtures that will prove important for the season overall. I really do believe that the next three or four games are pivotal for our season and they are vital to how things will pan out. We said much the same going into last week with the two cup games but, if you want to be successful and be contenders for promotion, every game becomes a big game and an important game.

We of course progressed to the next round of the LDV Vans and the FA Cup in the past week and have been given two away ties as a

result. We would have preferred a home tie because we'd fancy ourselves against anybody at home, but the game against Northampton is one we are looking forward to. We have nothing to fear and we are going well in our division and we'll be keen to get a result.

Accrington are next in the FA Cup and it is going to be a tough one. It is a potential banana skin and they have done really well to be where they are in the cup. I watched their replay with Bournemouth on the TV and you could see that the pitch was beginning to freeze up and it won't be any better in January. We've got a good chance of getting through, but it'll be far from easy.

We face Luton Town today and they have been a team that have snuck up into the play-off race in the past few weeks. They didn't have the best start to the season, but they have hit a bit of form in recent weeks and they're nestled in just behind us, meaning that this afternoon's match is going to be yet another tough encounter!

Fitz

SCOTT FITZGERALD'S PAGE SPONSORED BY



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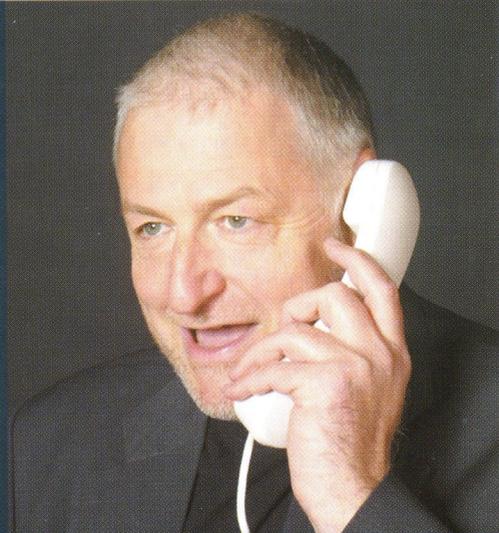
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FANTASYFOOTBALL

With the final matches of 2003 being played over the next few days, Steve Tovey takes a look at the top Fantasy players of the year so far...

As former League-leaders "Abberton FB's" slip further down the league, here is a look at some of the players that may have taken "Kylie's Kuckoo's" to the summit, and who could help Bobby Bowry and the Media Team kick-start their seasons. While Dan Woodrow's team stumble, David Howell's team "Real Lardmongers" benefited from two Alan Shearer strikes against Tottenham to take his place in second, only three points off top spot.

Goalkeepers

After being pulled up in these very pages for dodgy starts, runs of seven consecutive clean sheets each have seen Carlo Cudicini and Middlesborough's Australian stopper Mark Schwarzer establish their reputations and Fantasy points, but it is Manchester United's US import debutant Tim Howard who has impressed the most, conceding a measly 10 goals in 16 games, as well as being a decent price. Top Scorers - Tim Howard, Man U (54 pts) Carlo Cudicini, Chelsea (52), Mark Schwarzer, M'boro (51), Taylor, B'ham (44)

Full Backs

Benefiting from being part of the meanest defences in the Premiership, and weighing in with the odd timely assist, England defenders Wayne Bridge and Gary Neville are proving value for their Fantasy money, but the surprise package is former Tractor Boy Jamie Clapham, scoring only three points less than reformed Boro bad-boy wing-back Frank Quedrue Frank Quedrue, M'boro (56), Jamie Clapham, B'ham (53), Wayne Bridge, Chelsea (51) Gary Neville, Man U (51)

Centre Backs

Steve Bruce was a centre-back fixture as Manchester United began their dominance of the Premiership ten years ago, and his Birmingham side have picked up where he left off, conceding only 18 goals. In the CUFC Fantasy League, this transfers itself into points, and the Blues are currently the players to have at the back, particularly as they all feature in the bargain range. Kenny

Cunningham, B'ham (50), Claus Lundekvam, Soton (50), Rio Ferdinand, Man U (50), Gareth Southgate, M'boro (49), Matthew Upson, B'ham (49)

Midfielders

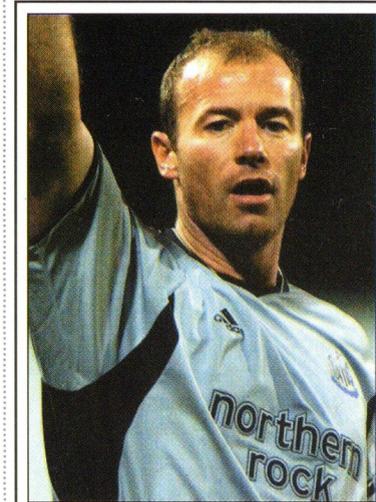
As with Wayne Bridge and John Terry, Frank Lampard has been an English constant at Chelsea, producing much in Roman Abramovich's drive for the title. Likewise goals and assists from Steed Malbranque have aided free-scoring Fulham in their recent climb up the table. But it is the old regulars, Man U's and Arsenal's left wingers who have created the most. At least one of Pires and Giggs, if not both, will be in most of the Fantasy Teams in the CUFC League. Robert Pires, Arsenal (64), Ryan Giggs, Man U (61), Steed Malbranque, Fulham (60), Frank Lampard, Chelsea (59)

Strikers

With Fergie's much publicized scouring for striking talent nearing its January transfer-window conclusion, one man linked with a move to Old Trafford may not be on the shortlist merely because of his availability in European matches. With eight league goals and a number of assists, Louis Saha is beginning to display the predatory instincts that brought 30+ goals in Fulham's promotion season. But

no one does it better than Shearer. The former England captain, who once turned down a move to Manchester United, has weighed in with a mammoth 108 points, claiming 15 goals along the way to lead the Fantasy scoring points total at the end of 2003. Alan Shearer, N'castle (108), Thierry Henry, Arsenal (95), Ruud van Nistelrooy, Man U (90), Louis Saha (86)

Steve Tovey



ALANSHEARER - TOP POINTS SCORER

Latest Table:

	Manager(s)	Team Name	Pts	+/-
1	Allan & Kylie Jones	Kylie's Kuckoos	956	N/C
2	David Howell	Real Lardmongers	953	+2
3	Martyn Ager	Martyn XI	937	N/C
4	Daniel Woodrow	Abberton FBs	929	-2
5	Ian Humberstone	Kingswood United	894	N/C
6	Daniel Whymark	The U'sual FC	822	N/C
7	Jon Keen	Royal STARS	817	N/C
8	Graeme Howell	Crazy Pupsters	802	N/C
9	Sean Field	Bianco Azzurri	765	N/C
10	Jon Burns	Bob For England	703	N/C
11	Stefan Andreas-Carter	HeadlessChickens	688	+1
12	Micky Cook	Micky Cook XI	677	-1
13	Jeremy Aves	PSFA	668	N/C
14	Krista Hultquist	Sparky's CUMers	647	+2
15	Marie Partner	Partner Athletic	618	N/C
16	Pat Baldwin	Baldwin's Blues	610	-2
17	Adrian Coote	Coote's Canaries	609	N/C
18	Matt Hudson/Colin Wood	CUFC Media Team	589	N/C
19	Bobby Bowry	Bobby's Boys	569	N/C

Key: Red - CUFC Fan Blue - CUFC Playing Staff Black - CUFC Official



As we come to the last match of 2003 at Layer Road it seems like an appropriate time to reflect on a year that has seen many changes for Colchester United.

On Boxing Day last year the U's drew 1-1 with Peterborough United at home. It was a game that the team perhaps should have killed off in the first half but Kem Izzet's fantastic volleyed goal was cancelled out late on in what was a typical afternoon for Steve Whitton's side.

Although Colchester had won at Luton Town and Notts County, they had been

eliminated from each cup competition they entered in the first round and were just two points above the relegation zone. The last home win had been in mid-October and that form was not set to change until February.

It is not difficult to see that things have changed a massive amount in the past 12 months. On the pitch there is now a real sense of confidence amongst the team and as we take a close look at how the team has developed in defence, midfield and attack since January, Alan White told U's review how the defence has improved.

"The defence is performing well although

we have let in more goals than we would like," he says. "I think that has been down to the Plymouth and Rushden games, that put us back a bit. Up until Yeovil and since then, I think the most we have let in when I have played is one goal. We have kept four or five clean sheets and we have only let in one goal in all the other games I've played. As a defensive side we look quite solid most of the time and we are scoring a lot more than we have done in previous seasons so that helps as well."

The back four has grown as a unit and most sides visiting Layer Road really struggle to break through that back line now. Phil Parkinson would like to have recorded more clean sheets but the U's are definitely a difficult side to beat.

"The games where we have conceded more have usually been silly, sloppy goals that we have let in towards the end of games, throwing results away a little bit," Whitey explains. "A goal a game adds up but clean sheets breed confidence and if you can do that the next week if you are 1-0 up in the last five minutes you are confident you can hold out."

Confident

"Sometimes when you let a few late goals in it knocks you a bit but we are confident whoever is playing at the back, whoever plays at the back out of myself, Fitz and Liam with any of the full backs - Greg, Sam, Andy or Gav Johnson - we are confident we can block teams out and give the lads up front a chance to win the game for us."

Although the big northerner has been a little frustrated by injuries keeping him out of the team this season, Scott Fitzgerald and Liam Chilvers have proved to be very strong in the heart of defence. The return of the player known as 'The Rock' around the Layer Road dressing room, has definitely been one of Parky's best moves in the transfer market.

"He is a good player and a really nice lad as well, we all got on with him last season when he came," Whitey revealed. "Liam did a great job for us then and unfortunately he got injured just as the new gaffer took control. That was disappointing for him because he would have liked to have stayed until the end of last season and finished the campaign off well but he came back this season after I got injured against Port Vale."

"We needed another centre half in and since he has come in he has done really

well, he is a good player and I don't know what is happening with him at Arsenal but if he doesn't get another contract there I am sure there will be plenty of clubs interested in signing him and a lot of them are likely to be in Division One rather than Division Two because he is very good on the ball, very strong and because he is such a likeable person he should fit in to a club wherever he goes, as he has done here."

This time last year Steve Whitton was playing a 3-5-2 formation and the main tactical change made by Geraint Williams on his friend's departure was to switch to 4-4-2. The back four look more comfortable in this formation and the full backs who have played regularly - Sam Stockley and Andy Myers - are both showing that neither of them are willing to compromise in the way they play.

Whitey said: "Sam has played in Division Two for a while and he had a good start to the season. Andy would probably hold his hands up and say that his first couple of performances for the club were not as good as he expected of himself. He has dropped down a division and that is a very difficult thing to do because in the First Division he was playing against a different style of football."

"He had only just met the lads and didn't have much of a pre-season. I think he had been injured a little bit so he wasn't 100% fit when he came but since then he has got his match fitness up and I think he has been brilliant, Andy has played really well, he's been solid and bar a couple of injuries he has played just about every game."

Best

"I think the crowd have taken to him now because they can see what he is and the crowd respond to that sort of a player, someone who will just fly in, 100%, and do the best he can for the team and Andy shows that every week."

Of course defending is not just the job of the back four and Whitey believes the whole team has benefited from an increased focus on the defensive side of the game: "There has been more emphasis on defending on the whole from the forwards through to the midfield," he explained.

"In the midfield in particular, from the moment Phil Parkinson came here he didn't tinker about too much with the team that George (Geraint Williams) was playing at the time. He didn't want to change the back four

too much because we had played quite well under George but he took the midfield and really focussed on shutting down and the main emphasis is when the opposition is on the ball to get them in to a certain part of the field so we know what they are going to do. The gaffer is a big believer in showing the opposition inside so you know where they are going to come and the back four can react more easily rather than guessing where the ball might go. He did a lot of work on that and I think it has paid dividends."

"You look at Thomas Pinault, he is doing really well and the defensive side of his game has come on a treat. He is winning headers and winning tackles and he is still passing the ball like we know he can and he has become a much better player for it."

All of this is backed up by some very good goalkeeping too. Simon Brown was

named Player of the Year in May due to his heroics between the sticks although he had only played 26 games. And when Richard McKinney was given an opportunity he proved that his fellow keeper would have to graft to get his place back.

"Unfortunately Rich has had a bit of a nightmare this season with an injury to his knee because he was doing really well in pre-season up until the Ipswich game. I think that killed him a little bit because it was very close between him and Brownie at that point that any sort of mistake was going to swing it either way."

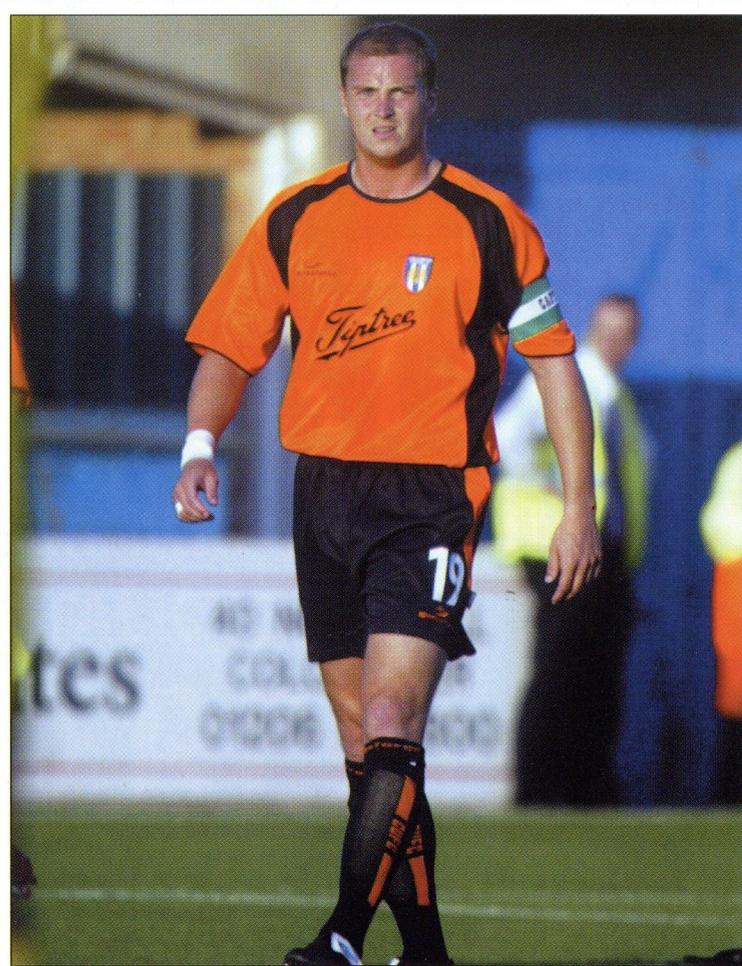
Whitey continued: "Rich is back now and he is training really well. He is more or less fully fit and I think he is giving the gaffer a



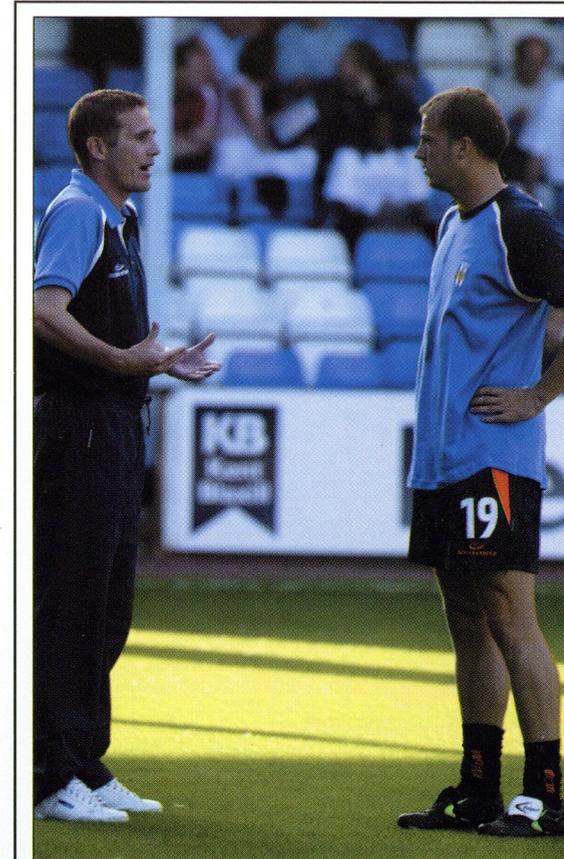
few headaches because Brownie is playing well again too. He had a couple of little blips in two games but he has been very good throughout the season as a whole and Rich will be keeping him on his toes now.

"You know when you have got one of those two keepers behind you that if an opponent does get through you there is a good chance that they won't score because Brownie and Rich are such good shot stoppers, quite sharp off their line and generally good goalkeepers - it gives defenders extra confidence."

