

U's Review

Luton Town

Coca-Cola Football League One

Saturday 22nd January 2005

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INSIDE...



Welcome to this afternoon's game against Luton Town, where the U's return to Layer Road on the back of a couple of away days - with two very different results.

We take a look back at the games against Hull City and MK Dons over the past couple of weeks, as well as looking forward to the FA Cup tie against Blackburn Rovers next Saturday.

Remember, the U's are also at home on Tuesday night when they host Walsall - the return of Mark Kinsella for his first competitive game since leaving for Charlton back in 1996.

In this afternoon's issue...

4

Parky looks back at the U's recent results and talks about what he expects from the match against Luton Town this afternoon.



19

The U's performances recently have given fans plenty to talk about. Our fans' columnist Barside Ninja takes a closer look.



8

Despite creating plenty of chances, the U's ended up drawing 0-0 with Oldham the last time they played at home. We have the best of the action shots here!



22

Defender Wayne Brown has been in good form of late and we talk to the U's skipper about what he expects from his side in the coming weeks.



10

Luton have had a fantastic season to date - we take a look at recent events with the Hatters as well as talking to former U's loanee Rowan Vine.



26

Important news on the ground front as a government decision brings The U's new home closer to reality. Find out the latest here.



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Good afternoon and welcome to this afternoon's match against Luton Town at Layer Road.

I last wrote these notes before our games away at Luton and Swindon Town over the festive period and overall we have got to be pleased with our recent form. Once again, as a management team and as a group of players we have produced some magnificent performances on the road.

After the frustration of the game against Bournemouth on Boxing Day being called off we had two potentially tough tests away from home in League One. The lads showed the right mental and physical approach in those matches and we have shown that when we can approach games like that we are as good as anybody.

Deserved

Convincing wins at Swindon and Hull City, in the FA Cup, along with a good 2-2 draw at Luton were richly deserved but we let ourselves down at Milton Keynes last week. It was disappointing to give a team low on confidence an advantage so early on in the game and I feel mentally we did not start the match quite right. A goal inside two minutes obviously gave the Dons a lift and we did not really recover from that.

Last weekend's performance was in stark contrast to what we achieved the previous Saturday at Hull because we have not played better than we did at the KC Stadium all season.

Overall we have been pleased by our recent run of games but we come into today's match on the back of a defeat and desperately need some points from the two games we have at home now.

Understandably, people are asking why we haven't recorded the results we need at Layer Road recently but we created five or six very good opportunities against Oldham Athletic in our last run-out here and I thought we would go on to win the game comfortably. The only difference between that game and the 3-0 win at Swindon was that we did not manage to put the ball in the back of the net but I could not fault the lads in that game and if we keep creating chances like that at home our results will turn.

Pleased

Ahead of today's game I was pleased to a new forward into the club. We have got seven games in the next month and with one or two injuries plus the possibility of suspensions looming. It was important to get a fresh face in the building.

Gylian N'Dumbu N'Sungu has become available and he is a player who scored nine goals from 20 starts at Sheffield Wednesday last year. We have signed him initially for a month and he will have the opportunity to show us how good a player he is.

Some people may be talking about our forthcoming FA Cup game at Blackburn Rovers but we need to go up there with some League points from these next two home games. That is absolutely vital and I cannot stress the importance of these two games more to the players and supporters.

Enjoy the match,

Parky

PHIL PARKINSON

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RECENTLY...



With the season now just beyond its halfway point, we will continue to keep you up to date with recent events at Colchester United in our Recently At Layer Road page.

The official website — with all its associated products! — remains the best place to keep on track with the goings on at the U's, but we know you may not always be able to get to a computer.

With that in mind, we bring you the latest news from the home of Essex football since the match against Oldham Athletic...

04.12.04

Having struck four goals during the final month of the year, Greg Halford is named as the U's supporters' choice for December's Player of the Month.

The Chelmsford-born youngster scored a memorable hat-trick in the FA Cup against Rushden and added another to help the U's pick up a useful point at Luton Town two days after Christmas.

The 20-year-old has made a successful conversion from full back to forward and has now scored nine goals this season. And his displays during December stood out in particular - his performances picking up well over half of the supporters' votes.

05.12.04

The U's collections for the Tsunami Appeal are a massive success with both monetary and material contributions being donated in abundance.

The cash collection before and after the Oldham game raises in excess of £1,500 for the appeal, which now stands at well over £100m from British public donations.

Meanwhile, a clothes collection for those that have lost their possessions out in Asia sees around 200

bags of clothes given to the club. A lorry arrives on Thursday to take the clothes down to London, ready for a flight out to the affected areas.

The U's response is just one part of a magnificent response from football clubs around the country to the tragedy of the Tsunami.

07.12.04

Colchester United midfielder Kem Izzet is unlikely to play again this season after discovering he will need further surgery on his ankle injury.

The midfielder injured his ankle in pre-season and, although he returned to first team action with three appearances in October, he then received a further injury to the same ankle in the match against Tranmere Rovers.

The 24-year-old goes for an MRI scan on his ankle and, with the apparent damage to the joint not settling down, he has now had further surgery.

He tells the East Anglian Daily Times: "The not knowing has been killing me, so at least I now know that I need an operation. I want to get back playing as soon as possible, but I have to be philosophical.

"I have been very fortunate with injuries up until this season, so I have to take it on the chin. It's very frustrating, but now I want to make sure that I'm raring to go again next season."

08.12.04

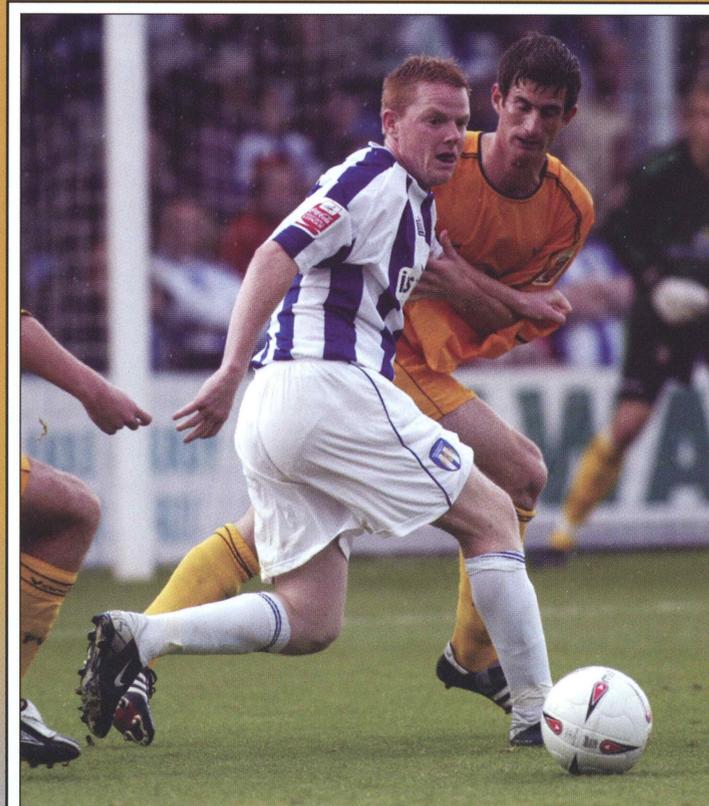
The U's record a fantastic victory away at Hull City in the FA Cup. The game sees one of the most complete team performances from a Colchester United side in many years as Gareth Williams and Craig Fagan notch first half strikes to make the difference on a biting cold afternoon at the KC Stadium.

Phil Parkinson's players remain resilient in the second half to keep the home side at bay and the result can be regarded as one of the best of the season against a Tigers side that had recorded nine wins on the spin to head to the top of League One, with eleven wins in their last thirteen matches.

Progress past Hull means that for two successive seasons, the U's have reached Round Four of the historic competition. And that is the first time in Colchester United history that the club has had back to back seasons of progress to that stage of the tournament.

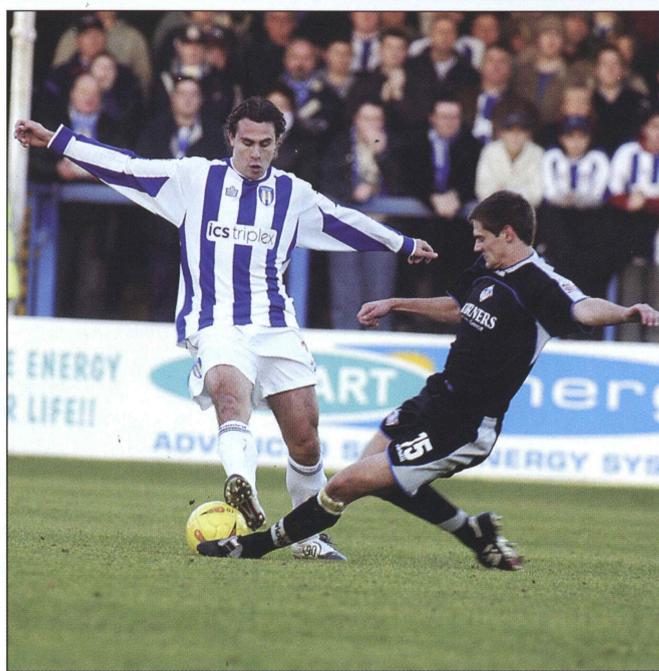
10.12.04

After two days of waiting, the U's are paired with Blackburn Rovers in the Fourth Round of the FA Cup. Rovers overcome Cardiff City 3-2 after the Ewood Park Replay courtesy of two David Thompson goals and a Morten Gamst Pederson strike.



Gareth Williams - early goal at the KC Stadium

U'S ACTION



Richard Garcia - feels the force of this challenge



Gavin Johnson - despairs as a chance goes begging



Pat Baldwin - gets stuck in



Kevin Watron - hunts for the ball



Craig Fagan - checks out his options



Neil Danns - battles it out in midfield

THE WAY THE U'S LINED UP...



SUB USED: Williams for Garcia 61
SUBS NOT USED: Cousins, White, Keith, Hunt
GOALS: None
YELLOW CARDS: Danns, Halford

BRENTFORD: Pogliacomi, Bruce, Haining, Hall, Holden (Croft 28), Appleby, Kilkenny (Eyre 79), Hughes (Bonner 45), Griffin, Betsy, Vernon
SUBS NOT USED: Beharall, Wolfenden
GOALS: None
YELLOW CARDS: Appleby, Betsy, Hall, Haining, Kilkenny

ATTENDANCE: 3,873

● The U's extended their unbeaten run to three games against Oldham, but were left rueing the fact they missed out on three points in another frustrating home game.

They had dominated the first half with several opportunities going begging and the visitors could feel lucky to have gone into the break level pegging.

Although they continued to press after the half time whistle, they were unable to find a way to goal, with heads in hands a regular occurrence as the U's got closer and closer to breaking the deadlock.

Phil Parkinson: "I felt we had some good openings in front of goal and it's in games like this that you must take them."

"In the end we had no composure in the penalty area, but my players have shown great character and run themselves into the ground over the Christmas period."

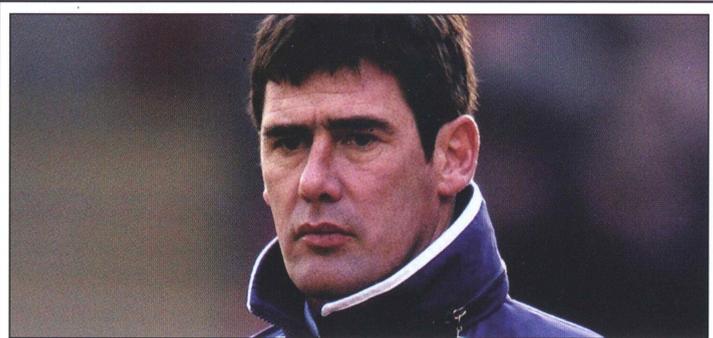
"Neil Danns, for one, has come off gutted that he didn't score a winner for us and it's great to see that sort of attitude in the team."

Brian Talbot: "It was a good result considering we have lost eight away games already this season. The lads are a hardworking bunch, but they are tired after a busy couple of weeks."

"We defended well as a team, but didn't create that many chances which was disappointing. However, two months ago we were in the bottom four, so I am very happy with a draw."

WWW.CU-FC.COM MAN OF THE MATCH:
 Neil Danns

IN TOWN TODAY...



Mike Newell - confident

LUTON TOWN

Given that Luton Town had stared over the precipice of administration eighteen months ago, few Hatters fans would have thought that they would find themselves in such an excellent position at the end of 2004.

During a saga that saw Joe Kinnear leave his post as Luton manager to be replaced by Mike Newell in controversial circumstances, it appeared that the Kenilworth Road side were in the midst of a crisis that would affect the club for several years to come.

Yet, in his second season in charge, former Town striker Newell has shaped a side that is going great guns and, in the first half of the season, given themselves a sterling chance of getting promoted to the Championship.

However, with the Hatters having a minor blip over Christmas - they drew three of their matches before losing to Brentford in the FA Cup, they arrive at Layer Road today facing a new challenge.

It has been virtually unbroken success for Newell's side this season but, with Hull momentarily knocking them off the top spot in League One with their own fantastic run of form, Luton started 2005 with the task of regaining first place.

The drop to second did not perturb Town's manager, though, despite some murmurs of discontent from a minority of supporters.

"We've got the same group of players here who have put us in a great position in the league half-way through the season and we haven't lost faith

in them," Newell told the Luton News. "I don't know if some other people have lost faith with them for whatever reason, but it's ridiculous to hear some of the things that have been said this week."

Newell added: "We've sat down and spoken to the players this week and there's no problem here whatsoever. It's alarming to hear some of the things that have been said on the radio and on some of the phone ins - it's really surprised me.

"In every league there are teams who have been top of the league who are now in second place or who have dropped dramatically and we're not in that position. We've had 22 points from the last 11 games and two points a game is promotion form in anybody's book - I don't see where all the pessimism is coming from."

Favour

And the statistics are in Luton's favour. In the last seven years at this level, the team that has been top at Christmas has gone on to be champions on five occasions.

Newell is confident that his team can regain that top spot. Whilst other teams - including the U's with their addition of Neil Danns - have been busy in the transfer market, the Luton boss believes he has enough in his side to go up and doesn't feel it necessary to bring anyone in.

Indeed, Newell has admitted that he already has one eye on getting things prepared for next season. Contract talks have begun with some players - striker Steve Howard, midfielder Ahmet Brkovic, defender Sol Davis and club captain Kevin Nicholls - although some will have to wait longer to discover their longer term fortunes.

The last ten years

- 1994/95 Division One, 16th
- 1995/96 Division One, 24th (relegated)
- 1996/97 Division Two, 3rd
- 1997/98 Division Two, 17th
- 1998/99 Division Two, 12th
- 1999/00 Division Two, 13th
- 2000/01 Division Two, 22nd (relegated)
- 2001/02 Division Three, 2nd (promoted)
- 2002/03 Division Two, 9th
- 2003/04 Division Two, 10th

Last time at Layer Road

26.12.03 U's 1 Luton 1

The U's, with current Town loanee Rowan Vine in their ranks, take the lead with an early Scott McGleish header after good work from Wayne Andrews. The advantage lasts just fifteen minutes though, as Lee Mansell makes the most of a deflection to nip in and peg Colchester back. There are chances in the second half, but the Hatters leave with a point.

Last time away from home

28.12.04 Luton 2 U's 2

In the final fixture of 2004, the U's take the lead through a Richard Garcia flick before a Rowan Vine double either side of half time puts the league leaders in front. The visitors refuse to be cowed, however, and Greg Halford's brave header earns them a point - only the third team to take a result from Kenilworth Road this season.

Hatters' last five League One results

- 26.12.04 Chesterfield 0 Luton 1
- 28.12.04 Luton 2 Colchester 2
- 01.01.05 Luton 1 Sheffield Wednesday 1
- 03.01.05 Peterborough 2-2 Luton
- 15.01.05 Luton 3-0 Stockport County

Newell added in the local press: "Talks have been ongoing with Steve Howard and you'll have to ask his agent what stage they're at, although I don't expect to hear anything until nearer the end of the season to be honest.

"The other three who are all playing regularly we've also had discussions with, but nothing's happened at the moment. It's a difficult situation to be in really because we won't know what position we're going to be in until later in the year.

"A lot will depend on what happens in May, but I think the players realise that. It's better this way than being at the bottom end of the table and not knowing what position you're going to be in come the end of the season."

Luton Town's last away XI



v Stockport County
15.01.05 W3-0
(Coyne, Howard, Nicholls)

Marlon Beresford: Mike Newell strengthened his squad with the signing of 6'1" goalkeeper at the beginning of July 2004 from League One rivals Barnsley. The 34-year-old is a vastly experienced goalkeeper with over 400 appearances under his belt and he returned to Kenilworth Road on a two-year contract after impressing during a successful three month spell with the Hatters last year.

Kevin Foley: The emergence of Kevin Foley was one of the success stories of last season for Luton, during the course of the campaign he went from the Hatters youth team to the Republic of Ireland U21s. He has been brought through the junior ranks at Kenilworth Road and in pre-season game last year he was thrown into the first-team because of injuries to other defenders. He settled in rapidly and was soon competing on merit for a regular place in the side.

Chris Coyne: Coyne signed for West Ham as a teenager, but Premiership chances were few and far between, and after spells at Brentford, Southend and Dundee he moved to Kenilworth Road in September 2001 and Coyne rapidly became a crowd favourite in the promotion run that followed.

Curtir Davies: Central defender Curtis was rewarded with a two-year professional contract at the end of last season after impressing during a spell in the side at the tail-end of the campaign.

Having been a solid and consistent performer in the club's U19s over the past three years, he made the step-up to first-team level and turned in some encouraging displays when called upon.

Paul Underwood: Luton Town fought off competition from a number of clubs to complete the free transfer signing of Paul Underwood from Second Division rivals Rushden & Diamonds. The Wimbledon-born defender joined Rushden for £50,000 in the summer of 1997 from Enfield and in 2002/03 he led the club to the Third Division Championship and was named as Rushden's Player of the Season.

Alan Neilson: Experience and versatility has made Neilson a valuable member of Luton's squad. The former Welsh international was signed from Grimsby in 2002 as part of a cost-cutting exercise. He enjoyed a good career in the Premiership, with his first club Newcastle and then with Southampton and Fulham.

Kevin Nicholls: The tough-tackling midfielder began his career as a trainee at Charlton before a move to Wigan. Luton then snapped him up in the summer of 2001. The move to Luton suited Nicholls and the Hatters alike. He quickly became team captain, and his huge enthusiasm and ferocious tackling soon made him a big favourite with Hatters fans, although opponents did not always view his action style with similar relish.

Steve Robinson: A hard working midfielder who topped the Hatters assists chart last season. 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.

Ahmet Brkovic: The Croatian midfielder is tidy and hardworking member of the squad. He joined Luton on a Bosman free transfer in the summer of 2001. He played a valuable role, mainly on the right flank, to help Luton return to the Second Division at the first attempt.