That confidence is something that seems to have surged through the side so far this season. Team spirit is something that Bobby Bowry points to as he reveals his expectations for the remainder of the season, focussing on the midfield in the second part of this review on page 26.



ALANWHITE - TROUBLED WITH INJURIES THIS SEASON



ALANWHITE - TALKS THINGS OVER WITH THE MANAGER



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THE PUB DEBATE

Goodwill to all men?

Is it right that footballers go to work on Christmas Day?

GIVE THEM A BREAK

says Bargepole

When you're a youngster, and you're planning your future career, if you have a real desire to spend Christmas Day at home, there are certain jobs that you would be inclined to avoid. Things like medicine, the emergency services, nursing, even utility companies like the electricity board - embark on a career in any of these and you can be pretty certain that sooner or later you'll be spending Christmas Day stone cold sober, up to your ears in work.

However, if fortune has smiled upon you and you find that you have a real talent for football, you wouldn't think that it was the sort of job that would ever get in the way of opening your pressies in the bosom of your family.

How wrong you would be. You see, there has always been a tradition in football to get the players in on Christmas morning for a training session. Why is this? Is football a matter of life and death, like driving an ambulance? Is the health and well-being of little old ladies at stake if the players stay at home?

Will civilisation grind to a halt if players aren't plodding round some blighted piece of grass with all the enthusiasm of Ron Atkinson entering an order of trappist monks? Is physical fitness in young professional athletes such a fragile entity that to be spared a day's training would leave them huffing and puffing round the pitch like a Sunday league veterans team? I hardly think so.

Footballers may well be richly rewarded for what looks to the rest of us rather a doddle - being paid pretty good money to play a game. But there are some things that money just can't buy, and being at home surrounded by your family on Christmas morning is, as they say in the credit card ads, priceless.

I'm amazed in this day and age of paternity leave and the 'new man' who takes an active part in raising his family, and of extensive communication systems, that it is still felt to be valuable to the team to drag players away from their home on Christmas morning to make a desultory effort at training for a couple of hours. Where's the psychological value in that?

Leave the boys at home with the Scalextric and Playstation, fighting the kids for a go. Give them a diet sheet, by all means. Give them a training schedule they can do in the local park or back garden while the turkey is roasting. Send them packing on Christmas Eve with a video of tactics and a pep talk from Sir Parky to watch during the Queen's speech.

And above all, promise them that they can have next Christmas off as well if they win - and we'll all get the three points that we put at the top of our letter to Father Christmas.

OF COURSE!

says South

What? Don't make me laugh! Why should footballers expect a day off training when they have a match the next day?

There are rich rewards to be made from playing football and when this profession moved from being purely a sport to becoming an entertainment, it suddenly had a duty to perform to the public whenever they were required. If that means they lose out on one day a year to prepare for this overpaid job, then so be it!

If they are happy enough to accept the rich rewards and the public adulation of playing for Colchester, then they have to take this incredibly small inconvenience of getting up early on Christmas day and going for a small run.

I hardly think most of the players are domestic goddesses in the kitchen and would use this time more beneficially by perfecting their chestnut stuffing or flipping through some cooking book to make their sprouts more interesting. All over the world, mothers and wives spend this time meticulously preparing food for dinner, I would expect most of them would just love to have the day off as well.

Let us not feel to sorry for these players when you consider how much time they get off in the summer months. Over the last couple of years, many footballers have hardly had many problems with the football season over running and disrupting holidays plans because of little things like play-off runs or being called up for international duties in big tournaments. Up until this year they can't really say they have stretched themselves even during the season and become lethargic because of all the cup matches fixture congestion.

How many footballers these days have a strong enough Christian belief that would prevent them from plying their trade during this, supposedly, religious period? I wouldn't imagine that many! The only 'higher being', they hold in reverence is the football agent who has managed to get a better football boot contract for them.

There is a lot of fuss and talk about how unfair it is for them not to be able to drink on Christmas Day, but this is the same for many professions these days. Hospitals, airports, television companies, Police, fire brigades all work on this day and we don't think twice about them. In fact these people work all day away from their friends and family, not just for a couple of hours in the morning like footballers.

Asking a footballer not to drink on Christmas Day is really like asking a normal office worker not to drink just before coming to work. There is no difference! Lets not treat them with kid gloves, they earn more than you and me, have more holiday, work a lot less and yet still seem to want more.

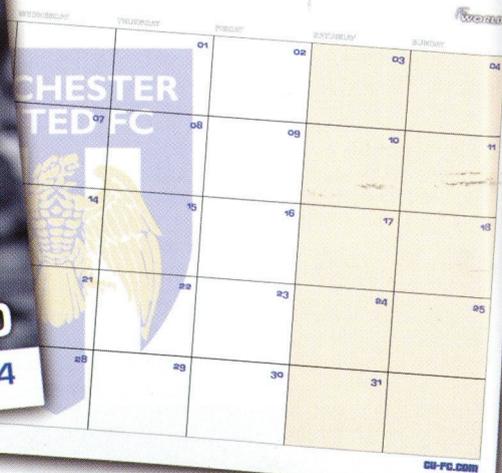
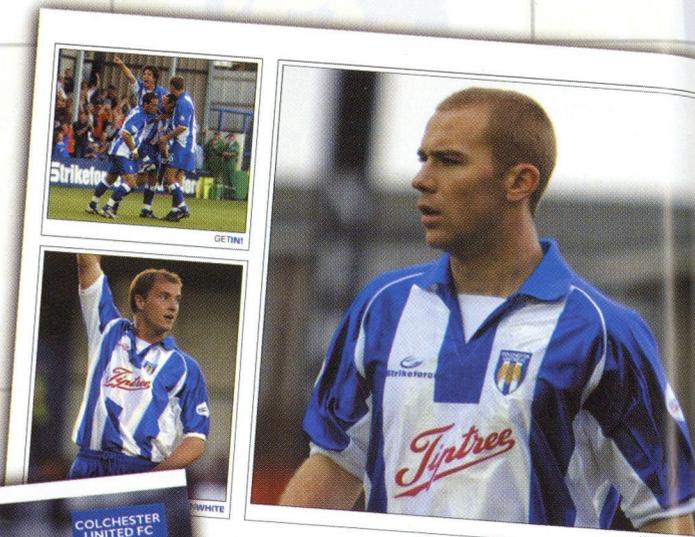
...SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Which side of the fence are you falling? Is a light training session on the big day too much to ask? Or is it just a drawback of the profession? E-mail us at editor@colchesterunited.net or drop us a line at the postal address on the U's Views page!

IS IT THAT TIME OF YEAR ALREADY?

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CALENDAR 2004



Despite having spent the last week preparing for Christmas, Colchester United's supporters have still found time to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard!) and send in their views to the U's media department.

We have the best of your letters here and we will be continuing to print a selection of your views in the matchday magazine during 2003/4, as well as the e-mails that arrive at the club.

It's become clear that we have plenty of budding correspondents in our midst so, if you want to see your name in the matchday magazine this season, you can contact us at editor@colchesterunited.net or by writing to us at the following address:-

U's Views,
Media Department,
Colchester United Football Club,
Layer Road, Colchester,
Essex CO2 7JJ

THANKS MR HEARD!

Following a discussion I have been having on the Oldham Athletic internet messageboard, I would like to thank Mr Heard. The discussion was about whether the FA should "bail out" smaller clubs after Cambridge United became the latest club to have met financial difficulty. We are fortunate not to have to worry about this and that is largely down to having a level-headed and sensible man at the helm of the Good Ship Colchester United (I haven't forgotten you either Marie!).

As to whether clubs should be rescued by the FA footing the bill, I for one certainly think it shouldn't happen. These clubs are in a sticky situation not because of the FA, but because of the actions of their Chairmen - spending money that they haven't yet received (step forward ITV Digital!). I do not wish to see any club fold, be it Leeds or York, but it is not for the FA to rescue them as it would set a very, very dangerous precedent. I LOVE this club and I think we should all raise a glass this

Christmas to the Chairman and his friends for the way it is run.
Cheers Mr Heard and Co!

Dave Battson

GOALS ARE REQUIRED!

I'm writing this having just got back from the Oldham game and would like to congratulate the team on a fantastic second half performance, including two stunning goals. I have just one bone to pick.

2-1 up with five minutes left, well on top of the game at this stage but yet we insist on playing 'keep-ball' in the corner! It suggests that the lads do not have confidence in their own ability to keep attacking fluently and defending strong until the final whistle. I have great faith in this team but continuing to play in our skilful way right up to the final whistle could see us with a much healthier looking goal difference, something that I am predicting will be very handy in May!

Sam Bullard



MATES DAY

Colchester United will be hosting a special day in their first home game in 2004, as a fans-led initiative attempts to boost crowds at Layer Road as the team look to sustain their play-off push.

'Mates Day' is an initiative by the popular U's fanzine The U'sual, who hope that each Colchester United supporter can bring along a friend to the match against Barnsley on January 10th and lift the numbers on the terraces.

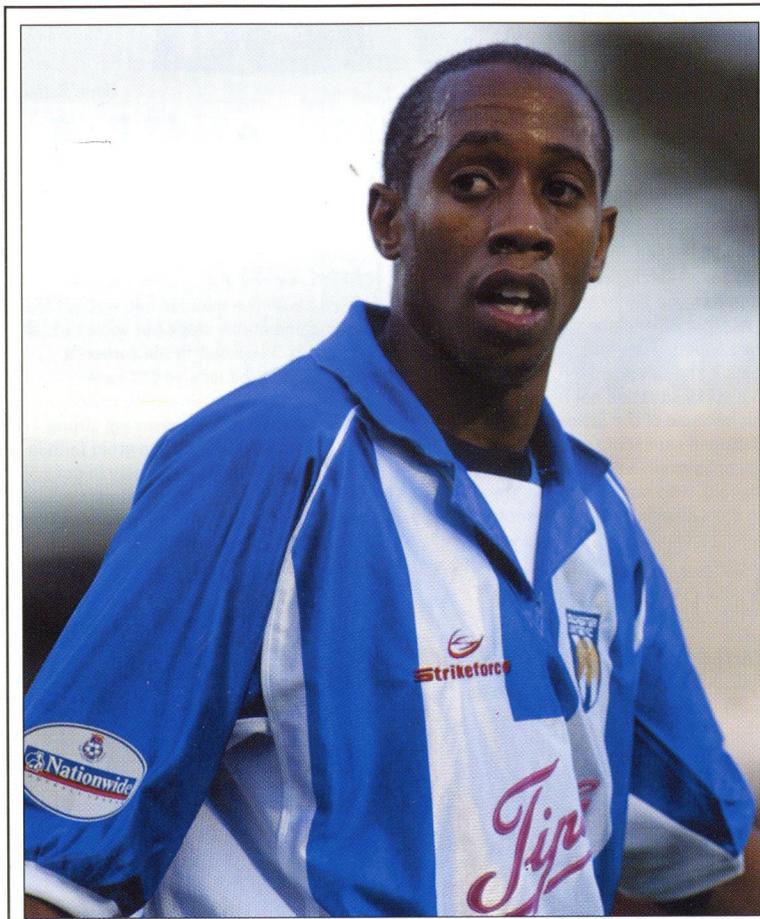
Fanzine editor Daniel Whymark told the matchday magazine: "With the team doing so well under Parky, yet the average home attendance at Layer Road being so small, we thought we'd try and do something to bolster the crowd. In the Steve Whitton era the club

tried all sorts to get more fans through the gates, but none of them really seemed to work and it was costing the club money giving out free tickets etc, so instead we've gone for the simple idea of getting the fans to bring a mate along to the game.

"What harm can it do? I'm sure many of us have a some point or another had our mates laugh at us when we say we support Col U. Well now's the perfect opportunity to show them what they're missing.

"We've gone for the Barnsley game for a number of reasons. It's the first game of a New Year, so it would be great to start on a high and it's a game that you wouldn't really expect a high gate for. The Sheffield Wednesday game has set a benchmark for us, it would be brilliant if we could beat that, or at least get near, that figure."

Get involved!



BOBBY BOWRY - TALKS OF 'FANTASTIC SPIRIT' AT THE CLUB

Things can change very quickly in football and over the past twelve months Bobby Bowry has seen life around Layer Road change quite distinctly.

When Phil Parkinson arrived as manager ten months ago he was keen to make sure he did not change too much too soon.

Parky pointed out that there were long-term aims and short-term goals. The most pertinent issue for the new manager, as always, was to win the next game. He was also determined to avoid relegation from Division Two but one thing Phil Parkinson has always stressed is the importance to raise the professionalism at the club and that is something that has been addressed on many different levels and is constantly being reviewed.

"I think there has been a massive turnaround in the club since Steve Whitton left. He (Whitton) was probably a little bit unfortunate in terms of injuries and other things," says one of the most experienced players that Parky inherited from his predecessor.

And Bowry does not underestimate the amount of change that has taken place in the past year: "Due to a new management set-up, new staff being brought in and new players coming in there really has been a massive turnaround in the club. The performances on the pitch have changed and the way people look after themselves off the pitch has changed too and that is a big plus for the club."

One change that has happened on the pitch is the shift in the roles that individuals within

the midfield have been employed in. Although the former Crystal Palace and Millwall man has been involved in first team matters a little less frequently over the past 12 months than previously, he believes that whoever is out on the pitch on a match day has a better understanding of their job within the team.

"Kem Izzet likes to get forward even more than me, to get in the box, and he does that really well," Bobby explains. "Under the old manager, and sometimes at Millwall, I played in the role Thomas Pinault has here now but as you get older you adapt your game to play with other players. When I play with Kem I hold the ball and sit back more whereas if I play with Thomas I get about the pitch a little bit more."

"I think those two players have done really well this year and it has been frustrating for me sitting out and watching them do very well but I got my chance a couple of weeks ago and I thought I had done enough to stay in the team. For whatever reason, I didn't keep my place but that holding midfield has been one of the big factors in why we have done really well this year."

Hard work

Another foundation that Parky has looked to build his team on his hard work. One of the first things the U's boss said after his appointment was that he wanted the players to 'roll their sleeves up,' get stuck in and earn results on the pitch.

There can be no denying that has happened and within the midfield much of that effort has been channelled into closing down the opposition when they are in possession.

"I think before Phil Parkinson arrived we were always known as a nice passing team that didn't win enough games," Bowry recalls. "We have probably let that side of it go a little bit because this league is about hard work. I think the harder you go in, you have got to have better passers. We can play, everyone knows that, but that is an aspect of the game we have adapted. That is a tribute to the boss because he has made people like Thomas, who had never really got to grips with that side of the game, aware that if they want to play at a higher level they need to do that and I think that it has paid off big time for him this year."

Some of the midfielders could be disappointed with the relatively low goal returns individually this season. After finishing the 2002/3 campaign with eight goals, Kem Izzet is yet to score this season, Thomas Pinault has not hit the net since the beginning of August and Karl Duguid only scored his second goal of the season two weeks ago.

The increased strength in other areas of the

team means that the midfielders are comfortable with these statistics though: "Obviously the defence has played well and I think the fans will see that the boss has made some shrewd signings up front. We have actually looked like we have got goals in us whereas in years gone by, before I came, the side probably struggled in that respect. We have now got two players on ten goals before Christmas, Rowan Vine is on eight and we have got Doogie who can chip in with a goal as well."

Bowry continued: "It is nice going on the pitch knowing you have got so much firepower. As a midfield we don't just let the forwards get on with it but it has been the case this year that when we have gone a goal up or a goal down we are always confident of getting another goal ourselves."

That strength in the squad has been a massive boost to Phil Parkinson, especially with the relatively low number of injuries encountered so far in 2003/4 and some credit must go to physiotherapist and fitness coach Stuart Ayles. But the players have also bonded well off the pitch and Bowry believes this could be another key factor if the U's want to realise the potential they have already shown.

"I must say the team spirit at the club is fantastic at the moment," Bobby admits. "I have particularly noticed that team spirit and the games from the Christmas period into the New Year are really going to shape the season. If we are still in the position we want to be in after Christmas I think that we have enough about us in the squad to be in the top six."

"We have got some very good players on the pitch and some very good players on the bench. I think the manager knows now that if he brings somebody onto the pitch as a substitute they are going to be able to hold their own in whatever position they play."

"There is a fight for places and that is healthy competition. At the end of the day I wouldn't like to be the manager because he has got to make the decisions and he can't keep everybody happy. I have been in the situation before when I have been number one and it is nice when you are in that position but you have to take the rough with the smooth and I have been pleasantly surprised with the way the fans have been with me this year. They have been very good towards me and very appreciative of my performances, which is nice."

This time last year Colchester United supporters could perhaps have been forgiven for feeling apprehensive about a Saturday afternoon at Layer Road. The U's were not playing bad football but the final product was

not always there and too frequently the team wearing blue and white couldn't quite hold on to a one goal lead or would concede a soft goal to lose the match against the run of play.