Steve Howard: He has been the Hatters leading marksman in recent seasons and is a huge favourite at Kenilworth Road. Howard was magnificent in his first full season with Luton, and his 24 goals made him the Third Division's top league marksman as Luton won promotion.

Rowan Vine: A player well known to U's fans, the Basingstoke-born striker initially joined Town on a three-month loan deal from Premiership Portsmouth on the eve of the new season but that arrangement was extended in September for the whole season after he had made an impressive start to life as a Hatter. The 21-year-old front man has enjoyed successful loan spells at this level before when he appeared for Brentford and The U's.

The Rest...

Sol Davies: English, defender, DOB 04.09.79
Previous Clubs: Swindon Town
Total LTFC appearances: 113, one goal

Calvin Andrew: English, striker, DOB 19.12.86
Previous Clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: Seven, no goals

David Bayliss: English, defender, DOB 08.06.76
Previous Clubs: Rochdale (currently on loan to Chester City)
Total LTFC appearances: 41, one goal

Robert Beckwith: English, goalkeeper, DOB 12.09.84
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: Seven, no goals

Ian Hillier: Welsh, defender, DOB 26.12.79
Previous Clubs: Tottenham Hotspur (currently on loan to Chester City)
Total LTFC appearances: 67, one goal

Peter Holmer: English, midfielder, DOB 18.11.80
Previous Clubs: Sheffield Wednesday
Total LTFC appearances: 83, seven goals

Max Howell: English, defender, DOB 02.09.85
Previous Clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: None to date

Paul Hughes: English, midfielder, DOB 19.04.76
Previous Clubs: Chelsea, Stockport County, Norwich City, Crewe Alexandra, Southampton
Total LTFC appearances: 88, seven goals

Keith Heone: Irish, midfielder, DOB 20.11.86
Previous Clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: 27, one goal

Michael Leary: English, midfielder, DOB 17.04.83
Previous Clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: 25, three goals

Lee Mansell: English, midfielder, DOB 23.09.82
Previous Clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: 61, eight goals

Stephen O'Leary: English, midfielder, DOB 12.02.85
Previous Clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: 23, two goals

Russ Parrett: English, defender, DOB 18.05.73
Previous Clubs: Lymington, Portsmouth, Cardiff City
Total LTFC appearances: 75, seven goals

Dino Sremet: Slovenian, goalkeeper, DOB 16.08.80
Previous Clubs: Maribor Pivovarna Laako
Total LTFC appearances: Eight, no goals

Enoch Showunmi: English, striker, DOB 21.04.82
Previous Clubs: Willesden Constantine
Total LTFC appearances: 54, ten goals

Stuart Sinclair: English, midfielder, DOB 19.11.87
Previous Clubs: From trainee
Total LTFC appearances: None to date

Fans View

How have the past twelve months been as a Luton fan?

The last twelve months have been remarkably better than the 12 months before it. As a whole, I don't think any Luton fan can complain about the last year. There was disappointment that we couldn't quite make the playoffs at the end of last season. However, all in all given what had happened during summer 2003's traumatic takeover of the club by John Gurney and the subsequent machinations to place the club into administrative receivership to wrest control away from him, we'd have taken a tenth place finish. But we are delighted by our start to this season. Hopefully we can keep going until the end of the season.

Which of your summer signings has impressed you the most?

The signing that has impressed me the most is Rowan Vine. He'll need no introductions to Colchester fans, I'm sure. He has formed a great partnership up front with Steve Howard; he is a tireless worker who makes great runs. He has contributed to many of our goals this season and scored one or two important goals himself. Although he's only on a season-long loan from Portsmouth he has already proved to be a very good signing.

What are your expectations for the rest of the season?

Having been top for the majority of the season many Luton fans will expect us to go on and win the title. To be honest I'd be very happy just getting promoted. I think that's the least we deserve for the football we've played this season although there's no reason why we can't win the title as well.

Having had such a great season so far, who do you see as the biggest threats to your hopes of promotion?

Hull are obviously a fairly big danger to our promotion chances; only time will tell if they will last the distance. The only other team I see as a danger to us is Sheffield Wednesday. They have the resources to continue their success and have a manager that has won this division before. Of the rest of the teams up the top I can honestly say none of them cause me that much concern.

What do you expect from Colchester United and what do you think this afternoon's score will be?

Colchester have always been a side that on paper many people think we should beat but for whatever reason we very rarely do! However, this season I think and hope we will win. We are playing much better football this season than we have for ages and that should stand us in good stead for today. If we can recapture the form that has seen us win at places like Swindon, Barnsley, Bristol City and Chesterfield already this season we will win this game. I'll go for a 2-0 Luton win with a Colchester old boy Rowan Vine getting on the scoresheet!

● Questions answered today by Kevin Harper from Trust In Luton. Kevin writes: "In the 18 months that Trust In Luton has existed, we have already achieved an awful lot. Firstly TiL were instrumental in saving our club for which we have been rewarded with a promised place on the clubs board of Directors and handed a 10% stake in the football club. We have also launched our own beer which has managed to raise well over £2,500 in its first year alone.

"Our main focus now is on consolidating the hard work and achievements of our inaugural year. We hope to be able to work with the club as we support it's progression into the Championship.

"Details on anything to do with Trust in Luton whether it be how to join, giving us a donation or reading about our community and fundraising work - you will find everything you need to know on our website - www.trustinluton.com"



OPPOSING VIEW

During the course of 2004, Colchester United had a very successful year in the loanee market.

Whether it was scoring goals or keeping them out, all of the temporary faces made a big impact in what proved to be a memorable campaign in 2003/4.

The summer months saw three of the loanees join the U's ranks on a permanent basis, whilst later in the year Gareth Williams and Neil Danks made it five who opted to turn full time.

Just three returned to their former clubs. Ben May returned once again this season from Millwall, Paul Tierney's truncated spell saw him swiftly return to Manchester United, whilst Rowan Vine opted to go out on loan once again to Luton Town.

The Portsmouth forward returns to Layer Road for the first time this afternoon since his summer departure and arrives as part of a Hatters squad that are having an exceptional season.

From the beginning of the campaign, Mike Newell's outfit have spent the season in the top two positions and Vine admits that he has really enjoyed his time at Kenilworth Road to date.

"It's been really good so far, we've always had a pretty decent position in the table and it's been a brilliant season - the important thing is that we can keep it up in the remaining games," he told U's Review.

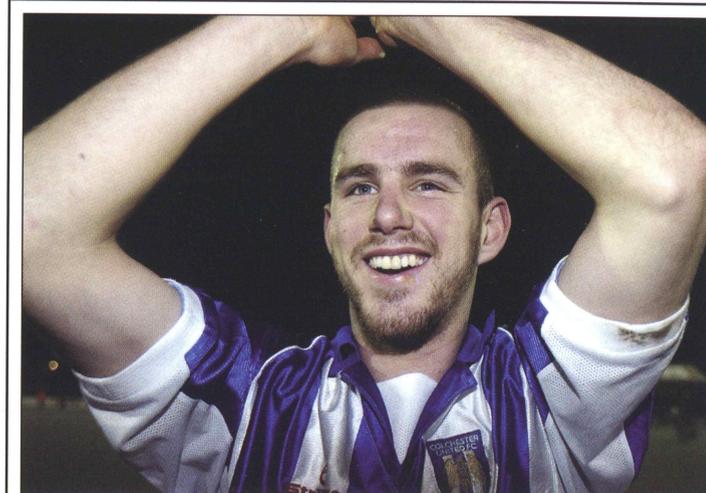
"We got off to a great start with a winning sequence at the beginning of the season and we've kept it up throughout. Those early results gave us the confidence that we had enough about us to get out there and win games, whatever the challenge."

Having spent a season at Brentford before his 14-goal campaign with the U's in 2003/4, Rowan is familiar with the rigours and challenges that League One football has to offer.

In his time at Layer Road, most of his goals came before Christmas - as was the case with the Bees - and he is hoping that this time around he will have a stronger second half to the campaign.

He added: "I've got over 100 games under my belt now and it's given me plenty of experience. I'd say that the two seasons before has given me a lot of knowledge of what to expect when you go to play certain teams or at certain grounds and that's been important for me this season.

"I've scored seven so far but I know I should have scored more. Like the team, it's important that I now keep it going in 2005 and hopefully I will bag a few more goals before the season is out."



Rowan Vine - celebrates in his Colchester days

Important in his chances of adding to his tally is the partnership with Steve Howard. The burly forward has led the way with the goals so far this season - Rowan providing plenty of assists - and he admits that playing alongside 'Howie' has been good for his game.

"He's scored goals for different teams year in and year out and he's good at what he does. He's a clever player and a good one to play alongside," Rowan confirmed.

"When I was at Brentford and with Colchester, the squads perhaps weren't as big as they were here at Luton. Recently, Howie was suspended for three games but others came in and took his place and we still picked up results and I think that's important."

Sticky

The Hatters come to Layer Road today looking to arrest a run of results that saw Hull depose them from top spot over the Christmas period. But, as Rowan points out, it's not necessarily as sticky a patch as some of the critics of the club are making out.

He stressed: "We lost three in a row in a week and got back on track, so recent results haven't worried us. Even though we've drawn a few lately, we had won a couple of away games in a row before that and so it hasn't been as bad as it looks.

"If anything, I think it will be Hull who will be more disappointed at how the table looks at the moment. They won all of those games on the spin and yet they're still only a couple of points ahead of us.

"They will wonder what they have to do to get us off their tails, so we've just got to keep picking up points. We're getting enough points to get promoted at the moment, so it's important to keep it up."

This afternoon's game presents the Hatters with another tough test - not least in light of the closely fought encounter between the two teams just under a month ago. Knowing many of the players inside the U's camp, Rowan was not surprised to see how difficult a game it proved to be.

He admitted: "Colchester battled the whole game and made it tough for us - not many teams have come to our ground and given us as much of a test. We thought we'd got what we needed at 2-1, but Colchester never gave up.

"To be honest, I think today's game will be more of the same. They're a strong side, we know that we're in for a decent match and we'll have to be ready for that."

Having made a big impact in his time at Luton so far, it has already been suggested in some circles that he may make his switch to Kenilworth Road a permanent one. The 22-year-old is still waiting to hear where his future lies, however.

"I'm not too sure what the future holds just yet - I'm waiting to see," he confessed. "I signed the two year contract at Portsmouth last summer, so it's them who have to make a decision on me to be honest. I want to know what's going on in the longer term of course, so this summer I think it will come to a head one way or the other and then I'll know what's going on."



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STATS ANALYSIS



U's Media Manager Matt Hudson takes a look at the statistics for this afternoon's game against Luton Town...

Although the U's come into this afternoon's match on the back of the disappointing defeat at Milton Keynes Dons, they know that they have already notched one of their season's plus points against today's opponents.

As much as the Dons performance was a lacklustre one, the game at Kenilworth Road in December set the benchmark for the sort of display that boss Phil Parkinson would be looking for.

And, statistically speaking, it was something of a rarity for Luton this season to only draw at home. With the 2-2 draw in Bedfordshire, the U's became only the third team to take any kind of positive result away from the Hatters' home territory, although Sheffield Wednesday repeated the feat three days later.

Those two games, coupled with another in the league and one in the cup, signalled Town's worst run of the season but, despite dropping to second, they soon regained top spot with a 3-0 win over struggling Stockport County.

And the Hatters have scored plenty during the course of the season so far. They have scored a total of 51 goals to date, including 23 on the road. The U's have scored 21 away from Layer Road, but just fourteen on home soil compared to Luton's 28 at Kenilworth Road.

Headers

With Steve Howard leading the line, it is perhaps also not surprising that a third of the Luton goals have come via headers and twenty from within the six yard box. Those seventeen strikes are more than the U's have scored with shots.

However, the U's recent stats - MK Dons excluded - do make pretty good reading. The early goal at the National Hockey Stadium was the first that they had conceded in 315 minutes. The previous goal before the calamity opener on Saturday? Rowan Vine's second in the match against Luton!

The holy grail of a clean sheet will be on the defenders' minds once again today, but it is perhaps also interesting to note that the U's have actually scored a higher proportion of their shots on target than their visitors. Where that is undermined, however, is the fact that Luton have had around a third more shots in total.

Colchester v Luton

When Scored

For	Against
Shots: 16	Shots: 24
Headers: 10	Headers: 17
Volleys: 4	Volleys: 5
Penalties: 1	Penalties: 2
Free Kicks: 3	Free Kicks: 2
Own Goals: 1	Own Goals: 0
Shots on Target: 124	Shots on Target: 191
Goals Scored: 35	Goals Scored: 51
% of Shots Scored: 28.2	% of Shots Scored: 26.7

How & Where Goals Scored

Category	Colchester	Luton
Inside 6 yards	10	20
6-18 yards	17	26
18-35 yards	8	5
35+ yards	1	0
Penalties	1	2
Free Kicks	3	2
Own Goals	1	0
Scored 1st Goal in match	Fagan	Nicholls
Most goals in last 10	Keith	3 players
Points gained from goals	Fagan 5.75	Howard 14.35

Discipline

Category	Colchester	Luton
Red Cards	2	2
Yellow Cards	33	42
Fouls Committed	301	385
Average per Game	11.58	14.26
Conceded from Free Kick	6	5
Fouls Suffered	333	348
Average per Game	12.81	12.89
Scored from Free Kick	5	6
Caught Offside	83	165
Average per Game	3.19	6.11

Seasonal Progress Comparison

Opponents	H/A	Score
MK Dons	A	0-2
Oldham	H	0-0
Swindon	A	3-0
Luton	A	2-2
Brentford	A	0-1
Hull	H	1-2

Opponents	H/A	Score
Stockport	H	3-0
Peterborough	A	2-2
Sheff Wed	H	1-1
Colchester	A	2-2
Chesterfield	A	1-0
Bristol City	A	2-1

Luton's Last 10 Years

Year	Games Played	Win	Drawn	Lost	Goals Scored	Goals Conceded	Points Total
98/99	579	208	162	209	783	768	786

It will be either side of the half time whistle that the U's will need to be most on their game. Of the goals scored by Mike Newell's men so far this season, over half have come in the 15 minute spells before and after the break.

Strongly

That was indeed the case with Vine's double against the U's earlier in the season, but they know that they finish halves strongly, with fourteen of their 35 goals coming in the final fifteen minutes of each period.

Should the U's take the lead - and don't forget that they've done that in three of their last five games - they will need to be aware of the Hatters power of recovery. On seven occasions, they have been behind this year, only to retrieve the game and either draw or win - a record that has earned them thirteen valuable points.

But they are not invincible, whatever the stats might suggest. They have also thrown away three leads to settle for draws as well. And, as the U's will remember from their time at Kenilworth Road, a little bit of fighting spirit will go a long way!

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Hatters' Dream Team

Football historian LEIGH EDWARDS selects a post-war Luton Town 'Dream Team' with the help of several latics supporters and club officials.

RON BAYNHAM: England international goalkeeper who was a key figure as Luton Town were FA Cup finalists in 1959. He impressed with Worcester City before moving to Kenilworth Road in November 1951 and contested a first-team slot with fellow England keeper Bernard Stretton as Luton gained top-flight status for the first time in 1954-55. Missing just one match in both 1955-56 and 1957-58, he was capped three times and also represented the Football League. He made 388 League appearances for the Hatters until injury ended his career in May 1965 and subsequently worked as an interior decorator in Bedfordshire.

KIRK STEPHENS: Attacking right-back who was ever-present in Luton Town's 1981-82 Second Division title triumph. Initially with Nuneaton Borough, he helped them finish Southern League runners-up in 1974-75 and followed David Pleat to Kenilworth Road in June 1978. He was voted Luton's 'Player of the Year' in 1978-79 and 1983-84, scoring twice in 227 League games for the Hatters before moving to Coventry City in exchange for Ashley Grimes in August 1984. Later rejoining Nuneaton as player-manager after a knee injury ended his top-flight career, he also had a spell at Barnet and worked for his father's building firm.

MITCHELL THOMAS: Versatile England U-21 international left-back who had two spells at Luton Town. Born locally, he signed professional at Kenilworth Road in August 1982 and starred as Luton reached the FA Cup semi-finals in 1984-85. He followed David Pleat to Tottenham Hotspur for £275,000 in July 1986 and featured in the 1987 FA Cup final, moving to West Ham for £525,000 in August 1991. Returning to Luton in November 1993, he netted six goals in 292 League games overall for the Hatters prior to joining Burnley in July 1999 and was an experienced figure in their 1999-2000 promotion success.

BRUCE RIOCH: Influential midfielder who was capped 24 times by Scotland after leaving Luton Town. Signing professional for Luton in September 1964, he starred in the 1967-68 Fourth Division title triumph and netted 46 goals in 149 League games prior to joining Aston Villa for £100,000 in July 1969. He was a key figure in their 1971-72 Third Division title success and moved to Derby County in February 1974, helping to win the League Championship in 1974-75.

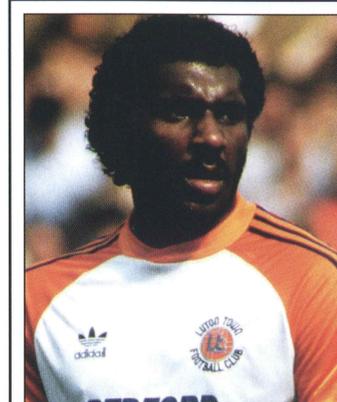
He played for Everton, Derby again and Torquay, since managing Middlesbrough, Millwall, Bolton Wanderers, Arsenal, Norwich City and Wigan Athletic.

SYD OWEN: Long-serving England international centre-half who skippered Luton Town in the 1959 FA Cup final. Signing professional for Birmingham City in October 1945, he moved to Luton in June 1947 and starred in their 1951-52 FA Cup run, 1952-53 promotion near-miss and 1954-55 promotion success. He was 'Footballer of the Year' in 1958-59 and netted three goals in 388 League games before becoming Luton's manager for a year in May 1959. Subsequently Leeds United's chief coach under Don Revie until October 1975, he then coached at Birmingham, Hull City and Manchester United. He died in August 1998.

MAL DONAGHY: Northern Ireland international central defender who gained a club record 58 caps while at Luton Town. He moved to Kenilworth Road from Larne in June 1978 and was ever-present as Luton won the Second Division title in 1981-82 and were FA Cup semi-finalists in 1984-85. Voted 'Player of the Year' in 1985-86, he was an FA Cup semi-finalist again in 1987-88 and starred in that season's Littlewoods Cup final triumph. He netted 16 goals in 410 League games for the Hatters prior to joining Manchester United for £650,000 in October 1988, then returned on loan before moving to Chelsea in August 1992.

RICKY HILL: England international midfielder who was 'Player of the Year' when Luton Town won the Second Division title in 1981-82. Signing professional at Kenilworth Road in May 1976, he was 'Player of the Year' again in 1982-83 and starred as Luton were FA Cup semi-finalists in 1984-85. He featured in two consecutive Littlewoods Cup finals including the 1988 Wembley triumph and netted 54 goals in 436 League games before moving to Le Havre in July 1989. Reuniting with David Pleat at Leicester City in August 1990 and later as a coach at Sheffield Wednesday and Spurs, he briefly rejoined Luton as manager.