How life has changed for Colchester fans. There is now a genuine feeling of expectation on the terraces, a sense of belief in the team, and a real buzz around a match day. That is something that does not go unnoticed by the players.

Upbeat

"I have been at some big clubs but it feels that the whole area is really upbeat at the moment and I think that has been helped particularly by the cup runs," Bobby insists. "It has been almost unheard of at this club in recent years to be in two cup competitions at this time of year. That is superb and as a whole it is going very well at the moment."

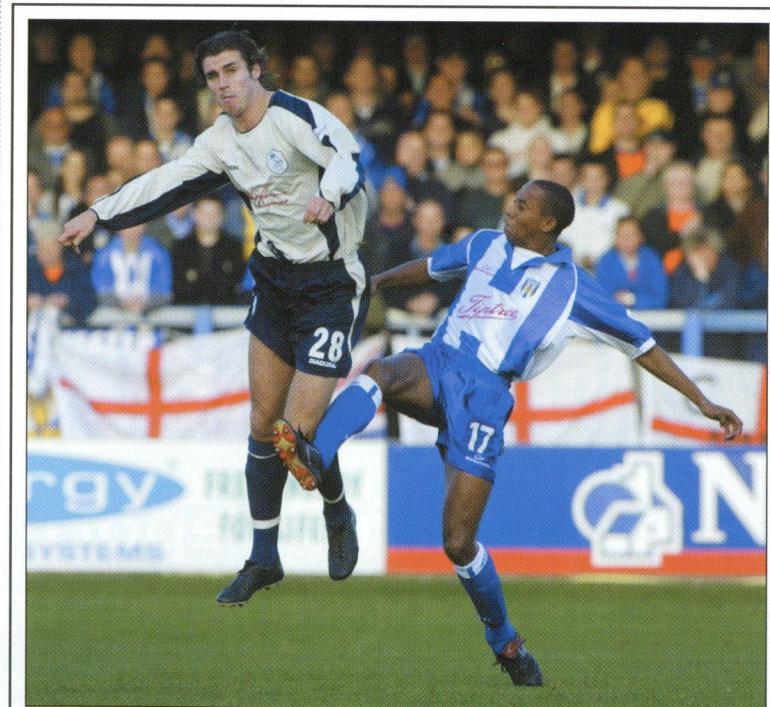
If nothing else, Bobby Bowry's experience on the football pitch has proved to be vital in some key games for Colchester this year. Part of that wealth of experience - and not a distant memory - was a promotion-winning season from this division with Millwall. Does he think the U's have got it in them to mount a serious challenge for Division One yet?

"I think the most important factor in this team now is that we have three or four players who can score goals," Bowry says. "When I was at Palace we had players like Chris Armstrong, John Salako and when I was at Millwall we had Neil Harris and Paul Shaw, who could all score goals."

"The year Millwall went up I played against Colchester and I remember saying then that they were a good passing team but didn't have any steel. I think this manager has brought that side of it into the club with the fitness and people's attitudes as well."

"People at this club have changed and to be honest if we do keep our focus and our heads screwed on I firmly believe that we can finish in the top six. We have got goals in the team and we are playing as a unit; there have been games when we haven't played well and we have got results and that is the sign of a good team."

"Before we were the Colchester who would go away to QPR and play really nice football and get beaten 3-1. Although we have had a couple of blips on the road at Rushden, Grimsby and Notts County, I think we are quite formidable at home and away, if we score first, I think we are very hard to beat."



BOBBY BOWRY - VITAL EXPERIENCE



COLCHESTER UNITED AND THE EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES A WINNING TEAM!

Read the full report from this afternoon's match in Monday's EADT - Essex's leading morning newspaper!



In his regular column, EADT Journalist Carl Marston, who will be following the U's around the country this season, will be taking a look back at what was making the news five, ten and twenty years ago at Layer Road.

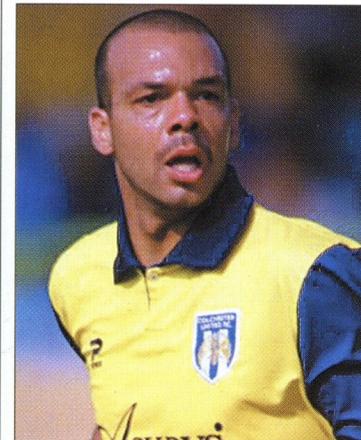


CARL MARSTON

FIVE YEARS AGO

Colchester United were second best to Kevin Keegan's multi-millionaires at Fulham as the U's lost 2-0 at Craven Cottage on Boxing Day, 1998.

The U's stifling tactics had worked at lowly Lincoln City the previous weekend, grinding out a point with Jason Dozzell (below) as a lone target man. But Fulham were a different proposition. Lincoln never even registered a shot on target, but Fulham peppered the target and also



bagged two goals, scoring midway through each half.

The fact that United played the final 18 minutes with just 10 men and no regular keeper, following the dismissal of Carl Emberson, merely made Fulham's life easier. Neil Smith nudged the Cottagers ahead in the 26th minute, meeting Rufus Brevett's cross with a firm header.

Emberson was shown the red card for a professional foul on German striker Dirk Lehmann on 72 minutes. Neil Gregory was handed the green jersey, but dived the wrong way as Barry Hayles buried the ensuing penalty.

Emberson was furious: "I just stood my ground. He (Lehmann) just ran into me. I thought it was only going to be a goal-kick. I told the referee that the player had run into me, and he appeared to agree with that. But then he got out his red card. It's very frustrating because I don't think that I deserve any suspension," added Emberson.

Fulham led the Division Two table by two points from Walsall, with Stoke in third. The U's were in 15th spot.

U's line-up: Emberson, Dunne, Betts, Williams, Greene, Buckle, Wilkins, D Gregory, Dozzell, Abrahams, Stamps. Used subs: N Gregory, Lock, Sale.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

The U's completed a month to remember at Layer Road on Tuesday, December 27, bringing their goal tally to 18 in their fourth game, thanks to a 4-1 home win over Aldershot Town.

Visitors Aldershot, level on points with the U's before kick-off, were obviously in January Sales mood as they gave away goals to the free-scoring U's.

The rush was started after just 12 seconds, and before the Shots had even laid a boot on the ball. Steve Leslie crossed in hope and defender Compton handled the ball.

Tony Adcock needed no second invitation as he tucked away the penalty for his 19th goal of the season.

Steve Wignall netted the second goal, following Ian Phillips' corner, before McDonald pulled a goal back for Aldershot. But Adcock restored the two-goal advantage just two minutes later. Keith Bowen added the fourth.

The U's were looking good in fourth position in the old Division Four table, behind York, Blackpool and Doncaster.

U's line-up: Chamberlain, Cook, Phillips, Hadley, Wignall, Houston, Groves, Osborne, Bowen, Adcock, Leslie.

TEN YEARS AGO

If ever there was a case for enjoying a Boxing Day lie-in, then this was it. Colchester United shared a goalless draw with Mansfield at Layer Road. The match didn't deserve a goal, but then it never looked like getting one.

The U's biggest crowd of the season turned up, expecting to see the Stags hunted down, but by half-time everyone was beginning to wish that they hadn't bothered.

Mansfield packed the midfield with five men, and Colchester were never good enough to break down that barrier. The closest they came to stealing a goal was in the very last minute when player-manager Roy McDonough had a shot cleared off the line, following Nicky Smith's corner.

The one plus mark for the U's was the display of their two new signings - keeper Jon Sheffield and winger Chris Fry. Sheffield, signed on loan from Cambridge United, never put a foot wrong and made one outstanding save to deny Peter McLoughlin.

Fry, signed from Hereford United for a nominal fee on Christmas Eve, was introduced as a second half substitute and he showed some neat touches down the right flank.

McDonough's men were 18th in Division Three. Crewe led the table by three points.

U's line-up: Sheffield, Betts, Roberts, Kinsella, English, Cawley, Ball, Brown, McDonough, McGavin, Smith. Used subs: Fry, Dickens.

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DAVID GREGORY

The Christmas Diary

First of all, I would like to wish every one a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope you all got what you wanted yesterday and had a good day eating, drinking and being merry. Spare a thought then for the players out there today who probably trained yesterday and kept off the beer and wine all day!

All the managers I have played under have had at least a forty eight hour alcohol ban before games and I'm sure Phil Parkinson is just as strict. This means that even on Christmas Eve, the lads would have had to have stayed off the sauce and watched what they ate. In this two day period before a game, pasta and plenty of carbohydrates are the order of the day. These are the sacrifices players have to make in order to be in peak condition for the busy eight or nine days ahead. These sacrifices will be well worth it if we have a successful Christmas period.

Delighted

I am sure if Phil sits down in his office on the 4th of January and has taken four points in the league and is in the Fourth Round of the FA Cup, he will be delighted. This is a lot easier said than done though; today's game is no formality and Sunday's game against QPR is probably the toughest league game of the season.

Following that game we have the long trip to Accrington Stanley on January 3rd. It looks like an easy game because, after all, they are only in the Conference but Bournemouth couldn't beat them home or away. We can not afford to go there with any of the players not being a 100% focused on progressing to the next round.

Without trying to double guess the boss and his management team, I will try and take you through the Christmas period as the players will see it. After the Hartlepool game on 20th December, the players will report on Monday morning for a normal training session. Tuesday may become a rest day and after this, preparations for today's game will begin in earnest, with training on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The players will want to be in early on Christmas Day so that they can be home to spend most of the day with their families. They will however be expected to rest up completely and consume the required diet.

Today's game will see the players getting to the ground between 1.00 and 1.45. The latter is the time they will have to be in the dressing room but some players, including myself in the past, like to be at the ground early to make sure everything - as in boots, shin pads, etc - is ready. After the game, they may all eat together before going home and again putting their feet up.

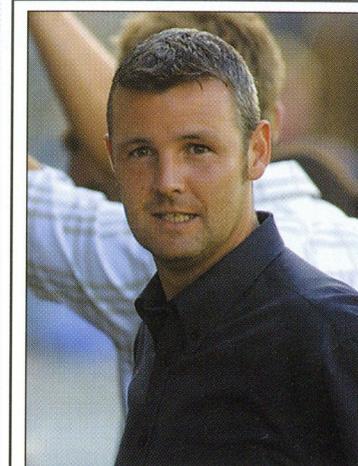
Light

Tomorrow, they may be in for a light session, stretching, cooling down or analysing parts of the match. Any of them with bumps or bruises will be in with Stuart the physio and will sit out any training.

Another excuse not to help with the house work when they get home, 'got to relax darling, I've got a game tomorrow against QPR, they are top of the league you know.'

Playing on a Sunday may be a common occurrence for the Premiership teams but is rare in the Second Division. If the lads have shown up well in these two games and there fitness levels are looking good they might be rewarded with another rest day on the Monday.

Tuesday will be a normal training day for the lads that have played both days but the others might have to endure some extra fitness work in case they are needed for the game against Accrington Stanley. A light day will be had on Wednesday before the cycle starts again with two days intense



DAVID GREGORY

preparation ahead of the FA Cup game in the North.

This schedule is obviously liable to change due to various reasons, the weather at this time of year usually has a say in proceedings, but I am positive that Phil will have the troops ready for every eventuality and they will be hungry to be successful during this busy festive period.

Once again, Season Greetings and enjoy the game.

David Gregory



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Two goals by Reg Stratton gave Colchester United a 2-2 Fourth Division draw against promotion rivals Luton Town in front of 10,200 at Layer Road on 8th April 1966.

Stratton signed for the U's from Boston United that summer and started his Layer Road career off with a bang. He grabbed five goals in the first few weeks of the season, having added a much needed cutting edge to the Colchester forward line.

Stratton notched a total of seventeen goals that season, and was on target again as Colchester held Luton to a 1-1 draw in the return fixture three days later. His strikes, coupled with the best defensive record in the division during 1965/6 meant that the U's were able to pip the Hatters to promotion on goal average.

He eventually went on to play over 120 league and cup games for Colchester United, scoring 54 goals – an impressive tally of a goal nearly every other game. An ex-England amateur international, he eventually departed to Vancouver Rovers, but returned to play for Brentwood, Dover and Basingstoke and is now a storeman for Solatron in Farnborough.

Football Historian and Membership Secretary of the Colchester United Former Players Association LEIGH EDWARDS traces the Colchester team.

SANDY KENNON: Experienced goalkeeper who made 77 League appearances for Colchester prior to joining Lowestoft Town in August 1967. He now lives in Wroxham and was a partner in the Bunney & Kennon betting shops, then a sales

executive for Highland Distillers until retiring in September 1996.

DUNCAN FORBES: Scottish defender who starred in Colchester's 1965-66 promotion success and scored twice in 170 League games prior to joining Norwich City in September 1968. He skippered the Canaries to two promotions and two League Cup finals, then became their promotions manager and later chief scout.

JOHN FOWLER: Scottish left-back who starred in Colchester's 1961-62 and 1965-66 promotion campaigns, netting five goals in 415 League games while at Layer Road prior to joining Heybridge Swifts in June 1968. He later played for Easter Gas and worked locally for Securicor until a fatal heart-attack.

BOBBY BLACKWOOD: Scottish wing-half who netted six goals in 105 League outings for Colchester prior to joining Hawick Royal Albert as player-manager in July 1968, then rejoined Hearts as reserve team trainer. Settling in Edinburgh, he ran a betting shop in Balerno until March 1992 and died in June 1997.

MICK LOUGHTON: Centre-half who starred in Colchester's 1965-66 promotion success, scoring six times in 122 League games before joining Brentwood Town in July 1968. He later played for and managed Chelmsford City and has also coached Tiptree, Witham, Brightlingsea, Brantham and Heybridge Swifts.

DEREK TREVIS: Influential wing-half who netted 13 goals in 196

League games for Colchester prior to joining Walsall in September 1968. He later played for Lincoln City, Stockport County, Philadelphia Atoms, San Diego Jaws, Las Vegas Quicksilver and Philadelphia Fury. He died in Sacramento in 2000.

MIKE GRICE: Outside-right who was in his second spell at Layer Road, helping to win promotion in 1965-66 and netting 29 goals in 247 League games before rejoining Lowestoft in June 1966. He was a draughtsman for Eastern Coach Works, then Phillips Petroleum and died in Lowestoft in August 2002.

PETER BULLOCK: Former England Youth inside-right who starred in the 1965-66 promotion success and scored 33 times in 95 League outings while at Layer Road before moving to Exeter City in July 1968. He later played for Walsall and Stafford Rangers and has since worked for Michelin, living in Trentham.

TED PHILLIPS: Former Ipswich Town favourite who netted 13 goals in 32 Fourth Division games for Colchester prior to joining Maltese side Floriana as player-manager in May 1966. Subsequently with Chelmsford, Lexden, Brantham and Long Melford, he worked for British Telecom and still lives locally.

BRIAN HALL: Versatile outside-left who was ever-present in the 1965-66 promotion success, scoring 29 goals in 328 League games prior to joining Chelmsford City in January 1973. He later played for Wimbledon, Clacton, Tiptree and Rowhedge and has since been a storeman for Essex Heating Supplies.

GAVIN JOHNSON

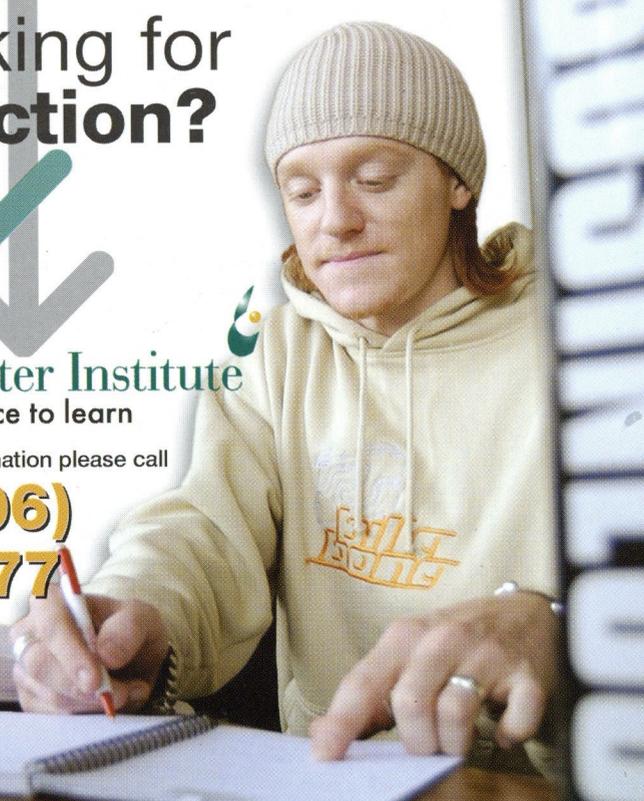
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GOOD WEEK FOR...

ij Blackpool's Squad Strength

With his team sitting four points outside the play-offs, Seasiders boss Steve McMahon has made a move to bolster his team heading into the Christmas period. First up, McMahon signed Leeds United youngster Simon Johnson on a month's loan, with the forward making his debut against Luton nearly a fortnight ago.

And, last Monday, the Blackpool boss confirmed that Derby County defender Steve Elliott would be staying at the club for a further month. Elliott has performed well in his time at Bloomfield Road and McMahon was delighted to secure his signature, saying: "Steve has been tremendous for us over the last month, he has been a tower of strength. We are delighted with Steve and the way he has performed."

ij Leon McKenzie's Career

With Darren Huckerby leaving Norwich City and returning to Manchester City, it opened the door for someone else to get their chance at Carrow Road. And the Canaries decided to opt for Peterborough United's Leon McKenzie, with the pacy striker signing for the First Division club for a fee that could eventually be worth £625,000.

McKenzie was delighted with the move, saying: "Norwich City is a massive club and always seem to have a good pedigree of players and an attractive style of football. 'I just want to come here and prove myself by scoring goals - that's my job and I have managed to maintain a good scoring ratio to date, so hopefully I can keep that up with my new club."

And the striker started with a bang on Sunday by scoring both goals in the 2-0 East Anglian derby win over Ipswich Town.

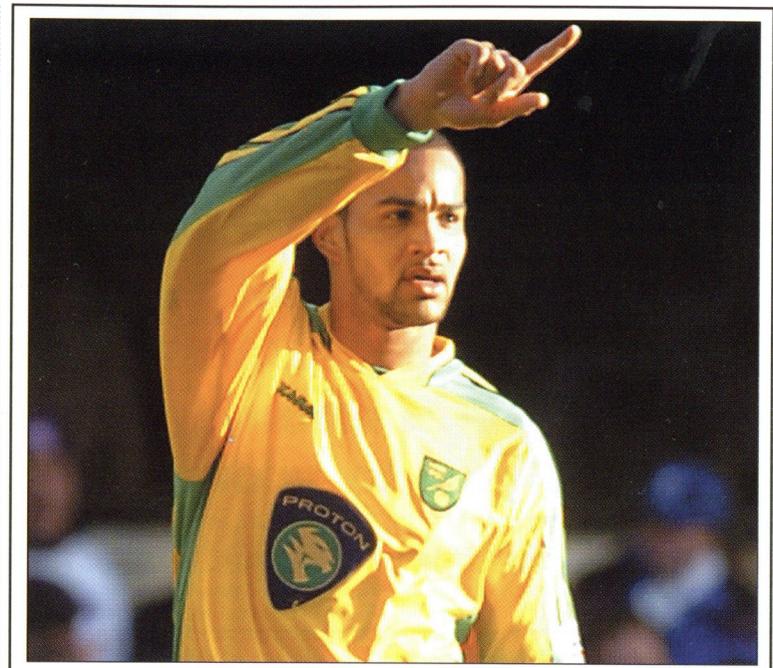
GREAT WEEK FOR...

Oldham's Long Term Survival Hopes

The Latics have moved a step closer to pulling clear of the trap door to extinction after a date was set for the takeover of the club to be ratified. Three New York businessmen have kept the Boundary Park club afloat in recent months and now are due to take over on a permanent basis in the New Year subject to Football League approval.

It will prove to be a blessed relief to the Latics fans who have seen their club hang perilously over the edge during the summer and, when asked why he had decided to take over the Lancashire club, one of the American trio Simon Blitz said: "Because we love football. You have to follow your dreams, if you don't fulfil your dreams then life passes you by and you realise you've maybe missed out.

"To be involved is exciting, nervous, it's everything. You can't believe that I was sitting in New York watching on the internet seeing the team lose and getting annoyed. Once you invest



LEONMCKENZIE - BIG MOVE

and that's what you decide, you become an instant supporter and defeat hurts, it doesn't matter who you are."

BAD WEEK FOR...

ij Stockport's Goalkeeping Problems

Having taken over at Edgeley Park a couple of months ago, Sammy McLroy is finding life in club management as tricky as that at international level. The Northern Irishman signed Aston Villa keeper Boaz Myhill to solve an injury crisis at County but, after a string of impressive performances by the loanee, McLroy is back to square one after Myhill was snapped up on a permanent basis by Hull City.

"I've really been hit hard with this one," he said. "Boaz did brilliantly for us and we wanted to keep him on. But the story got out that we wanted to sign him and his agent then did a deal with Hull. Of course, I'm disappointed, but that's football and we just have to get on with things."

ij Wycombe's Survival Hopes

Until this Saturday's 2-0 win over Bournemouth, new Wanderers boss Tony Adams was yet to record a win in the league.

Goals from Keith Ryan and Luke Moore secured a vital three points, however the Chairboys remain rooted in the bottom four.

Before the weekend win a disappointed Adams had told the press: "Am I confident of turning it around? No, absolutely not. I'm not confident at all, but we're going to give it a go. But there are signs that we're getting there. I'm loving it. It's great fun."

TERRIBLE WEEK FOR...

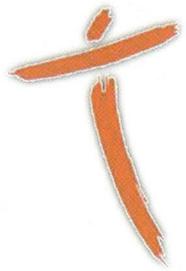
Oldham's Off Pitch Behaviour

Having appeared in this section last time out after a fan threw a bottle onto the pitch against Notts County, the Latics supporters are again under scrutiny after alleged racial abuse in the recent game against Colchester United at Layer Road.

After complaints by Oldham fans about their fellow Latics followers, the club confirmed that it intends to investigate.

A statement on the club website read: "The Club has this morning become aware of incidents regarding racial comments made at Colchester on Saturday. The Club is investigating these incidents and is currently speaking with Greater Manchester Police to see what can be done.

"The Club recognises it is a minority and will do everything in its power to stamp out such behaviour. The Club will not allow this activity to spoil the hard work it undertakes in forging links with all parts of the community."



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Good afternoon and welcome to this afternoon's game. The treatment room has been quiet again since our last home match and it was good for the manager to be able to choose his team from a fully fit squad last weekend.

Andy Myers missed out when we faced Oldham Athletic recently after he came in to the club with an infected toenail on the match day. It seems like a silly little injury to stop him playing but that type of problem can be very painful. Andy is a tough lad and he would play through a little bit of pain but this was causing extreme discomfort. We got him to see the chiropodist promptly who sorted everything out and he was back in training on the Tuesday after the game.

Obviously it is very important for footballers to look after their feet because they are the tools of their trade. We make sure the players wear flip-flops in the showers and whenever they don't have boots or trainers on because it is a moist environment around the dressing room where fungal infections are able to flourish. The players get fined if they are not wearing flip flops and we have to be careful to prevent athletes foot - if you get that going through the club it can prove very painful for individuals and stop people playing.

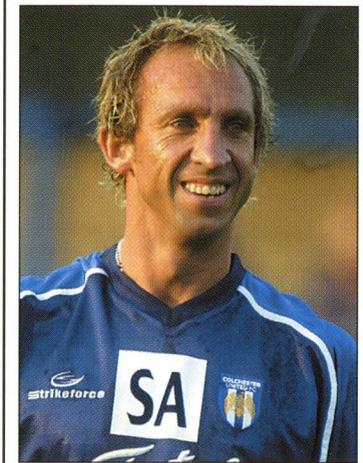
Thankfully, Andy was back in training very quickly and, after travelling to Hartlepool last weekend, there should be no reason why he is not available to play against Luton Town today.

We have also been continuing to protect Gavin Johnson's bruised foot, as I mentioned in my notes for the Oldham game. It is important that Gav gets plenty of rest to his foot. Ideally, he would have three weeks rest but we can't do that within a playing environment. It is painful to play with a bruised foot but once you are running around adrenaline takes over and, because of our present fixture schedule, it is difficult to say how long the problem will be there. The bruise is on the underside of Gav's foot and that makes it difficult for him to rest it. In training I have been giving him more non-weight-bearing exercise and on the Monday and Tuesday after the Oldham match Gav was doing a lot of work in the pool and on a bike.

For most people Christmas Day is a time to relax and eat excessively but that is very different for professional footballers. We treated yesterday as we would any normal training session the day before a match. As usual, the players were in for training in the morning and ate together as a team



STUARTAYLES



STUARTAYLES

after training.

After training they were free to go home and there is no problem with them eating a traditional Christmas dinner because turkey and vegetables provide them with what they need. After a meal like that though the players have to avoid the chocolates and sweets that most people will be tucking in to. Likewise, they cannot really drink during the Christmas period. Players can have a glass of wine with their meal on Christmas Day but there is no excessive eating or drinking because they are preparing for the game the following day.

With just two days until we play at Queens Park Rangers after today's match it is important to make sure the players prepare properly for the trip on Sunday. Our recovery from today's match will start immediately after the final whistle. As I have explained before, the players drink milkshakes after the game to replace energy and they warm-down on pitch.

Ice

In the past couple of months, after these warm-downs they have been sitting in ice baths in the dressing rooms at Layer Road. We fill a bath, half with ice and half with cold water and the players have to sit submerged up to their waists for 30 seconds and then they get back into a warm shower. They alternate by getting back in bath and then the shower three or four times.

We cannot put into print what some of the players said the first time I asked them to get into a bath full of ice but they are slowly getting used to it. Ice restricts blood flowing from any micro tears in the muscles while the heat from the showers increases the blood flow and this process speeds up the repair of minor muscle damage incurred during the match.

You may have seen in the papers recently that the England rugby union team took their own ice baths over to Australia for the World Cup and it certainly didn't seem to do them any harm. The ice baths are one of the changes we have brought in this season but it has been a gradual process of bringing in different ideas. We have been doing this for about eight weeks continuously but we have been trying to educate the players about the benefits since pre-season.

Some of the players almost had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the baths the first time we used them but we will continue to supervise the players while they whinge about taking the baths. It is more difficult to do this at away games because we can't take away the amount of ice we would need. We could alternate hot and cold showers but that is not quite as effective.

Tomorrow morning the squad will be back in training for a mixture of match preparation. The manager and his assistant will do some coaching and then they will be with me to do the second part of their warm down in the swimming pool. They do around 45 minutes to one hour on the day and it is important to do enough but not too much.

After training tomorrow the players will eat before they go home to continue Christmas under strict instructions that they are preparing for another game the following day.

Hopefully our squad can remain as fit in the New Year. For now I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and many thanks for your continued support.

Stuart

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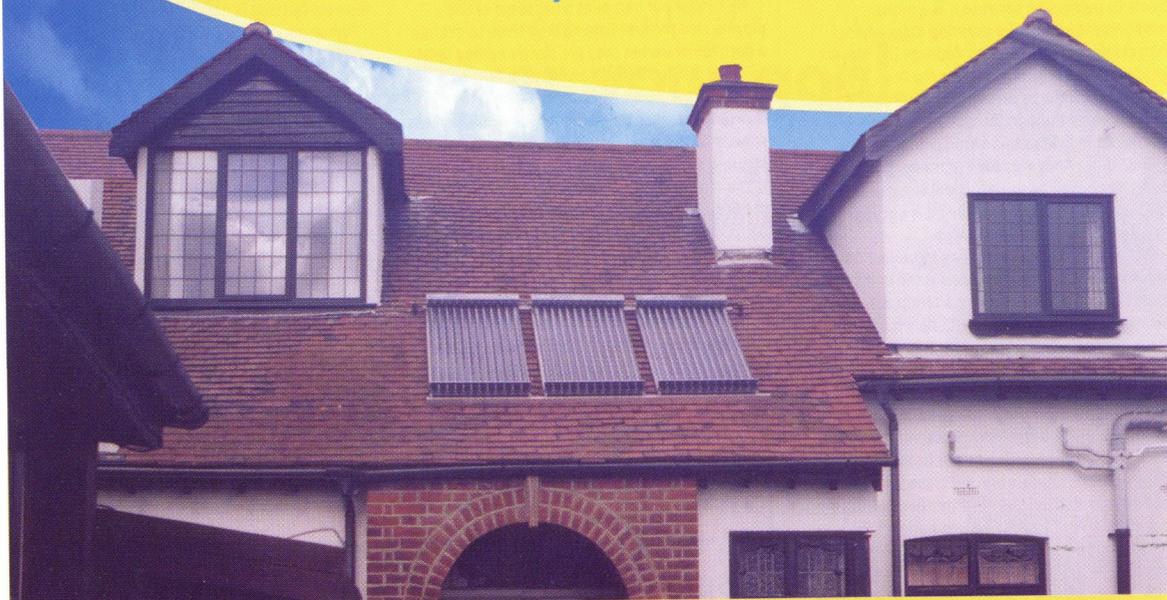
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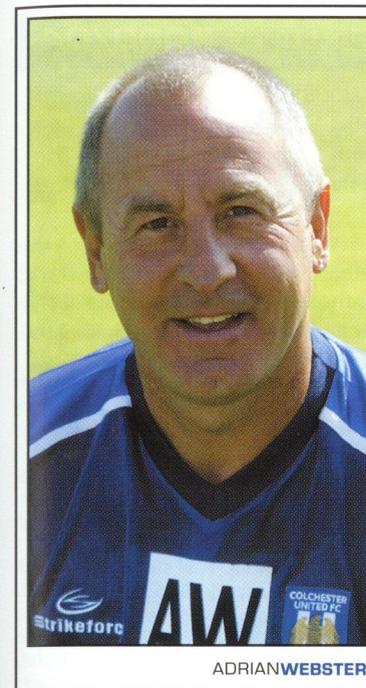
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ADRIAN WEBSTER

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Welcome to this afternoon's game against Luton Town and let me take this opportunity to wish a Merry Christmas to both sets of supporters and I hope everyone has had a good time in the last few days.

I was asked the other day 'How does one measure success?' Ultimately, our youth department will be judged by what players break into the first team. In time, however, there are many obstacles to overcome along the way.

Over the years, I have been asked many times in my role of Recruitment Officer 'What do you look for in a young player?' If I am honest, I would have to say that over the years, that has changed somewhat.

Obviously, it has to be what the manager of the day is looking for. When I first became Recruitment Officer and I started looking at games, I would always look for the best player, but I soon found out that when it came to trying to get that player, we were way down the pecking order.

Today, I am pleased to say that that has changed, mainly due to the reputation we have developed over the years.

For example, when Steve Whitton was here, he wanted players who could pass the ball and receive the ball comfortably. But when Phil Parkinson came in as manager, I spoke to him and asked him what he was looking for in players.

The thing that came out of that was he wanted players with athleticism. He feels that during the time that a young player is with the club, he should be able to pick up the technical stuff and the tactical awareness, whilst the athleticism is a natural thing.

I still believe that when I look for players, as well as the athleticism I am looking for

"IT IS GETTING THAT BALANCE OF WHAT THE MANAGER WANTS AND WHAT I WANT FROM A PLAYER TO GET THE BEST END PRODUCT."

players who are comfortable on the ball. It is getting that balance of what the manager wants and what I want from a player to get the best end product.

And, at the end of the day, whilst the individual manager's focus of what they want from young players is different, the aim still has to be to get the best players for Colchester United. The Centre of Excellence goes from the U9s to U16s and is the first stage on the conveyor belt to get players to the first team and getting the best players early on can only be good for the club.

Make A Move,

Adrian Webster

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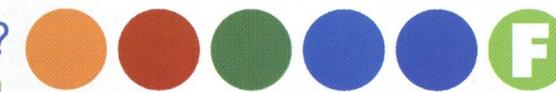
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A warm welcome to you today and I trust your Christmas Day was special - I would like to wish you all the best for the New Year.

We, at U17s level, are all enjoying a bit of a break at the moment, as our next fixture is against Leyton Orient at home on January 10th.

The last game we played was away at Northampton Town on December 13th and goals from Matt Paine and Craig Hughes won us the game by a 2-0 scoreline. What really pleased me about this game was that it was a great education and learning experience for my players.

Frustrated

What I mean by this is that at half time, the players were a bit frustrated with how scrappy the game was even though we were 1-0 up. The pitch was boggy and the weather was wet and windy, but I told the players that not every game you play in in your career will be total football and sometimes you have to earn the right to win.



JOEDUNNE

What they did unnoticed to themselves was outmuscle the opposition for sixty minutes and, for the last half hour, they played some really great football and hence we earned the right to play.

Respect

Robbie King and Mark Cousins joined me for the Northampton game from the U19s and I have nothing but respect for these two players for showing great attitude and commitment along with all my other players. For once, here was our team:-

M. Cousins, D. Cross, M. Paine, R. King, E. Cussons, M. Lundridge, A. Fredericks, M. Cross, D. Wareham, M. Mbiyeye, C. Hughes, A. Daniels, S. Opaka, T. Benjamin.

Remember some of those names for future reference!