BRIAN STEIN: England international striker who scored twice in Luton Town's 1988 Littlewoods Cup final triumph. Moving to Kenilworth Road from Edgware Town in October 1977, he was leading marksman in Luton's 1981-82 Second Division success and also starred as they were FA Cup semi-finalists in 1984-85 and 1987-88. He joined Caen in July 1988 and moved via Anancy back to Luton in July 1991. Voted 'Player of the Year' for the second time in 1991-92, he netted 130 goals in 427 League games overall for the Hatters before joining Barnet in August 1992. His younger brother Mark also played for Luton.



Ricky Hill - former player and manager

MICK HARFORD: England international striker who played for Luton Town in consecutive Littlewoods Cup finals including the 1988 Wembley triumph. Signing professional for Lincoln City in July 1977, he had spells with Newcastle United, Bristol City and Birmingham City prior to joining Luton in December 1984. He starred as the Hatters were FA Cup semi-finalists in 1984-85 and 1987-88, moving to Derby County in January 1990 and returning to Luton in September 1991. Joining Chelsea in August 1992, he then played for Sunderland, Coventry City and Wimbledon before moving to Chelsea in August 1992. He is now Nottingham Forest's assistant-boss.

MALCOLM MACDONALD: Ace marksman who was capped 14 times by England after leaving Luton Town. Initially with Tonbridge, he moved to Fulham in August 1968 and moved to Kenilworth Road in July 1969. He was Luton's top scorer in two consecutive seasons including the 1969-70 promotion success and netted 49 goals in 88 League games before being sold to Newcastle United for £180,000 in May 1971. An FA Cup finalist in 1974, he joined Arsenal for £333,000 in August 1976 and was an FA Cup finalist again in 1978 before injury ended his career. He subsequently managed Fulham and Huddersfield Town.

PAUL WALSH: England international striker who was capped five times while at Luton Town. Signing professional for Charlton Athletic in October 1979, he starred in their 1980-81 promotion success and moved to Luton in July 1982. He was 'Player of the Year' in 1982-83 and leading marksman in 1983-84, netting 24 goals in 80 First Division games for the Hatters prior to joining Liverpool in May 1984. Helping to win the League Championship in 1985-86, he joined Tottenham Hotspur in February 1988 and was an FA Cup winner in 1991. He later played for Portsmouth and Manchester City until injury ended his career.

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BARSIDÉ NINJA



It was all my fault...

Anyone who's watched the English cricket team over the last few years will know that you do not become a good team overnight - it takes planning, preparation, and plenty of damned hard graft.

Anyone who's watched the English cricket team over the last couple of weeks will know that you do not become a bad team overnight - its takes planning, preparation and plenty of damned hard graft to make sure you do not and to return to form.

I am sure Parky will have the lads as primed as possible over the coming weeks to ensure we do not get too caught up in any sort of relegation battle.

The playoffs, while not impossible are some considerable way off (although you only need to look at the efforts of teams like Crystal Palace and Watford when on their way to the Premiership to know that it can be done and I don't think too many would disagree we have the players with the ability to do it), but there's the prospect of a decent fourth

round FA Cup tie at the weekend, which should come as a nice distraction.

Progress

It was good to see serious progress being made with the campaign for the new stadium at Cuckoo Farm. A delegation from the CUSA, CCSAG (Colchester Community Stadium Action Group) and Evening Gazette delivered in excess of 15,000 petition signatures supporting the new development to Whitehall.

An interim gesture in advance of forthcoming deadlines, it shows a great response from people who appreciate what such facilities can bring to a town.

Following this with the announcement that serious progress has been made in getting the stadium development underway and that John Prescott's office will not contest the planning

application is great news. Another big step in the right direction and looking forward to the prospect of seeing the lads in a new stadium in just two years time is beginning to become reality.



Another lower league club is coming out of the woodwork announcing serious financial peril. It is reported that Grimsby owe the Inland Revenue £720,000 in unpaid taxes. The Leeds saga continues, and with the prospect of administration (the 10 point deduction plunging them in serious trouble), maybe we'll see them at Layer Road next year. With debts reported at £25m the future certainly looks bleak.

I see everybody's favourite agent Barry Silkman is making headlines again. According to the Portsmouth official website, striker Yakubu is fed up with comments in the national press attributed to Silkman about the player's future at Fratton Park, stating he has never been represented by him. Portsmouth claim they will be reporting the matter to the FA compliance unit. Whether the unit act at all remains to be seen.

Coming back to the title, I guess I should apologise to one and all. Those of you who are superstitious will understand. Just after Christmas I succumbed to the necessary evil and purchased Football Manager just after Christmas (as no one else would!).

Having intended to go to Milton Keynes, only for best placed plans to go to waste, I thought I would console myself with a short (four hour) burst. Have to say it has not been easy - been an up and down first season (sounds familiar?). Got off to a good start only to struggle a bit through the middle of the season (sounds familiar?), struggled a bit at home (sounds familiar?).

Kinda hoping that we just get through to the end of the season without too much trauma and look forward to building up over the summer (sound familiar?). Anyway, back to the game...figured I'd play just one more fixture, which happened to be away at MK.

The result: I lost 5-1. My first thought (that I can type without fear of censorship at least) was well that's us done for this weekend. My second mistake was not wearing the lucky boxers on the Saturday.

If anyone knows of a good psychologist, please feel free to send the necessary details into the editor...



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Captain's log

KARL DUGUID

It's nearly three weeks since our last home game against Oldham Athletic which we drew 0-0 and our players probably felt they could have won that match.

We created a lot of chances against the Latics but overall the draw may have been a fair result. Oldham obviously came here to get draw and did the job they set out to do on the day. Obviously we had the better chances but couldn't quite put the ball away on the day. That result took us to a run of three games unbeaten however and it was important to keep a clean sheet and not get beaten.

After that match the lads travelled up to Hull and secured an excellent 2-0 win at the KC Stadium. I spoke to some of the lads after the match, it was a great result and everyone was confident we would go up there and beat them.

Hull had a few of their main players out when we played them but it was a brilliant performance because we also had a number of players out. We seem to be able to dig out some great results away from home in cup competitions though and it was a superb day for everyone concerned. You could tell that it was a very good team effort by the papers ratings for every player and what everyone was saying about the way the boys played after the match.

The FA Cup draw always seems to be a bit gutting doesn't it, and it always seems that the next ball out is a big, big club. I suppose we should not forget that Blackburn have won the Premier League so they are certainly not a small club. Depending on the replay we could have ended up travelling to Cardiff but

we have done quite well there too. A trip to Blackburn would be a great day for Dannys and we know we can go there and compete against teams like that at a higher level.

It's also difficult to believe that we nearly always get an away draw in the FA Cup. Yeovil Town always seem to get big ties, we don't get the top clubs or get home draws, it's just the way it always seems to go. On this season's form though, the lads are probably happy going away from Layer Road because we have done a lot better on the road.

Winning formula

In previous seasons it has been our home form that has kept us up and we need to rediscover that winning formula at home. If you look at the performances the lads put in at Luton and against Oldham they were more battling than anything else. On other occasions we have done well in our attacking play but ended up losing. If we can keep putting good team performances together and couple that with the attacking side our game then we will find the winning formula.

We are down there in that relegation scrap now but we have got to concentrate on what we are doing ourselves and not look at what anyone else is doing. It is not nice for anyone to take six points off you in a season and the fact that MK Dons have done that to us as a team in a lower position in the League is very disappointing. We have to put that behind us now though, look forward to the rest of our games and try to get as many wins as possible.

The last couple of weeks have summed our

season up; we go to Hull and win 2-0 then travel to MK Dons and lose 2-0. We do have a very young side and a lot of our experienced players are not involved at the moment. Some of our best players haven't been involved much all season but hopefully our young players can learn and start adapting to the difficulties we have had.

I watched the game when we drew 2-2 at Luton less than a month ago, they are organised and consistent but not head and shoulders above everyone else this league. It seems like it is a funny division this season because every team can beat one another. Not one team we have watched has made us think: "Oh, they will do well," and that has been illustrated by our own form in the last two games. Luton have been consistent though and that has got them where they are now.

Today gives us an opportunity to welcome Rowan Vine back to Layer Road. When he came here on loan last season he did not see himself as a winger but he played there, showed he was a very talented player and was our second top scorer. The one time he played up front he scored a hat trick against Coventry and he has shown can do it as a striker. If he wasn't a good player he wouldn't be at Portsmouth and on loan at a club who are top of this division.

Viney used to travel in with me and some of the other lads and we got on well with him. I must say though that he has still got the worst gear I have ever seen, especially the tracksuit and baseball cap he wore for his interview with Sky after the Coventry game!

Enjoy the game,

Doogie



WAYNE'S WORLD

They say that a week can be a long time in politics - and that adage certainly rings true in the footballing environment as well.

The U's had a successful Christmas period and brought their festive fixtures to a close with a first class performance to knock Hull City - then leaders of League One and a side with nine straight wins - out of the FA Cup.

It was widely described as one of the U's most complete team performances in years. The Tigers could not compete with a Colchester side on top of their game, and one missing several key players at that.

Fast forward seven days, though, and the U's hit rock bottom with a 2-0 defeat at relegation threatened Milton Keynes Dons. Whilst the performance in itself was a shock, the fact that it came so soon after the supreme quality of the Hull win made it even more surprising.

U's captain Wayne Brown was livid after the match when he spoke to press, including the U's Review editorial team. Not mincing his words, he said: "Make no mistake about it now, we are in a relegation battle, whether we like it or not.