I have only been U17s manager since the start of the new season and I would like to thank all those people who have aided me in my progress. People like Micky Cook, Adrian Webster, Theresa Lock, Geraint Williams, Brian Owen and of course Phil Parkinson.

I would also like to pay a special tribute to all the players I have coached and who have played for me this year.

I wish all happiness for 2004,

Joe Dunne

U17s South East Conference Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Gd	Pts
QPR	17	13	4	0	62	18+44	43	
Brighton & HA	17	13	0	4	49	21+28	39	
Cambridge Utd	18	11	3	4	41	16+25	36	
COLCHESTER UTD	18	8	6	4	40	32 +8	30	
Portsmouth	18	7	5	6	34	32 +2	26	
Southend Utd	16	7	3	6	37	30 +7	24	
Rushden & D	17	6	6	5	32	37 -5	24	
Luton Town	15	7	0	8	36	24 +12	21	
Oxford Utd	17	6	2	9	27	45 -18	20	
Gillingham	17	4	5	8	26	44 -18	17	
Brentford	15	4	4	7	24	30 -6	16	
Wycombe Wdrs	16	3	7	6	26	48 -22	16	
Leyton Orient	18	2	3	13	26	57 -31	9	
Northampton Tn	17	2	2	13	22	48 -26	8	

Fixtures 2003/04

AUGUST

9th	Gillingham	Do-0
16th	Portsmouth	D1-1
23rd	Southend	L1-4

SEPTEMBER

6th	Rushden & Diamonds	D3-3
13th	Brentford	D3-3
20th	QPR	D1-1
27th	Wycombe Wanderers	D2-2

OCTOBER

4th	Oxford United	L2-3
11th	Luton Town	W2-0
18th	Northampton Town	W5-1
25th	Leyton Orient	W4-1

NOVEMBER

1st	Cambridge United	W3-0
8th	Brighton & HA	L1-4
15th	QPR	L1-6
22nd	Wycombe Wanderers	W6-1
29th	Oxford United	W2-1

DECEMBER

6th	Luton Town	W1-0
13th	Northampton Town	W2-0

JANUARY

10th	Leyton Orient	(h)
17th	Cambridge United	(a)
24th	Brighton & HA	(h)
31st	Gillingham	(h)

FEBRUARY

7th	Portsmouth	(a)
14th	Southend United	(h)
21st	Rushden & Diamonds	(a)
28th	Brentford	(h)

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We took on Southend just under two weeks ago in our latest league match and it was an extremely disappointing day.

Many times this season, I have mentioned that it is not necessarily all about winning at youth level, but more how the players perform during the course of a match. The performance is the most important thing but, arguably, if you perform well individually and collectively, it normally follows that a decent result is the end product.

At the Southend game, I was very disappointed at the boys' application because it was so below par. I've seen a little bit of this before during the season and its not a pleasing thing. Fair play to Southend, though, they worked hard and were up for the challenge of beating the team at the top of the table.

We did not meet them halfway in terms of effort, commitment and enthusiasm and ended up getting what we deserved from the game. It was a very inept performance and, once Southend had taken the lead, it was a game we didn't look like getting back into.

We lost the chance to establish ourselves and achieve something before 2004 kicked in, because three points last Saturday would have secured top spot in our Youth Alliance table.

I hope the boys have thought about that performance and my only positive that I could

“THE PROBLEM IS THAT THOSE THAT UNDERPERFORMED AGAINST SOUTHEND ARE DENYING OTHERS THE CHANCE TO SHOW WHAT THEY CAN DO...”



Fixtures 2003/04

AUGUST

9th	Southend United	W5-1
16th	Gillingham	W2-1
23rd	Brighton & HA	W4-1

SEPTEMBER

6th	Brentford	W1-0
13th	Portsmouth	Do-0
27th	Wycombe Wanderers	W4-2

OCTOBER

11th	Gillingham (YA Cup 1)	Lo-2
15th	Chelmsford City (FAYC)	Lo-1
25th	Brentford	Lo-2

NOVEMBER

1st	Portsmouth	Do-0
8th	Leyton Orient	W2-0
15th	Wycombe Wanderers	W2-0
30th	Leyton Orient	W2-0

DECEMBER

13th	Southend United	(a)
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JANUARY

10th	Gillingham	(h)
24th	Brighton & HA	(a)

FEBRUARY

14th	Merit Division Fixture	
21st	Merit Division Fixture	
28th	Merit Division Fixture	

MARCH

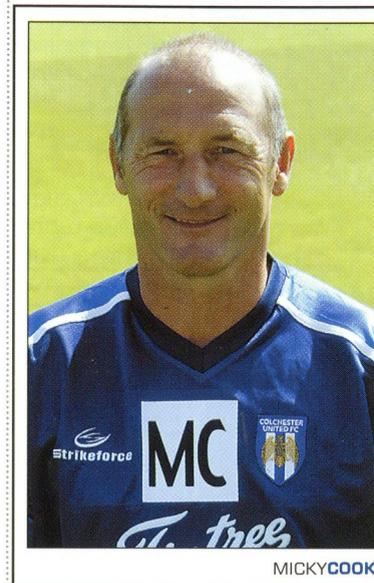
13th	Merit Division Fixture	
20th	Merit Division Fixture	
27th	Merit Division Fixture	

APRIL

10th	Merit Division Fixture	
17th	Merit Division Fixture	
24th	Merit Division Fixture	

U19s South East Conference Table

	Pld	W	D	L	F	A	Gd	Pts
COLCHESTER UTD	12	7	3	2	21	10	11	24
Brighton & HA	13	6	5	2	16	11	5	23
Brentford	13	5	3	5	18	16	2	18
Gillingham	11	5	2	4	24	15	9	17
Portsmouth	12	4	5	3	19	13	6	17
Southend Utd	13	3	4	6	18	33	-15	13
Wycombe Wdrs	12	2	5	5	18	25	-7	11
Leyton Orient	12	2	3	7	13	24	-11	9



MICKYCOOK

take out of the game was that Phil wasn't there to see how we'd played on the day. If they learn, it has been a worthwhile exercise, but my worry is that not all will learn.

The problem is that those that underperformed against Southend are denying others the chance to show what they can do and I don't really want to see that sort of display again. We came in on the Sunday to discuss things, because if things aren't working out, you have to work harder to put things right.

On Saturday, we had an in-house game against the U17s, where we were looking to get back in the saddle as quick as we can. This was a chance to see a few triallists and potential scholars or apprentices for next season. I'm looking forward to a very competitive game and we hope we can get a good performance under our belts.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all those who have continued to support us in the season so far. They all do wonderful things - from parents giving their valuable time to Allan Berry and Smart Energy, our sponsors and Archie Christie of Drakes Group.

I would also like to wish all our supporters a very Merry Christmas and a blinding New Year. Well done to the first team boys for what they have given us so far - they have provided a great example to follow and it sets standards for the younger lads to follow. Here's hoping it is a really outstanding 2004!

Micky Cook



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Our Hospitality Lounge is once again full this afternoon as businesses and supporters alike make the most of our Festive Bangers & Mash afternoon here at Layer Road.

As well as some familiar faces, there are also some new visitors to the home of Colchester United today and we are pleased to welcome everybody to our Boxing Day match against Luton Town.

Enjoying the matchday hospitality this afternoon - again ably provided by Chenery's Catering - we have Mr & Mrs Steve Absolon and their guests, Terry Ponder and his guests as well as Mr & Mrs Combes, who have brought along a party of Luton Town supporters to watch the match from our Vice Presidents Area.



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- Sponsorship includes: presentation on the pitch of a match souvenir of the day; logo on front cover, recognition and advertising copy in the match-day magazine, tannoy announcements etc.

Match Sponsors will have the opportunity to present the Man of the Match with their own special gift.

CELEBRATING A BIRTHDAY OR AN EVENT?

- Welcome drink and complimentary programme
- Best seats in the Vice Presidents Area
- Three course meal with wine
- Half time refreshment
- Fully licensed bar
- Vote for Man of the Match
- Matchday magazine recognition
- Tannoy announcements
- After match access to meet & socialise in the Players Bar
- £55.00 plus vat per person (tables of four, six or eight)



SPONSORSHIP 2003/2004

Thank you to all the companies and individuals listed below for their matchday sponsorship this season

DATE	OPPONENTS	MATCHDAY SPONSOR
Jul 22	Charlton Athletic	Flare Recruitment/Fred.Olsen Travel
Jul 26	Ipswich Town	Falcon/Chassis Cab/Colchester Institute
Aug 12	Plymouth Argyle	Tamdown/Allan Jones
Aug 15	Swindon Town	Ali Hall/Kent Blaxhill
Aug 26	Bristol City	Tiptree/Wilkin & Sons
Sep 6	QPR	Peter Richbell & Co./Glenn Harrington
Sep 13	Brighton & HA	Danes/Spa/Peter Best
Sep 27	Bournemouth	Colchester Institute/Studio Executive Cars
Sep 30	Brentford	Falcon/Greg McCausland
Oct 11	Blackpool	Flare Recruitment/Mike Baker/H2O
Oct 25	Chesterfield	Inside Business/Nick Thurston
Nov 8	Oxford United	Tolway Fixings/Nick Pickford
Nov 15	Sheffield W'day	Beaumont Seymour/Accountancy Additions /Design & Print Integration
Nov 29	Plymouth Argyle	Smart Energy
Dec 6	Aldershot Town	Sodexo Defence Services
Dec 13	Oldham Athletic	CJ Firminger/AdConnect
Dec 26	Luton Town	Greene King/Cherry Tree Garage
Jan 10	Barnsley	Lexden Installations
Jan 24	Port Vale	ADP Resourcing
Jan 31	Tranmere Rovers	Atspeed Distributors
Feb 20	Grimsby Town	Tamdown/Cadmans
Mar 2	Stockport County	H.P. Morris Electrical
Mar 6	Hartlepool United	
Mar 16	Wycombe Wanderers	Falcon/Greene King
Mar 27	Peterborough United	Coca Cola/Wildings
Apr 10	Notts County	Allan Jones
Apr 17	Wrexham	AdConnect
May 1	Rushden & Diamonds	Kent Blaxill/Tamdown



Good afternoon and welcome to Layer Road for this afternoon's Boxing Day fixture with Luton Town.

I hope that all of you had a wonderful Christmas and I wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

A Big Thank You!

2003 is drawing to a very successful conclusion and many businesses are finding it to be an exciting time to be involved at Colchester United Football Club.

New businesses and old are making good use of our hospitality facilities and we would like to thank every single one of them for their support.

We hope to see them all again in the New Year and if you want to get involved do not hesitate to get in touch!

How you can get involved...

In the Commercial Department, we are always on the look out for new business for Colchester United. If you would like to become more involved, there are many ways in which you can become part of our sponsorship scene and the excellent atmosphere that currently surrounds the club.

Prices range to suit all budgets and you may wish to consider one of the following options:-

- Individual Player Sponsorships for both our First Team & Youth Team
- Programme Advertising from an 1/8th page to Full Page
- Match and Match Ball Sponsorships for a

- fixture of your choice
- Hospitality Packages for individuals or celebratory parties
- Perimeter Advertising at special discounted prices
- Advertising on our literature and "flyers" - i.e. 50/50 Draw Tickets, Team Sheets etc.

If you are interested, please give me a call on 01206 715306

Julie Ager - Commercial Department
Tel: 01206 715306

50/50 DRAW

Building on the success of this season's new 50-50 draw we have decided to introduce a second prize from the next home game against Barnsley.

A second prize will be paid every time the lads score before half time.

The more goals scored means more prizes for lucky winners. So let's get right behind the team and hope for lots of goals, look out for the list of potential prizes around the ground.

Congratulations to the 50/50 draw winner against Oldham Athletic, who was Mr E. Hogan.



MATCHBALL SPONSORS V OLDHAM - PETER DEVANEY OF MATCHBALL SPONSORS FOR THE OLDHAM GAME, AD CONNECT MEDIA LTD RECEIVES HIS OFFICIAL MATCH SHIRT FROM U'S MASCOT EDDIE THE EAGLE.

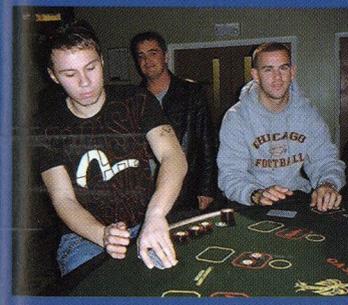
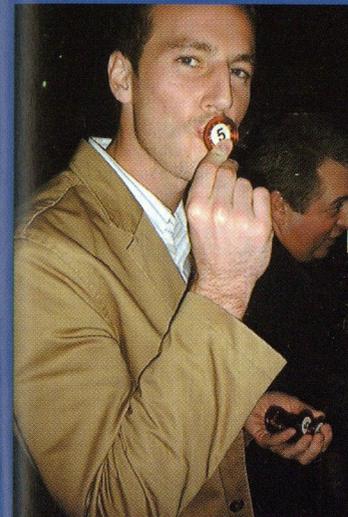


MATCH SPONSORS V OLDHAM - CHRIS FIRMINGER OF MATCH SPONSORS FOR THE OLDHAM GAME, C.J FIRMINGER BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS, RECEIVES HIS OFFICIAL MATCH SHIRT FROM U'S MASCOT EDDIE THE EAGLE.



CASINO NIGHT

Colchester United players were celebrating their recent win over Oldham Athletic with a night at the casino last Monday at the U's latest social event. Hosted at Route Nightclub in Colchester, there were a host of traditional casino tables available for the guests to play on and the evening was a roaring success with a number of prizes being won. Keep an eye out for our next one!



VICE PRESIDENTS 2003/2004

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Mrs. S. Absolon	Mr. P. Gardiner	Mr. P. Joyce	Mr. M. Roddy
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Become a Vice President!

Now the season is well underway, we are able to reduce the cost of becoming a Vice President - we only have a handful of available places so now is the time to think about treating yourself.

Enjoy the match with a bit of extra luxury, with a pre and post match bar in a non-smoking environment.

Guests are joined by the sponsors before and after the match as well as by the players and their guests.

Membership to the Vice Presidents Club gives you a seat adjacent to the Directors Box, whilst the Hospitality Area and Sponsors Lounge provide a ideal venue. You will be treated to a pre match drink and, with complimentary half time refreshments and matchday magazine, you can enjoy the banter and vote for the Man of the Match.

Vice Presidents this season will also have unlimited use of the formal environment of the Directors Guest Lounge as well as the informal but

smart sponsors areas.

A Vice Presidents committee this season will be organising executive away trips and several social functions.

You are assured of a warm and friendly welcome to the Vice Presidents Club, leaving well after the crowds are gone.

For full information on how you can become a member of the Vice Presidents Club, call Julie Ager in the Commercial Department on 01206 715306.



man of the match

The matchday sponsors and the Vice Presidents Club will be voting for the Man of the Match throughout the season. The winning player receives a meal for two, kindly donated by the Old King Coel Pub, Ipswich Road, Colchester.

MATCH

- Plymouth Argyle
- Swindon Town
- Bristol City
- QPR
- Brighton & Hove Albion
- AFC Bournemouth
- Brentford
- Blackpool
- Chesterfield
- Oxford United
- Sheffield Wednesday
- Plymouth Argyle
- Aldershot Town
- Oldham Athletic

MOTM

- Craig Fagan
- Simon Brown
- Scott McGleish
- Sam Stockley
- Wayne Andrews
- Sam Stockley
- Craig Fagan
- Craig Fagan
- Scott Fitzgerald
- Sam Stockley
- Thomas Pinault
- Thomas Pinault
- Wayne Andrews
- Thomas Pinault

R/UP

- Thomas Pinault
- Kem Izzet
- Pat Baldwin
- Scott Fitzgerald
- Scott Fitzgerald
- Karl Duguid
- Rowan Vine
- Scott Fitzgerald
- Wayne Andrews
- Liam Chilvers
- Liam Chilvers
- Craig Fagan
- Karl Duguid
- Karl Duguid



This time last season, Scott McGleish had just three goals to his name and Colchester United were sliding towards the bottom four in a run of form that would eventually cost former boss Steve Whitton his job.

Twelve months later, things could not be more different for both the striker and the team as a whole. Despite not playing every game this season, McGleish has already notched ten goals this season and looks on course for a personal best in a season,

whilst the team are laying the foundations for strong play-off push in 2004.

McGleish admits to being happy with his lot at the moment and told the matchday magazine: "It took me a long while to get going last year - it was the end of October before I got my first goal and I ended up with nine goals in the end. We're now coming up to Christmas and I've already got ten and surpassed last year already. My target now is to beat my career best in a season, which is 15 goals."

29-year-old McGleish has been the U's top scorer for the past two seasons and is



SCOTT MCGLEISH - CELEBRATES ONE OF HIS TEN GOALS THIS SEASON

well placed for the second half of the campaign. The spring heeled striker is level pegging with new boy Wayne Andrews at the top of the scoring charts at Layer Road and is aiming to be there once May arrives.

The popular front man admits that the fluency with which the team is scoring is largely down to the fact that there are a number of potent strikers at the club, all keeping each other on their toes.

And, despite changes in the starting line-up from time to time, McGleish has been pleased with how the forwards have performed in 2003. He added: "Last year I was in and out of the team and, once the forwards hadn't scored in the first four or five games, things were changed around rapidly.

"This year, we have had a settled side and, even though the forwards have been in and out to an extent, whoever has played, the partnership has done well. To be successful, you need to be able to bring in players who are going to do well and keep the other person out of the team or on their toes.

Competition

"That competition for places has been really important for us so far this season. To stay in the team, you have got to play well. And, as a forward, you will be judged on whether you are playing well or not by how many goals you are scoring."

If judging the attacking unit of the team is going to be based on goals, then it has to be said that they are definitely doing their job in 2003/4. Whilst there have been games where the front line has been kept quiet by the opposition, there is no doubting that Colchester United's forwards are one of the most potent attacking forces in the division.

If you include Rowan Vine, who has spent most of his appearances on the left wing, in the attacking sector of the team, four players have notched 32 goals to date this season. However, whilst that record is impressive, McGleish is confident that there is more to come from the front line - and the players behind them - in the second half of the campaign.

"I think you have to look at the number of goals we've scored and have to say we've done OK so far this season. Even with Rowan playing out on the wing, he is still very much an attacking player. I think we have been strong throughout this season.



"We're creating a lot on the deck, but crossing-wise, I don't think we're creating as much as we normally do. It is strange because that is what we were good at before, but we've now brought a little bit more play into our game and getting a lot more clear cut chances. That is definitely helping us keep those goal tallies ticking over."

"Elsewhere in the team, Doogie has two, Thomas has one and Kem's not scored yet. As well as that, no defenders have scored yet, but I'm confident that will change over the course of the season. And, whilst the strikers are scoring as regularly as they are, it's not the problem it could be and things are still going well for us."

Key

Whilst McGleish is hopeful that those behind him can start chipping in with goals, he knows that he too has to play his own part in the other half of the field. Although he has been freed of some of his defensive responsibilities compared to last season, his aerial ability still makes him a key player in the U's own penalty area.

"I still come back for corners and free kicks and it is something I have to live with," he continued. "I am a good marker and good in the air, so I have my responsibilities. I am still working hard and the gaffer has given us very specific jobs to do - I for one have to make sure I keep the deepest midfielder under pressure."

McGleish cites the U's cup success as a measure of the progress that the team as a whole has made this year and knows that it will require continued potency up front in 2004 if Phil Parkinson's side are going to be able to hold onto what they have achieved in the opening half of this season.

Asked what the forwards are aiming for in the rest of 2003/4, he said: "We just have to see how many goals we can get really! It is really important to carry on what we have been doing in the first half of the season. We currently have two players on ten goals and one not far behind, but we're still not in the top goalscorers list. We perhaps haven't scored as many goals as other teams, but that's the team in general, not just the forwards.

"That said whilst we're winning with 1-0s and 2-1s and we can stay up the top of the table, we're going to be a threat to the rest of the division!"



SCOTT MCGLEISH - OUR SPRING HEELED STRIKER



LUTON GOAL LOOKED WELL OFF-SIDE

U'S 1 LUTON TOWN 1

*From Essex County Newspapers
Friday, April 24 1964*

A GOAL for Luton that looked blatantly offside and a lucky deflected one for Colchester to equalise.

That, in a nutshell, was the story of this first ever Football League outing between these two clubs at Layer Road on Saturday. Luton had enough chances in the first half to have taken a commanding lead and, the U's had the better of the exchanges in the second half.

But at the end it was yet another draw? Colchester's 19th of the season. Luton's lead in the 66th minute was dramatic in its suddenness. One moment Billy Stark was falling in the Town's penalty area and in the next the visitors' tireless 19-year-old centre-forward John O'Rourke was dashing through after a big-boot clearance.

O'Rourke appeared to be yards offside when the ball was hit upfield. But he was allowed to go on and he brought his goals total to 19 in 20 matches with a

well-placed shot on the run.

In the 74th minute the U's equalised in fortunate fashion. Former England goalkeeper Ron Baynham had a shot from Colchester leader Martyn King covered, but it was deflected by a Luton defender. Baynham was caught completely off-balance by the change of direction, and the ball bounced into the net too far away for him to reach it.

The Colchester defence benefited from having Keith Rutter and Duncan Forbes restored to their old positions at centre-half and right-back respectively.

But the team looked better still in the second half when an injury to Derek Trevis caused Bobby Hill to move to inside-forward and John Docherty to fall back into the half-line.

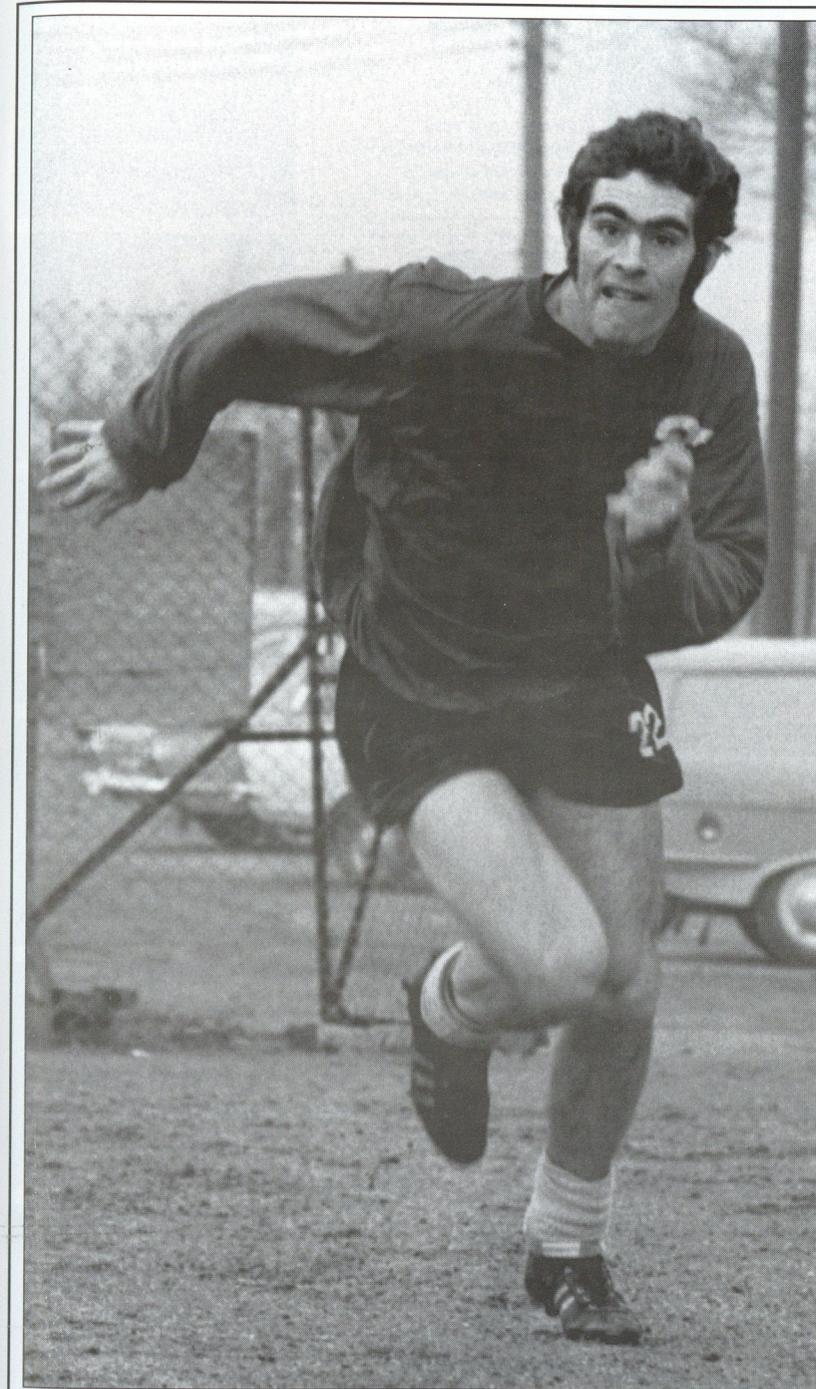
Docherty was much happier to be out of the front forward-line, and Hill really came into the game in his former role.

U's: Percy Ames, Duncan Forbes, John Fowler, Roy McCrohan, Keith Rutter, John Docherty, Michael Grice, Bobby Hill, Martyn King, Billy Stark, Peter Wright.

Attendance: 3,913

Arthur Wood

"In the 74th minute the U's equalised in fortunate fashion."



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**Want to sponsor Jamie?
Call Julie Ager
on 01206 715 306**



In the latest of our alphabetical series on Colchester United we take a look at the letter M and find one of the biggest characters in the U's history.

Masters, Mike
Became Colchester United's first American signing following a trial in November 1991. The 6ft 3in forward became a popular forward in the U's successful Conference campaign that season, scoring some very important goals including a hat-trick in the last league match of the season against Barrow and finding the net in the 3-1 FA Trophy final win over Witton Albion at Wembley. In total, Masters scored eight goals from 29 games but when Colchester returned to the Football League the following season the American was denied a work permit from the Home Office, being forced to continue his football with non-League Newbury Town.

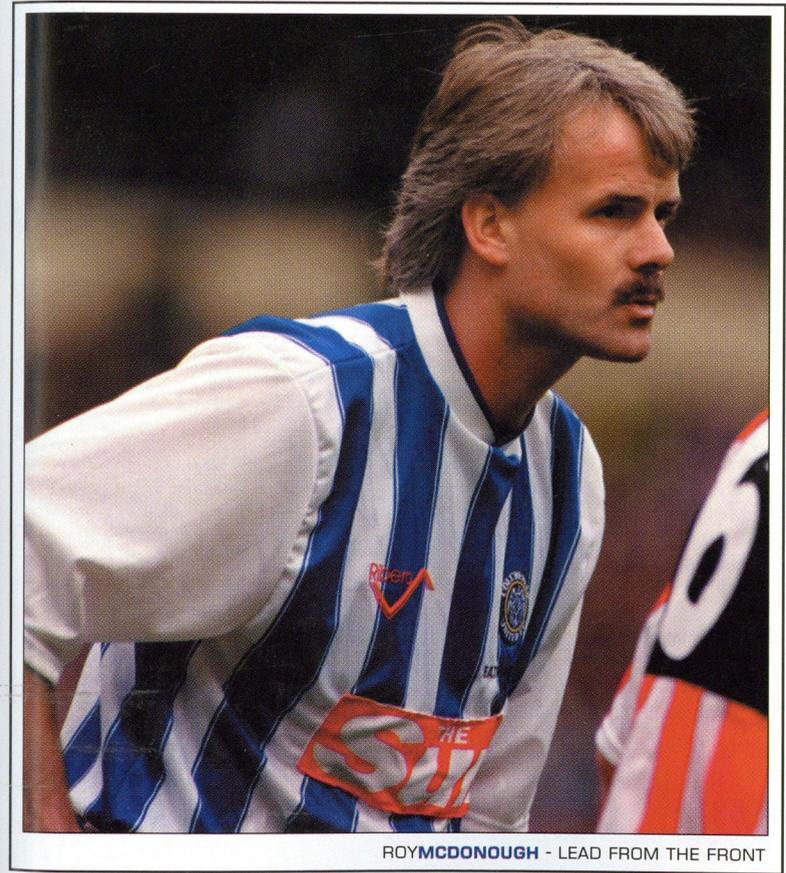
McCurley, Kevin
Having signed from Liverpool in 1952, Kevin McCurley went on to clock-up one of the best goal scoring records of his era for the U's. McCurley stayed at Layer Road for eight years, leaving in 1960 and his tally of 100 League and Cup goals from 237 appearances is equalled by few.

McDonough, Roy
Big Roy is undoubtedly one of the biggest characters in Colchester United's history. The larger than life centre forward took over as manager during his second spell as player with the U's ahead of the second season in the Conference, one of the club's most exciting seasons in living memory. McDonough lead from the front as the Essex side went head to head with Wycombe Wanderers for the Conference title. It could not have been a much closer race and Big Roy's side had plenty of goals in them as the championship race went to the wire.

With one game to go both clubs were level on points and it was McDonough's side, winning 5-0 against Barrow on the last day of the season who took the title on goal difference with the boss coming off the bench to score the final goal.

The U's then went to Wembley and won the FA Trophy against Witton Albion in front of 27,000 supporters. But McDonough also brought infamy to the U's, back in the Football League in 1992/3 the player manager and chairman, Gordon Parker, were called in front of a Disciplinary Commission because of the number of yellow cards being picked up. Roy was described in the national tabloids as the 'dirtiest footballer in the country,' not just because of his record for picking up red cards through his career but also his off-field antics.

Whatever Roy did away from the pitch though he remains one of the most celebrated managers in the club's history. The first season back in the League saw Colchester finish just four points adrift of the play-offs but after finishing 17th in Division Three the following season, McDonough was on his way out of Layer Road, leaving those at the club with some unforgettable times to look back on.



ROY MCDONOUGH - LEAD FROM THE FRONT

McGavin, Steve
Silky Steve McGavin is one of the most successful players to come out of the non-League to play for Colchester United. The talented forward signed from Sudbury Town in 1990 and caused all manner of problems to defences up and down the country. In January 1994 Barry Fry took McGavin to Birmingham City for a fee of £150,000 but a masterstroke from Steve Whitton in the 1999/2000 season saw Silky return. His second spell at the club proved to produce some very entertaining football as he linked up with Karl Duguid and Lomana Lua Lua to great effect, helping to preserve the U's Division Two status with some intelligent, free-flowing football.

McGleish, Scott
Currently in his second spell with Colchester United, after helping the U's to the Division Three play-offs in the 1995/6 season, Scott McGleish has been the club's top scorer for the past two seasons. His impressive ability in the air helped the well-travelled striker to a career best of 15 goals in a season in 2001/2 and he was joint top-scorer with Joe Keith, scoring nine last season. Reached 100 career goals in the game against Bristol City this season and the Layer Road crowd favourite is now looking to record a career best this season with ten goals on the board before Christmas.

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LOCTITE

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As 2003 draws to a close, the Ladies team have experienced a complete turnaround in fortunes in just twelve short months...

In December last year, the club were enjoying their first season in the South East Combination League and had managed to secure a respectable mid table position, proving their right to be in the higher league.

The next four months saw the team go from strength to strength as they put together a string of fine home wins and then finished off the 2003 season with a fantastic 3-1 win at Layer Road against Gillingham Ladies in April.

New Faces

After the summer break, there were lots of new faces in the senior camp as a number of last seasons Centre of Excellence players looked to make the transition from girls' to women's football. Youngsters Ami Warnes, Vicky Beales, Jamie Newstead, Nuala Schwartz and Christine Harding were all successful in securing a place in the first team squad, with a number of additions to the reserve team also strengthening the club as a whole - Aimee Drane, Sharon Cheeseman, Martine Harman and Katie Isborne have all played regularly for the U's second string.

Bitter blows

Expectations were high as the new season loomed, however the first team were to be dealt a number of bitter blows even before the first ball was kicked. Four experienced players decided to move on to pastures new just two weeks before the start of the season, with centre half Debbie Green and striker Danii Hoy leaving to join close rivals Stowmarket, England International defender Darel Poole also left to join newly promoted Watford, whilst midfielder Becky Garner joined Barking.

These losses so close to the start of the season effectively stripped out the experienced backbone of the team, leaving just five players in the squad of 18 over the age of 20.



LAUREN RICHARDSON - ONE OF MANY DEPARTURES

As if this wasn't enough, goalkeeper Louise Murphy was badly injured in training just two days before the opening game and the U's were forced to play the next five games with outfield players, Jane Swift and Jamie Newstead as stand in keepers.

Fourteen losses

Thus the losing run, which has extended to fourteen in a row started, and there have been more casualties along the way. Captain Lauren Richardson, left the club in October following difficulties with the management and the superb promising prospect of centre half Nuala Schwartz never materialised as she was forced to play football more locally in Cambridge.

With just one senior signing in the form of Sarah Jones from Crystal Palace, an almost impossible struggle has emerged for the Ladies team. With the club now sitting bottom of the league on nil points, they have managed just one win in eighteen games this season so far and have been knocked out of three cup competitions.

New Year, Better Fortunes?

Will the New Year bring better fortunes for the squad? Well, the last few games

have shown a distinct improvement on the pitch and the losses have always been so narrow, 1-0 to Denham, just 2-0 to league leaders Crystal Palace....

Despite this, the mood in the Ladies camp is good and team spirit is intact, the squad has bonded in the face of such adversity and it is clear to our supporters that this shows on the pitch with a "Do or Die Attitude" right to the final whistle.