"It's all very well beating teams in the cup and having a good run - which gets the spirit high - but despite our good Christmas run, we're still down there. Whatever we think, the lads know themselves that we're in a battle at that end of the table."

The results in the league previous to the Dons defeat had started to ease the U's away from the bottom four, but the reverse at the National Hockey Stadium means that they will have to go once again and try and establish another unbeaten run.

Central defender Brown played in all of the games over the festive period and with a run of clean sheets at the start of the year leading up to the Dons game, he had been pleased with how things have gone for Phil Parkinson's side.

"We've had a good Christmas period really and we've coped with a string of away games very well," he told U's Review on the Friday before the trip to MK Dons.

"The lads have to stay focussed now and the league has always been a priority. Whilst we haven't got the right results at home, we've done very well away."

Indeed, despite that 2-0 shocker, the U's record on the road stands up to any in the rest of the division. With just two defeat in their last ten away from Layer Road, the away day experience has been an enjoyable one for those who have followed Parky's side around the country.

Many theories have been put forward as to why the U's are better on their travels, but Wayne believes that size matters when it comes to the form away from home.

"Big pitches away from home suit us more," he added. "We can turn teams around a lot more easily whereas here, it's quite tight and any ball over the top has to be quite pinpoint. Kevin Watson is able to get on the ball more on a big pitch and the lads seem to raise their game in bigger and better stadiums."

The U's have also shown a strong team spirit in recent weeks and, since the Luton game back at the end of December, they have become the latest side to perform a team huddle before the game gets underway.

It is another thing that has sparked plenty of discussion amongst the club supporters and Wayne explained just what happens once the lads congregate just before the first whistle from the referee.

Together

"It's a funny one, because the gaffer brought it in before the Luton game. With myself as captain, I designate people to do the talk before the game and it is a bit of banter, but also bring us closer together, especially with the number of games we've had over Christmas.

"We spoke before the Christmas period and agreed that this could be the period that would make or break our season. The lads have risen to the challenge and done very well."

The U's have also developed a strong and resolute character at the back as the season has developed, with the emergence of Pat Baldwin being one of the biggest pluses of the campaign to date.

With hard work on the training ground, the U's have become a difficult team to break down and the three clean sheets at the start of 2005 have shown that, if the strikers can hit the back of the net, Colchester will soon start to rise up the table.

"It had been a very frustrating season for those at the back," he continued. "Sometimes the lads have been doing very well at the back, but the opposition always seems to manage to sneak a goal. You need a little bit of luck in football and in recent games we've been keeping clean sheets and, from a defender's point of view, it is very pleasing because that's what you tend to base your game on."

And the U's captain had a word for one of the squad's youngest players who has made a real impression during the course of the season, Dean Gerken.

"The run of results of late been especially good for Deano," Wayne pointed out. "He's a young lad and he's gone in goal and before this recent run, he hadn't been on the winning team. It's good to put that record to bed and keep clean sheets at the same time, so it's been good for him."

The back four has been settled in recent weeks and that has begun to show on the pitch as well. Deano has had the same players in front of him over the past few games and it has begun to bear dividends as the defence increasingly look like a unit that has played together for years.

Wayne has played his part in that, although he had to wait for his chance to regain his place in the team after serving a suspension at Blackpool. His form in recent weeks means that he is likely to stay in the team for a while yet, though.

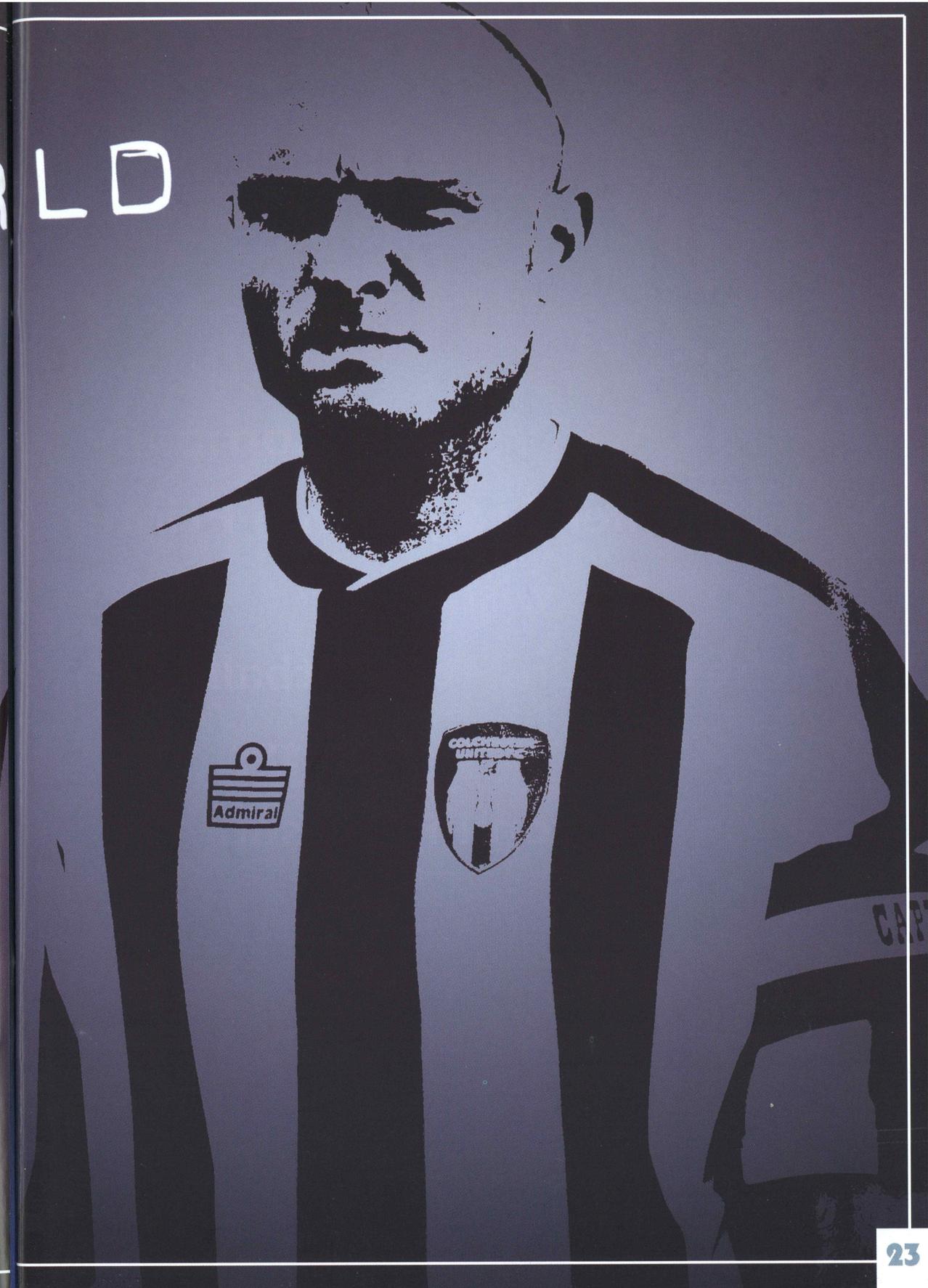
Wayne admitted: "I think having a settled group of players helps - you tend to get a little relationship together with the lads that you ply with a lot. You tend to learn their game and they get to know yours, so you it's easier to read what they're going to do and partnerships tend to form.

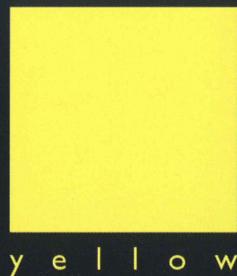
"Me and the gaffer had a talk about that suspension and it was just unfortunate really to get suspended for something out of nothing. The lads then did well when I was out of the team, but he has since put me back in as well as keeping faith with many of the lads who did well.

"I've come here to play football and the more I'm in the team, the more I'm going to be happy. The competition's good and if the players can come in and do a job when required, that's good for everyone."

If the U's are to continue their rise up the table in the coming weeks, they will do so under Wayne's leadership. Since the start of the season, he has been skipper whenever available and admits to relishing the role.

"I've enjoyed it to be honest," he confessed. "I wasn't expecting it when I came to the club, but with Daogie being out, the gaffer has to appoint someone and that has been me. It's a position that I've taken to and I will continue to do my best for the team."





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U'S VIEWS

With the 2004/5 season now past its halfway point, U's supporters have once again provided us with more of their views.

In this week's letters page, U's fans talk about recent events, and in particular the signing of Neil Danns from Blackburn just before Christmas. All contributions this time come from our highly popular official messageboard.

Over the course of the remainder of the season, we will again be looking for regular letter writers to contribute to this page so, if you want to see your name in the award winning matchday magazine in the next few months, 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

Wow, Just Wow!

I went to the FA Cup game against Hull a couple of weeks ago and just had to comment on what a fantastic stadium it is. We have been to quite a few nice grounds over the past couple of seasons, but this one makes some of the others look plain and average.

The facilities, the set up and the general layout of the ground are superb and I have to praise the club for the way that they looked after us on the day. If the new ground at Cuckoo Farm is anything like that - on a smaller scale of course - then we would be very fortunate indeed.

Fingers crossed that, within a couple of years, we will have other fans saying that we have people saying similar things about our new ground!

Geoff North

Let The Charge Commence!

2005 has got off to a great start so far, so hopefully we will see the U's push up the table to a more respectable position as the remaining games take place.

I was fortunate enough to go to both the Hull and the Swindon games and, although I didn't particularly enjoy the weather conditions at either, the football on display was excellent.



Pat Baldwin - 'excellent this season'

Firstly, the back four have done their bit by keeping clean sheets in crucial games and they have looked pretty impenetrable in recent matches. All have played their part, but much has to be said for the performances of Pat Baldwin, who has been excellent throughout the season.

Then the forward line has started to tick regularly and the team are looking in great shape going into the final third of the season. With the cup runs that we've already had this year, you'd hope that a respectable league finish - if not an improvement on last season - would mean that it has been another excellent season under Phil Parkinson.

Again, we will have our role to play as supporters and I think that there is plenty to be positive about as we finish off 2004/5.

Frank Hodgson

Danns The Man

I am just writing to add my words of praise to those

who wrote in the last matchday magazine with regard to the recent addition of Neil Danns to the Colchester United squad.

We saw in the matches he played for us earlier in the season that Neil is a player of exceptional quality so, to sign him on a permanent basis is a real coup for the club and Parkey in particular.

With the team looking for a spark, there was a lot of expectation on Neil's shoulders when he returned to the fold at the end of last year but, in his matches to date, he appears to have taken on that responsibility with some relish.

Hopefully, like many of the other young players that Parkey has added to the squad in recent months, we will see Danns continue to flourish in the blue and white stripes and lift us up the table. Even if we fall marginally short this year, I feel we have a squad of real substance to give us a decent chance of achieving something memorable in 2005/6.

Roy Lord

GROUND NEWS

A new community stadium for Colchester is now on the verge of reality after the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott has said he won't stand in the way of further progress.

The three partners involved in bringing the project to fruition - Colchester Council, Colchester United Community Sports Trust and Colchester United Football Club - were delighted to hear that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have decided not to call in the planning application made for the Community Stadium.

Had he chosen to do so, it could have seen a public inquiry, something that can often last in excess of a year. However, with national office happy with the outline plans, it will be left to the local planning authority to determine the precise details.

That means that the stadium is on the verge of being built and, whilst detailed work now needs to be done on the funding agreement, in essence

Colchester Borough Council will look to borrow £8million to help fund the £12 million cost of the Community Stadium itself.

U's Chief Executive Marie Partner told the matchday magazine: "In the last three meetings, I have been pleased with how the partnership now in place has taken things forwards in leaps and bounds.

Exciting

"On behalf of the club, I would say that these are now very exciting times and we are now in a position to discuss what are essentially cosmetic issues. We have overcome many major hurdles in recent months and those hurdles that remain are standard issues that have to be ticked off for any standard planning process.

"Hopefully, these will be overcome as quickly as those challenges that have been put before us in recent months and things will continue to move forward at this rapid rate."

And, following a meeting of all the partners involved in the Colchester Community Stadium on

Tuesday morning, agreement has been reached, in principle, on the funding arrangements of the new Community Stadium.

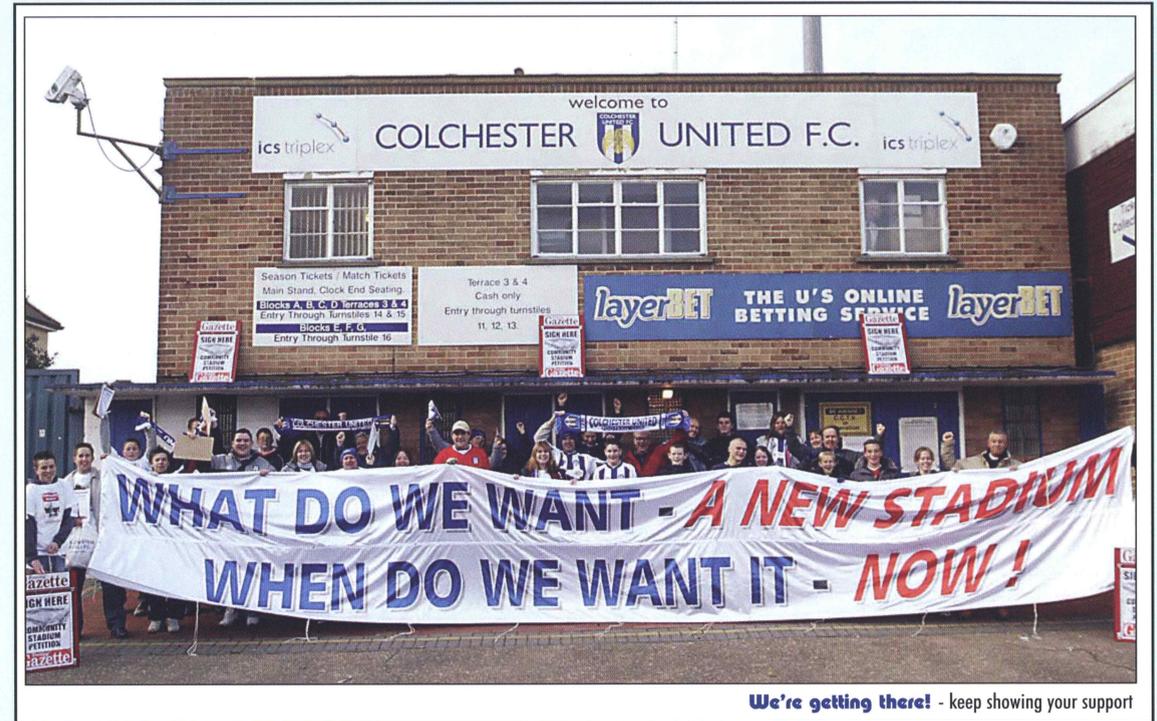
The partners also agreed to aim for having the Stadium built and opened in the Spring of 2007 although they accepted that a significant amount of work still needs to be done in order to reach this opening date.

Initial discussions have also taken place with Essex County Council highways on the traffic management issues associated with the additional traffic on match days once the stadium is open, and before the junction on the A12 has been built. Again, further detailed assessment needs to be done on traffic management issues, but the detailed work will now commence on highways matters.

The partnership will also be liaising directly with the local community, and in particular, Myland Parish Council where a meeting will be organised between the partners and the Parish Council to discuss the proposals as they are developed in detail. All parties are conscious of the need to ensure that the local



Putting our point across - The petition is delivered



We're getting there! - keep showing your support

residents in the area are satisfied with the traffic arrangements in and out of the stadium itself.

Colchester United Sports Trust are delighted that two five-a-side pitches will be included in the build programme for the Community Stadium as part of the overall cost of the project. The trust will now look to raise further funding to provide further community facilities as the stadium project develops.

There is still a significant amount of detailed work to be done on the overall design of the Stadium; the financial arrangements in detail; the highways and traffic management issues; and the community benefits which should be included within the Stadium project itself.

However, the partnership is now fully committed to progressing the Community Stadium project as quickly as possible, aiming for an opening date of Spring 2007.

A timetable of events

Next step - agree to transport plans, address concerns from Myland Parish Council.

June - full business plan completed and agreed by all parties.

July - Colchester Council's cabinet agrees to securing an £8million loan.

September - full planning application submitted.

Early 2006 - building work begins.

Spring 2007 - Colchester United play their first game at the new stadium; Layer Road sold off for development and money helps pay off the loan.

Several years time - stadium could be extended to 18,000 seats to cope with growing supporter base.

Backing

Whilst meetings go on amongst those with the power to make the decisions, the support and backing for the ground from the general public grows ever stronger by the week.

Led by the efforts of the Colchester Community Stadium Action Group (CCSAG), the petition total is over 16,000 and is rapidly approaching the 17,000 total.

CCSAG committee member Rob Knight told the matchday magazine: "Many thanks to those who have taken the few seconds it takes to make your mark!

"An interim presentation was made on Thursday

6th January to the Department of Media, Culture and Sport in London, but the campaign continues, with the more people signing, the better.

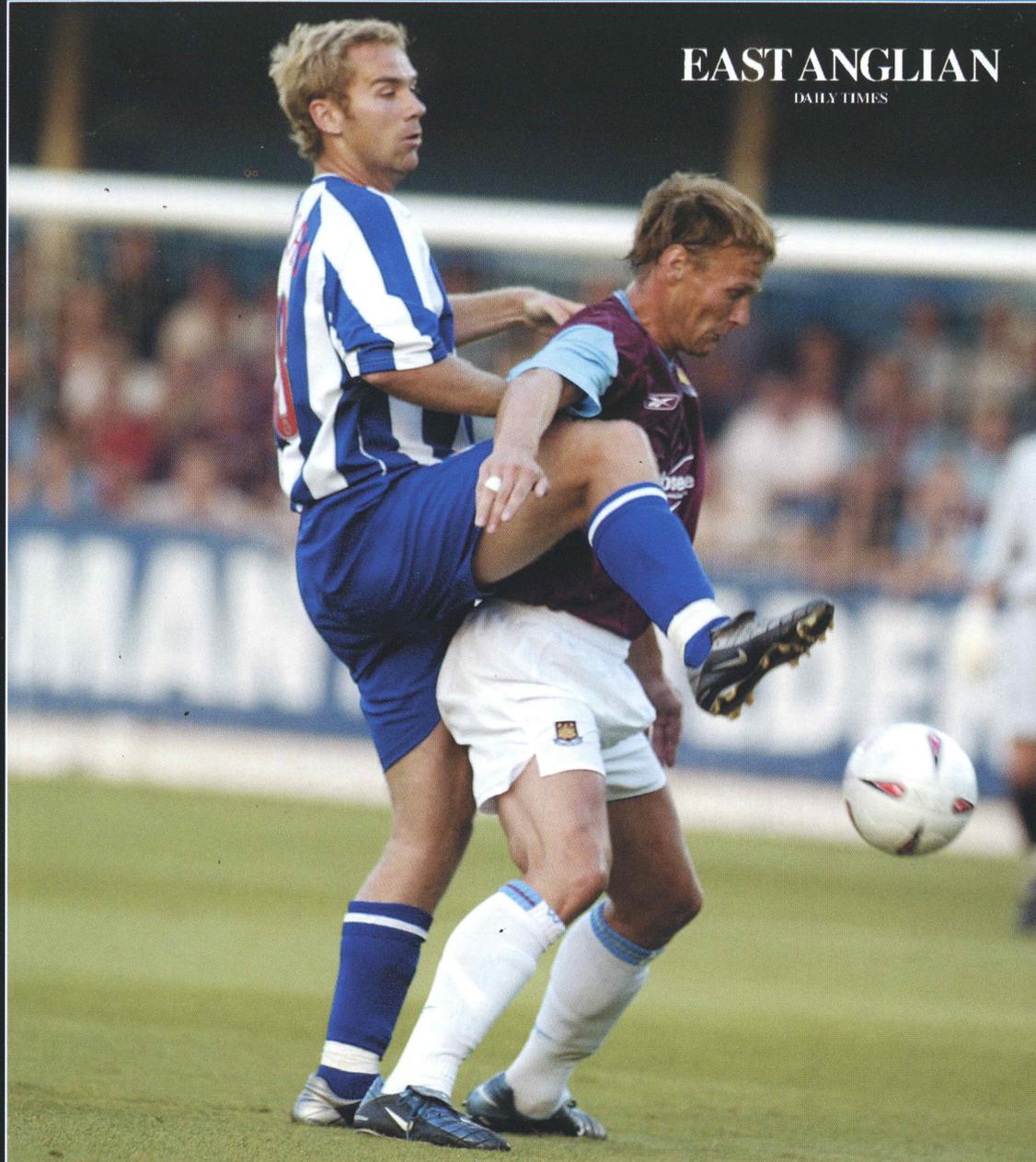
"Colchester United supporters (and CCSAG members) will continue to gather signatures at all home games, concentrating mainly on visiting fans, but also any locals who have not yet signed a petition sheet."