Thanks to our Supporters

We would like to thank each and everyone of you who have come to watch us through thick and thin this year. Teams do not like to visit the Ladies home ground at Wivenhoe as we boast the highest number of fans and loudest support of any of the teams in the league, where the other clubs generally play in front of just one man and his dog.

We know how lucky we are and we hope to see you all again in the New Year. For now the ladies club would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2004.

If you would like to find out more about women's and girls football simply visit our website at www.culfc.com or telephone Ben Bartlett on 01206 572378.

Sparky



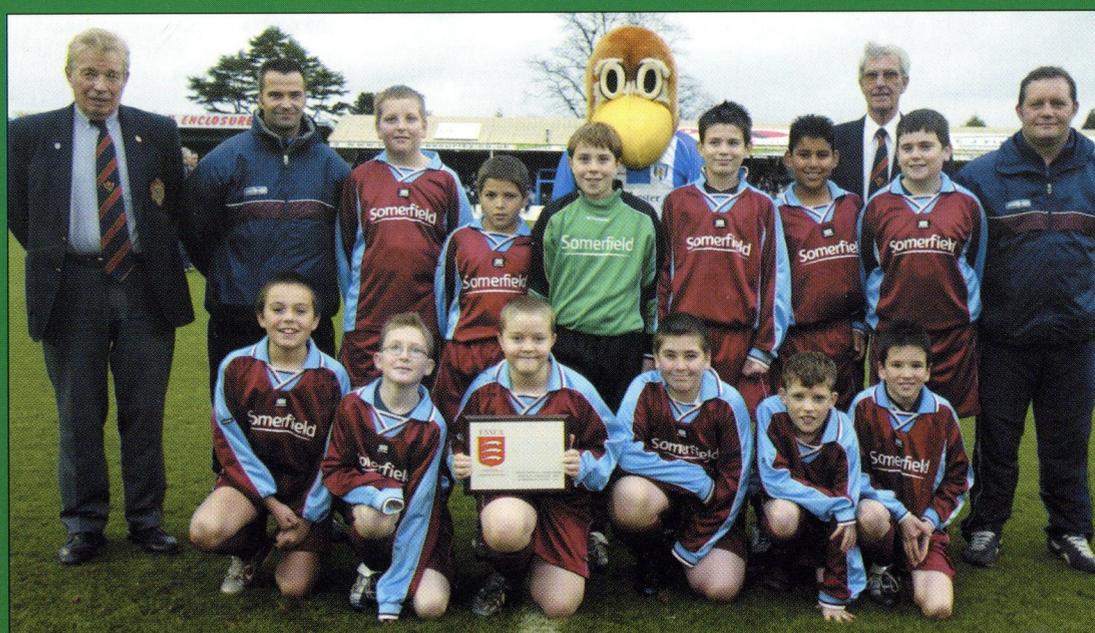
Hello all you Eagles and Eaglets!



Well, I hope you all got what you wanted for Christmas this year! I know that Santa was definitely a busy man this time, because he had asked Eddie to help drop some presents off in the Colchester area. Did you find any feathers in your garden? Maybe Eddie has dropped by!

The players will be hoping to give you the perfect Christmas present this afternoon with a great win against our visitors Luton Town. Did you know that they all had to come in for training yesterday? I wonder if they had to wait until they got back to open their presents!

Enjoy the game and have a great New Year party - I'll see you back here for the Barnsley game in a fortnight!



WHAT A DAY FOR ELMDEN!

Christmas came early for the players of Elmden Rovers U11s B team who were lucky winners in this year's Essex County F.A. Fair Play awards.

The boys from Clacton were recently nominated winners by

the Essex County F.A. and in conjunction with the Community Sports Trust, the lucky lads attended the recent game against Oldham Athletic on a special VIP match day package.

Here's hoping that Santa heard that they were good boys and brought them something nice this year!



Nosey Probes The Programme Producers!

With school breaking up for the Christmas holidays, our resident Kids Reporter Nosey Parker has been down to Layer Road again to do another of his interviews.

This time he spoke to the U's Media Department boys - Matt Hudson and Colin Wood. And, by the looks of things, they just wouldn't stop talking!

When did you start supporting the U's?

Matt H: The season that we went down to the Conference, but I think the first season I really started to attend games regularly was about 1994/5 and have been coming since then! We've certainly had some exciting times compared to many lower division clubs!

Colin W: For about ten years now and I start to watch regularly when Steve Wignall was in charge.

How long have you worked in the Media Department for?

Matt H: I joined the club after leaving Football365.com in March 2001, so this is my third full season at the club. It's amazing the amount of changes that have occurred during that time - there are hardly any of the same players left!

Colin W: I have been here for nearly two years now. Before I worked for Colchester United, I worked for a local newspaper up in the Liverpool area and did news reports as well as writing on the football teams that play up in that area.

What sort of things do you have to do?

Matt H: Firstly, I make sure that the club's website is right up to date with all the latest news. But there is so much other stuff to do! I also write the matchday magazine and make sure that when local and national

press want to do interviews with the players, we make it as easy as possible for them to get their job done. Myself and Colin do a lot of the PR stuff as well as media side of things.

Colin W: My main responsibility is to get U's World produced each day. That means interviewing the players who are making the news and then putting it together on our video software. But I also write the programme with Matt and organise the players' visits to schools, hospitals, fairs and so on.

Is it hard trying to find ways to improve the programme and the website?

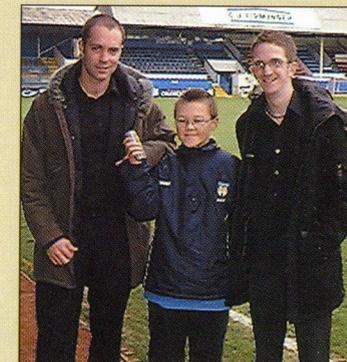
Matt H: This is my third season doing the programme and the website and I think it has got better each time. The secret is to listen to what the supporters have to say about it, because after all you are the ones reading and buying it! The problem is, we're only half way through this season and we are already wondering how to make it better for next year!

Colin W: What we tend to do is look at what other clubs are doing and see how we can use or adapt those ideas ourselves. By picking up the best ideas and also listening to supporter suggestions, we think we get the best combination possible.

What's your job on match days?

Matt H: I look after the press box - making sure that local reporters and the reporters for the visiting club have everything they need to do their job. I also type up the match report for the website as the game goes along, so it is on the site just after the final whistle!

Colin W: On a matchday, I do a lot of filming for U's World. I film shots of the crowd, pieces of action during the game and then film the post match interviews with Parky



and the players who have had the biggest impact. That is then used for Monday's bulletin.

How many products such as season videos do you try and produce?

Matt H: This year's season review video was the first that we had produced ourselves and it's gone down really well. We also have done the calendar this year and, now that we have done one of each, we know how to do them and it will be a quicker thing in future!

Colin W: It was quite a long process putting together the season review video, but now we know it has sold well, we will try and do more in the future. Watch this space!

How do you think the U's will do this season?

Matt H: I think we can stay where we are and get a play-off place. Mind you, I still think our silverware will be in the LDV Vans Trophy this year!

Colin W: I think we've got a real chance of the play-offs this season and it's great that the club is enjoying a long awaited Cup run.

GOT A PHOTO, A DRAWING OR A LETTER?

The Christmas holidays are here and there's no doubt you are up to some exciting things. Why not send in some pictures of you in your new Colchester United kit or put a drawing in the post. If you would like to see your art work on these glossy pages make sure to send in some festive pictures to Eddie and Claire!

For all the latest on the U's, as well as the best in music and fashion tips tune into Dream100.2FM

CLAIRE x



COMMUNITY CLUB AWARD

THE YEAR 2003 HAS BEEN ONE A VERY EXCITING TIME TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE COMMUNITY SPORTS TRUST, WE COLLECTED SO MANY AWARDS ALONG THE WAY WE THOUGHT WE WOULD TAKE A LOOK BACK AT THE LAST 12 EVENTFUL MONTHS...

January 2003
A Community Club Award

We were the first organisation linked to a professional club to receive the prestigious Community Club Award.

The FA Community Club project, in partnership with McDonalds, is aimed at developing the structure and quality of clubs and is designed to recognise clubs, which provide coaching and opportunities to all areas of their local community. It also builds on the foundations of The FA Charter Standard Clubs Scheme.

February 2003
Bonnie Is Big Personality

Young female football star Bonnie Horwood, aged just 15, received her award for the "Young Female Sports Personality of the Year". The awards ceremony held at Moot Hall in Colchester, in February and saw her voted winner by the "Colchester and District Sports Council" from a selection of the best sports stars in the district.

March 2003

International call up for CUCST's Steve
Steve Bartlett was appointed England's assistant coach and completed his first weekend coaching at the England Cerebral Palsy Football training camp held at Lilleshall.

Steve is thrilled to have been recommended for this prestigious post by the England Cerebral Palsy Technical Adviser Paul Harrison, and thoroughly enjoyed his first weekend's training camp.

High Sheriff Award

We were awarded the High Sheriff Award for our work in the community.

April 2003

Leanne Shoots for her Country
Young U's player Leanne Cullivan, at just 10 years old, was selected to represent her country at the International U11s mini Basketball tournament held in Madeira, Portugal.

May 2003

Bartlett Picks Up County Accolade
Steve Bartlett was honoured for his commitment to disability football at the Essex County Council's Sports Coach of the Year Awards on April 11th.

Steve, who manages Colchester United Pan Disability and became coach of the England Cerebral Palsy team earlier in the year, was



OFFICIAL SPONSORS



the winner of the Coaching Disabled Sports People category and received his award at the Essex Records Office from Great Britain Jujitsu team member Carrie Bywater.

August 2003

We were awarded the FA Charter Standard for our Holiday Course programmes

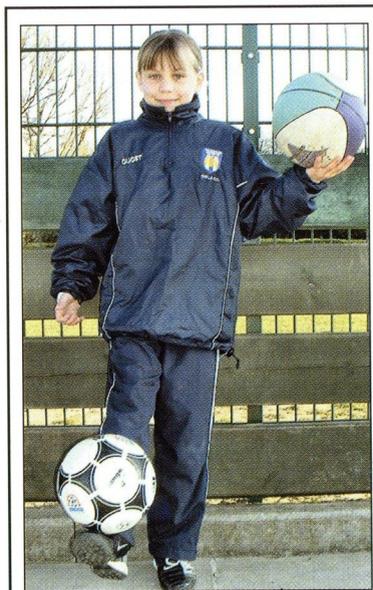
September 2003

Basketball Coach Mark Lloyd was appointed manager for the Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball squad. The Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball Association appointed 36 year old Mark as manager of the Men's team for the next year's Paralympics in Athens.

October 2003

Bradshaw Wins Special Social Entrepreneur of the Year award

Steve Bradshaw, Chief Executive of Colchester United Community Sports Trust, was awarded Ernst & Young's, National 'Special' Social



LEANNE CULLIVAN - BASKETBALL HONOUR



LOCAL RECOGNITION - THE HIGH SHERIFF'S AWARD

Entrepreneur Of The Year. The National judging panel wished to recognise Steve's leadership of the Colchester United Community Sports Trust as a blueprint, which they would recommend for replication across the country. They also acknowledged the impact that the Trust has had on so many peoples lives, using sport as a tool for good, increasing educational opportunities, health awareness and assisting the personal development of young people.



STEVE BRADSHAW - ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

November 2003

The girls football programme sponsored by Coca Cola and Sportsmatch came runners up in the Women and Girls Category at the annual Sportsmatch awards.

Organised by Ben Bartlett, head of football development at the trust, the sponsorship created girls under 10 and under 11 teams in the Essex Girls Football League and provided coaching and equipment. The £2,000 sponsorship was matched by Sportsmatch - which is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport through Sport England.

Success down to hard work

It seems there was hardly a month where we did not receive recognition in some form for our very many different sporting programmes and is a fitting testimony to the hard work and dedication of all staff at the Trust.

We would like to thank all of you who took part in our courses, clubs and events over the last year and wish you all a sporting and healthy 2004.

To find out more information about us and our sporting activities contact us at the Community Soccer Centre on 01206 572378 or visit our fantastic website at...

www.cucst.org.uk
www.cucst.org.uk
www.cucst.org.uk



PHIL PARKINSON SAYS...

"Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"



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a mountain of rock
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C.U.S.A.

Happy Boxing Day U's fans and may I wish you a seasonal welcome back to Layer Road as we take on our old friends from Luton Town.

No more festive cheer for them, I hope, after last season's 0-5 drubbing, but as always I expect it to be a close battle of wits between the two sides.

Well, did Santa Claus bring you all that you desire this Christmas? How many of you were unwrapping the new CUFC 2004 calendar yesterday morning? I know that I was, along with yet another Colchester United mug for the collection. You certainly know what you're going to get if you come round to mind for a cup of tea!

Just to take a quick look back to the Oldham match and I think that a round of applause is in order for Simon Brown, don't you? He was awesome between the sticks. Well done also to skipper Karl Duguid for injecting some much needed impetus to the U's display directly after half time.

I have to confess that I was half expecting the tiring Rowan Vine to be replaced just before he notched the winner, but you can never tell in football, can you?! Thankfully, his thunderbolt shifted our beloved U's into fifth place that evening.

It was also a pleasure to see former U's youth teamer Ernie Cooksey putting on a good show for Oldham, even if he was intent on getting

into trouble with the ref on many occasions. Scott McGleish's battered head still bears the bruises.

All in all, 2003 has been a tremendous year for the U's. Phil Parkinson must take the lion's share of the credit, but it's a team effort at this club, from the Chairman Peter Heard down to the scratchcard sellers. That's what a lot of us love about the club, don't you think?

There's plenty to look forward to as the year turns over. Who would have believed that Accrington Stanley would be our hosts in the FA Cup Third Round? If ever there was a fixture to capture the imagination, then surely this is the one.

Cracker

It is going to be a cracker of a fixture, and I truly hope that many of you will choose to travel there with the CUSA. I would love to fill at least a good couple of coaches that day, and if you would like to save on air/train fares of £50+, then why not give us a try? You do of course need to be a member to travel, but this will cost you only £3-£7 - makes sense, doesn't it!

A friend of mine has recommended their website for lots of useful information - www.accringtonstanley.co.uk - why not have a look?

With four away fixtures between now and the end of January, not only is it going to stretch those pennies, but it is also going to

Travel Details

SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER

QPR

COACH LEAVES LAYER ROAD AT 11.00 AM
Adult members £10
Concession members £8

SATURDAY 3 JANUARY

ACCRINGTON STANLEY FA CUP THIRD ROUND

COACH LEAVES LAYER ROAD AT 7.30 AM
Adult members £18
Concession members £16

SATURDAY 17 JANUARY

SWINDON TOWN

COACH LEAVES LAYER ROAD AT 9.30 AM
Adult members £15
Concession members £13

TUESDAY 20 JANUARY

NORTHAMPTON TOWN LDV VANS TROPHY

COACH LEAVES LAYER ROAD AT 3.45 PM
Adult members £10
Concession members £9

mean a lot of work for us so to help, please book as early as possible. We still have some seats on the coaches for QPR, but after today we cannot order anymore so once they're gone, they're gone - sorry!

Please call 07712 489305 or 07752 531600 (7pm to 10pm only) for coach bookings.

Party

To finish, I would like to truly thank everyone who came along to our CUSA Christmas party on December 13th. Thanks also for the kind feedback that we've received. It was a great evening and I hope that all enjoyed it as much as I did. After two or more hours on the dancefloor both myself and my dancing partner Judith Ost were spent forces. Oh, the aches and pains on Sunday morning!

Party, Geraint, Brian and Stuart also came along for a mingle amongst a very appreciative fans. Dear Phil tried not to pull his own ticket out of the raffle, but I guess that he didn't try hard enough! Well done and thanks very much, Phil.

Happy Christmas everyone, and in particular to our 500 CUSA members. Have a safe but enjoyable New Years Eve and I'll see you all in 2004.

Jon Burns



SIMON BROWN - EXCELLENT AGAINST OLDHAM



GROUND INFORMATION

GROUND NAME: Loftus Road Stadium
CAPACITY: 19,148 (all seated)
ADDRESS: South Africa Road, London, W12 7PA
MAIN TELEPHONE NO: 020-8743-0262

WHAT IS THE GROUND LIKE?

The ground has a compact feel, as it is totally enclosed, with supporters being close to the pitch. An unusual aspect of this ground is that all four stands are roughly the same height; their roofs meet at all four corners with no gaps. The South Africa Road Stand on one side of the ground has a larger upper tier compared to the lower tier, with a row of executive boxes running across the middle. There are a couple of supporting pillars in this stand.

The other side, the George Wimpey Stand, is single tiered, with a television gantry suspended below its roof. Both ends are similar looking two-tiered stands. There is a

R's factfile:

LAST FIVE RESULTS: WDWLW
LAST FIVE AT HOME: WWWW
TOP SCORER: Kevin Gallen - eight goals
LEAGUE POSITION: 2nd

RECENT NEWS: Like Colchester United, Queens Park Rangers are another side in Division Two who have made the most of a fully fit squad in recent weeks. Ian Holloway was recently voted football manager of the year by BBC London, ahead of the likes of Arsene Wenger and Claudio Ranieri and that says a lot about what is happening in Shepherd's Bush at the moment.

After reaching the play-off final last season, Holloway's men have been at the top of Division Two for much of this season, with Plymouth their main challengers. Rangers started the season showing their intent with a 5-0 home victory over Blackpool and a month later they visited Layer Road in what was one of the most entertaining matches featuring the U's this season, Paul Furlong scoring twice in a 2-2 draw.

The R's are determined to go one better than they did last year and look like strong contenders for automatic promotion this time. Holloway has also made it clear that he wants to return to Cardiff in 2004 to lift the LDV Vans Trophy, an area semi-final against Southend awaits in the New Year. And, with the Hoops having won their last six home games at Loftus Road, Colchester United will have their work cut-out to get a result from Saturday's trip.



LOFTUSROAD

small electric scoreboard at the away end of the ground, dividing the two tiers. The ground oozes character and there is no similar ground in the league. However, Loftus Road is starting to look tired, having had little recent investment.

WHERE WILL THE U'S FANS BE SITTING?

Away fans are situated in the two-tiered School End, where just over 3,000 fans can be accommodated. Normally only the lower tier is open (where 1,279 fans can sit), but if demand requires it, the upper tier (capacity 1,749) is also opened.

The stadium sometimes lacks a little in atmosphere and the legroom between rows of seats is often a little tight. There is normally quite a large police and steward presence at the ground. You should expect to be searched before you enter the away end. Food served within the ground is quite good and the service is prompt.

FANCY A PRE-MATCH PINT?

The Springbok right by the ground (near the ticket office) is recommended. Come out of White City Underground Station, go down the road right in front of the station; the Springbok is down on the left. The Green in Shepherd's Bush is also a popular choice and can be found by exiting Shepherd's Bush Underground Station, from the Hammersmith & City line, turning left out of the station. The Green is a short way down the road on the

left. Otherwise there are plenty of pubs to choose from in Shepherd's Bush. Alcohol is not available in the away end.

HOW TO GET THERE BY CAR:

At the end of the M40, take the A40 towards Central London. At the point where the A40 becomes the A40(M), turn off onto the A40 towards White City/Shepherd's Bush and turn right into Wood Lane, turn right into South Africa Road for the ground. Parking is available at a cost of £6 in the BBC car park, in Wood Lane on match days, otherwise street parking.

HOW TO GET THERE BY TRAIN:

There are two Shepherd's Bush tube stations, one on the Central Line and the other on the Hammersmith & City line. The latter is nearer to the ground, which is about a ten-minute walk. Leaving the tube station turn right and the ground will come into view further down on the right. White City tube station on Wood Lane (opposite the BBC Television Centre) is nearer the ground and less people seem to use it on match day but the nearest train station to the ground is Kensington Olympia, which can be accessed via Watford or Clapham Junction.

TICKET INFORMATION:

Admission prices:
 £20 adults
 £10 concessions



THEINTERLINKEXPRESSSTADIUM

GROUND INFORMATION

GROUND NAME: The Interlink Express Stadium
CAPACITY: 5,057
ADDRESS: Livingstone Road, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 5BX
MAIN TELEPHONE NO: 01254 356 950

WHAT IS THE GROUND LIKE?

The ground holds a total of 5,057 spectators with covering along each side of the length of the pitch. There is covered seating for 1,200 spectators and ample parking behind both goals at the ground with free parking. There is also on-street parking around the ground but the club try to discourage this as the residents complain to the police if their drives are blocked. If segregation is in place then away fans have the large car park situated at the entrance to the ground.

FANCY A PRE-MATCH PINT?

The Accrington Stanley Social Club is open before, during, and after the match but is not accessible to away fans if the match is segregated. Accrington is full of good pubs, most to be found in and around the town centre. The Stanley pub on Stanley Street caters for away fans with sandwiches and snacks laid on for match days. The Crown Inn on Whalley Road virtually overlooks the ground and offers a warm welcome to all supporters for banter, swapping stories and a good chat before and after the game, in the pool room a collection of memorabilia has been started to celebrate Accrington Stanley's promotion to the

Conference and the travelling Accrington fans always try to bring back something for the wall so any scarves badges etc from your club are welcome for the display. The three pubs closest to the ground are The Gray Mare, (5 minutes walk away), The Oaklea (5 minutes walk) and The Crown (2 minutes walk).

HOW TO GET THERE BY CAR

From the M62 you take the M66 north of Manchester. At the end of the M66, follow the A56 until you come to the Rising Bridge roundabout. Take the first turning, the A680 towards Accrington for around 3 miles. After passing the police and fire stations on the left follow the ring road dual carriageway around the town centre, through the pelican crossing and three sets of traffic lights. At the fourth set of lights, opposite the Castle pub, turn right to rejoin the A680. Follow this road up the hill for approximately one mile, Livingstone Road is approximately 400 yards past Accrington Victoria Hospital on the right.

TICKET INFORMATION

Colchester United have been allocated just 350 tickets for the game at the Interlink Express Stadium. Tickets will be priced as follows:-
 £15 Adults
 £7 OAPs and Concessions
 £5 U12s

After discussions with various parties on Monday morning, the following division of tickets has been confirmed:-

● 50 tickets to the Colchester United Supporters Association This allocation will be dealt with by the CUSA, please contact Jon Burns for further details.

● 200 tickets to Colchester United season ticket holders (including Vice Presidents). These are being sold via telephone or in person. You will only be able to purchase ONE ticket per season ticket book. If buying in person, please bring your season ticket book with you and, if buying by telephone, please bring your season ticket book upon collection of your ticket.

● 100 tickets to Priority Ticket holders. These will be sold in person ONLY. Again, you will only be able to purchase ONE ticket per Priority Ticket. Please ensure you have this with you when you come to buy your Accrington ticket.

● The Ticket Office is open until 6pm tonight for sales and you will also be able to buy tickets next Tuesday (December 30th). Any remaining tickets will go on general sale on Friday, January 2nd. For more details, see the official website!

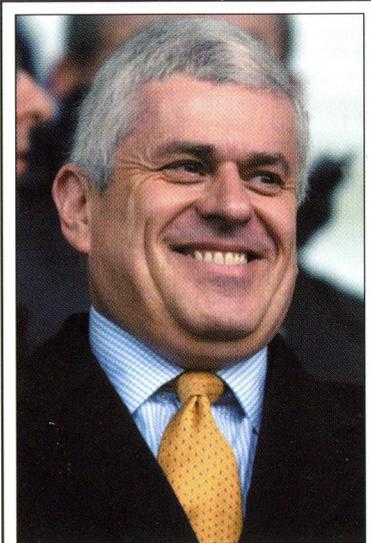
stanley factfile:

After beating promotion chasing Division Three side Oxford United and Conference high flyers, Aldershot Town at Layer Road in the first two rounds of this season's FA Cup the U's will travel to Accrington Stanley on Saturday, January 3, hoping to progress to the Fourth Round of the famous competition.

The fixture will provide another tough trip for Phil Parkinson's men with current Unibond Premier League Champions, Stanley having claimed two League scalps already this season. Huddersfield Town were eliminated by a 1-0 score line at the Lancashire club's home ground, The Interlink Express Stadium, in Round One.

After securing a 1-1 draw in Round Two at the Fitness First Stadium, AFC Bournemouth could not unlock the Stanley defence in the replay. The Cherries were held 0-0 and the home side went through 5-3 on penalties. Parky will want to make sure his team are not the third victims of a giant killing spree from a team who went out of business in 1962 and have had a long climb up the non-League ladder to gain Conference status in the past 12 months.

It is another very long journey for the blue and white army and there is a distinct chance that it will not be particularly warm so wrap up.



PETERRIDSDALE - TYKES CHAIRMAN

Whilst the progress made by Colchester United in the last twelve months has raised eyebrows within football, it is perhaps Barnsley who are the surprise package of Division Two in 2003/4.

Little could those U's fans who made the trip to Oakwell to see their side lose 1-0 on the opening day of the season have expected that the return visit by the Tykes to Layer Road in January would be a battle of two play-off chasing sides.

Having done an excellent job at Stoke City, Barnsley manager Gudjon Thordarson is another of a string of managers in Division Two to have performed miracles in very trying circumstances.

Administration

Limited by the financial constraints of being in administration, Thordarson has kept the Tykes in the top six for all but four weeks of the season to date and the Oakwell side head into the New Year knowing that, like the U's, they have a great chance of being involved in the play-offs when May arrives.

And the Yorkshire side's chances can only have been bolstered by the news that the club has been permitted to come out of administration by the Football League. After a couple of false starts, Barnsley are free

from their financial shackles and have also had their transfer embargo lifted.

Chairman Peter Ridsdale told the club's website: "I am delighted that we can put the uncertainty of the last 12 months behind us and look forward with confidence to the future. I would like to thank all Barnsley supporters and our members of staff who have so loyally stood by the club during the recent times of uncertainty."

And manager Gudjon Thordarson was equally relieved that he could finally dig into the transfer market and add the players he believes will help the club sustain their promotion push.

On Thursday 11th December he said: "It is a big relief and a boost for everyone. Obviously we have to run this club on a tight budget but it is nice to be out of administration. We can start to operate as a regular football club and do a bit of wheeling and dealing to strengthen the squad for the second half of the season. It is not healthy for anyone to be in the position we have been in.

Frustrating

"I think I have dealt with it well but there have been frustrating times. I do not think we will be in a position to bring anyone in before the Sheffield Wednesday game.

"Hopefully we can bring in some signings next week. We still have some problems with injuries but we have to make sure they are the right players. There is no point just bringing in anyone. I have to give the players here at the moment credit because they have worked so hard to get us into this position.

"I am not going to throw them away without giving them the opportunity to keep delivering. If they can do that then they will keep their place in the team. If not then I now have the chance to bring someone else in".

Tykes supporters will have been glad that they remained loyal during the difficult times, with the club also still hopeful of making an impact in the FA Cup. An impressive replay victory over Bristol City in the Second Round has given them a home tie against Scunthorpe United on January 3rd.

The match against the Third Division side - who saw off Sheffield Wednesday in a dramatic penalty shoot-out after their replay on Wednesday night - gives the Tykes a real opportunity to progress to

Round Four and boost the club's coffers even more as they look to build on their first half of the season success.

Yet it has not been a trouble free story for Barnsley in recent weeks. One of Thordarson's summer additions and a mainstay of the Tykes' defence so far this season, Tony Gallimore, will miss the trip to Layer Road in January, after picking up a knee injury that will rule him out for up to six weeks.

STOP PRESS

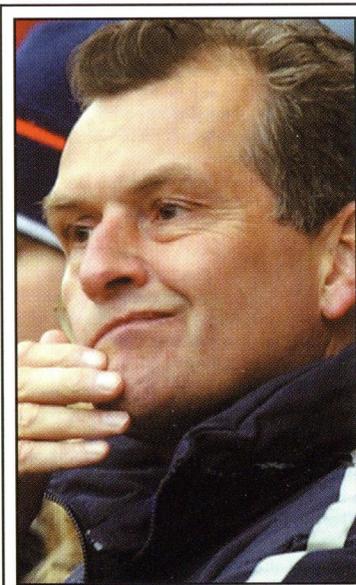
Tickets for this game are on sale now. To book your place, call the Colchester United Ticket Office on 0845 330 2975 or drop them an e-mail at ticketing@colchesterunited.net

CAN'T MAKE THE GAME?

If you're unable to make the game - or perhaps you're saving for Swindon Town a week later - then why not sign up to our official SMS service? Text CLUB COLC to 88442 now and we'll keep you bang up to date with all the news from the match.

FANCY THE U'S FOR PROMOTION?

Think the U's have what it takes to get into Division One this season? After our recent good form, Colchester United are rated at 5/1 for promotion! Check out www.layerbet.co.uk for more!

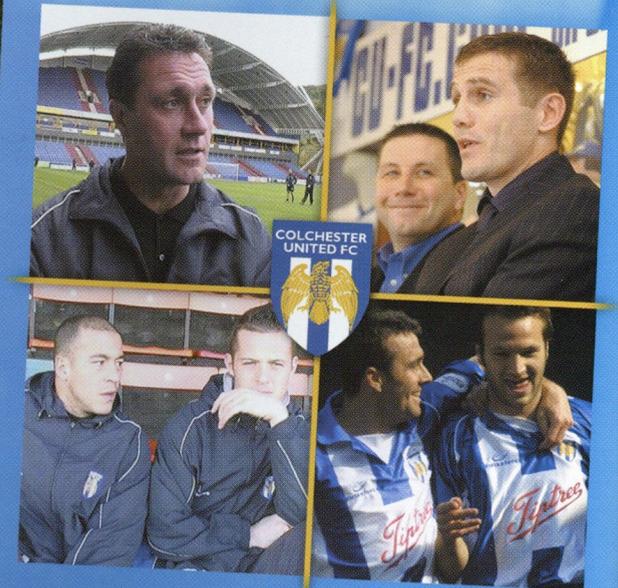


GUDJONTHORDARSON - MIRACLE WORKER

THE REVIEW OF THE 2002/3 SEASON AT LAYER ROAD IS NOW ON SALE IN THE U'S CLUB SHOP.

ALL CHANGE AT LAYER ROAD

CHARTING THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF A MEMORABLE CAMPAIGN USING INTERVIEWS FROM THE CLUB'S INTERNET TV STATION U'S WORLD, IT REALLY IS THE ULTIMATE STOCKING FILLER THIS CHRISTMAS!



A REVIEW OF THE 2002/3 SEASON WITH COLCHESTER UNITED



COLCHESTER UNITED



Manager: Phil Parkinson
Colours: Blue & White

		Pld	Gl
1.	Simon BROWN	✓	□
2.	Andy MYERS	✓	□
3.	Joseph KEITH	✓	□
4.	Gavin JOHNSON	✓	□
5.	Scott FITZGERALD	✓	□
6.	Thomas PINAULT	✓	□
7.	Karl DUGUID	○	□
8.	Wayne ANDREWS	✓	□
9.	Scott McGLEISH	✓	✓
10.	Kem IZZET	✓	□
11.	Jamie CADE	○	□
12.	Craig FAGAN	✓	□
13.	Dean GERKEN	○	□
16.	Rowan VINE	✓	□
17.	Bobby BOWRY	○	□
18.	Liam CHILVERS	✓	□
19.	Alan WHITE	✓	□
20.	Jermaine BROWN	○	□
21.	John WHITE	○	□
22.	Greg HALFORD	○	□
24.	Pat BALDWIN	○	□
25.	Sam STOCKLEY	✓	□
31.	Richard McKINNEY	✓	□
92.	Bob HAMILTON	○	□

LUTONTOWN



Manager: Mike Newell
Colours: Orange & Blue

		Pld	Gl
3.	Alan NEILSON	○	□
4.	Matthew SPRING	✓	□
5.	Russell PERRETT	○	□
7.	Adrian FORBES	✓	□
8.	Kevin NICHOLLS	○	□
11.	Steve ROBINSON	✓	□
12.	Chris COYNE	✓	□
16.	Enoch SHOWUNMI	✓	□
17.	Emmerson BOYCE	✓	□
18.	Ahmet BRKOVIC	✓	□
19.	Steven HOWARD	✓	□
21.	Paul HUGHES	○	□
22.	David BAYLISS	○	□
23.	Ian HILLIER	✓	□
24.	Sol DAVIS	✓	□
27.	Peter HOLMES	✓	□
29.	Marlon BERESFORD	✓	□
31.	Curtis DAVIES	○	□
32.	Lee MANSELL	✓	✓
33.	Dean BRILL	✓	□
34.	Dean CROWE	✓	□
36.	David DEENEY	○	□
37.	Keith KEANE	○	□
38.	Michael LEARY	○	□
39.	Steven O'LEARY	○	□
41.	Kevin FOLEY	✓	□
43.	Matthew JUDGE	○	□
44.	Parys OKAI	○	□
45.	Leon BARNETT	○	□
47.	Rob BECKWITH	○	□

NEXT HERE

BARNSELEY

Nationwide League Division Two

3.00pm, Saturday January 10th

Ticket Office number: 0845 330 2975

email: ticketing@colchesterunited.net



OFFICIALS

Referee: Mr J. Ross (London)

Assistants: Mr N. Kinsey (Essex) & Mr F. Graham (Essex)

Fourth Official: Mr G. Ives (Essex)

Evening Gazette