CCSAG are currently in the process of finalising a website detailing their activities in the coming weeks - but they are always looking for people to come along and aid them in the collection of signatures for the new ground.

So, if you're feeling mobilised, then be sure to contact Rob Knight. He asks that if you have any ideas about collecting at your school, workplace or any other location, then let him know. Rob can be contacted on his mobile which is 07890 096783.

Having had a presence in the town centre this morning, CCSAG will be collecting signatures tomorrow outside Sainsburys in Tollgate between 10.30am and 12.30pm, so if you're doing your shopping there be sure to keep your eyes open for them!

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COLCHESTER UNITED FC



LOOKING BACK WITH CARL MARSTON

5 YEARS AGO

Super sub Lomana Lua Lua produced another of his quality goals to finally break the resolve of nine-man Wycombe Wanderers, securing a 1-0 win at Layer Road on Tuesday, January 18, 2000.

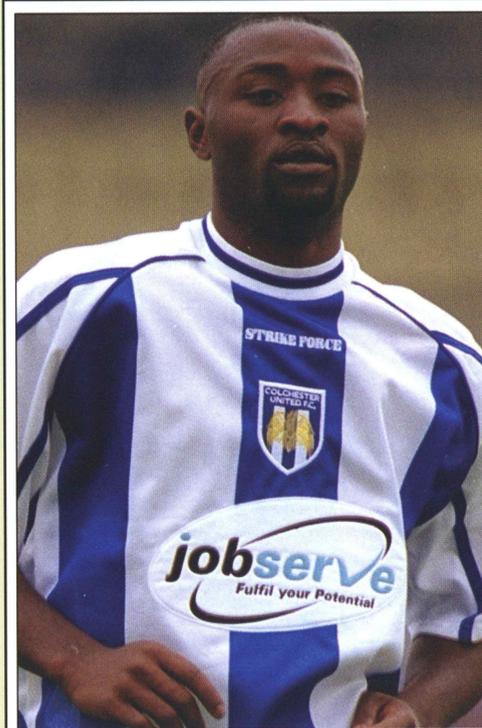
Wanderers boss Lawrie Sanchez had to be restrained by colleagues after the match as he attempted to confront referee Keith Hill, who had sent off two of his players in an eventful Division Two clash.

Midfielders Michael Simpson and Steve Brown were both dismissed after committing two bookable offences on a busy evening for Mr Hill. He also flashed five other yellow cards. Simpson saw red on 31 minutes after committing two crude tackles within a five-minute period, while Brown was sent off in the 58th minute.

Wycombe still clung on by their finger-tips until nine minutes from time, when a wonder strike from Lua Lua broke the deadlock, and also broke Wycombe hearts. He unleashed a 20-yarder that flew into the far corner of the net, giving keeper Martin Taylor no chance. It was Lua Lua's ninth goal of the season, helping the U's to pull further away from the relegation zone.

United now lie in 15th spot, nine points clear of the bottom four.

U's line-up: Brown, Dunne, Keith, Greene, R Johnson, G Johnson, D Gregory (sub Lua Lua, 46), McGavin, Dozell, Duguid, Moralee



Lomana Trevor Lua Lua - late stunner

10 YEARS AGO

Steve Wignall was appointed the new manager of Colchester United on Thursday, January 12, 1995.

Wignall, who learnt much of his footballing trade as a player at Layer Road, signed a two-and-half year contract. He becomes the third man to fill the U's hot seat in the last eight months. Roy McDonough was sacked last summer, and his successor George Burley resigned on Christmas Eve, to take up the manager's post at Ipswich Town.

New man Wignall, 40, is keen to continue where Burley left off. "I consider myself a lucky man to take over a club that is going so well. I am not looking to rock the boat too much" added Wignall.

Wignall's first match in charge ended in a 1-1 home draw against Barnet. Lee Hodges broke the deadlock for the Bees before half-time, but Trevor Putney netted an equaliser within four minutes of the restart.

U's line-up: Emberson, Betts, English, Cawley, Caesar, Locke, Putney, Dennis, Thompson (sub Fry 82), Kinsella, Abrahams.

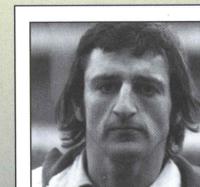
20 YEARS AGO

BAD weather resulted in there only being three league games during January, 1985.

The U's began the year with a fine 2-2 draw at Wrexham on New Year's Day. Russell Irving and Ian Phillips were on target for the U's. It was another 26 days before the U's had another League fixture.

* Roger Osborne scored the only goal in a 1-0 home win over Bury.

U's line-up: Chamberlain, Farrell, Phillips, Parkinson, Day, Groves, Godbold, Osborne, Bowen, Adcock, Irving. Sub: Houston.



Roger Osborne - only goal



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DAVID GREGORY



Route-Finder

It is not too often that fans are not sure whether they prefer a home or away draw in the next round of the FA Cup. There must have been a few U's fans in this predicament as they awaited the Fourth Round draw after our terrific win at Hull City. As much as we were due a home tie, recent statistics make good reading. We had been drawn away in the previous six FA Cup draws, suffering only one defeat. And, as we all remember, we only narrowly lost that one at Sheffield United last season.

It was no surprise then, to see ball number ten (Colchester United), being drawn out by big Neville Southall as the away side. Obviously, the home side had already been drawn so we knew we would be up against Cardiff or Blackburn. I wonder how many U's fans were onto their well-used route finders that afternoon looking up Ninian Park and Ewood Park.

As the replay went Blackburn's way, it is another opportunity for us to visit a Premiership ground. When was the last time the U's played at two top flight grounds in one season? Answers on a postcard - my hunch would be that this is the first time it has ever happened. As the lads proved at Southampton, we can mix it with Premiership players. We can go to Blackburn with nothing to lose and have the quality to cause an upset by winning or bringing them back to Layer Road.

Under Pressure

After last Saturday's disappointing defeat at the



Ewood Park - next venue in The U's march to Cardiff!

hands of lowly MK Dons, I had a little look at the differences in our home and away form. It is a testament to our generally good away form this season that this defeat came as a shock to me. Mind you, hearing Phil Parkinson after the game, it seems we got what we deserved despite an improvement in the second half.

I know that statistics can be used to somewhat distort things and results don't always truly reflect performances, but it seems that we are more successful away from Layer Road. We have won as many league games as we have at home and we have also lost fewer games on our travels. We have also gained more points, scored more goals and have a better goal difference away from home.

The obvious question is why does this happen? Not just to us but to lots of clubs. I feel that players can feel under a bit more pressure to perform in

front of their own fans rather than in away fixtures. It is rather like the chicken and egg situation - which came first?

Does the crowd lift the players to perform better or does the players performing well, lift the crowd? Obviously it works both ways, but it is harder for our team to automatically outplay the opposition than it is for us to cheer the lads on from the first whistle. We shouldn't wait for a goal or a shot before we start making some noise.

Mytic Greg

I think I am the same as every Colchester United fan when I say that my most wished-for prediction for 2005 would be a long unbeaten run that saw us ultimately gain promotion to the Championship. Of course it will be tough, but there are plenty of games left to overhaul the thirteen points between us and sixth placed Bristol City.

It would be a great achievement to get into one of those play-off positions and we all know what can happen in the play-offs!

My other wish for 2005 is further development of the stadium plans. I have already signed the petition for our new home and hope that all of you have too. If not, why not? Everyone at the football club, all our fans and the Evening Gazette have proved how much a new stadium is wanted and I hope this year sees us much nearer Cuckoo Farm.

I had my best years at Layer Road, so will miss it but I understand that we have outgrown the place and need somewhere bigger and better.

Hopefully, I will be watching us playing Championship football in our new stadium in the near future.

Enjoy the game,

David Gregory

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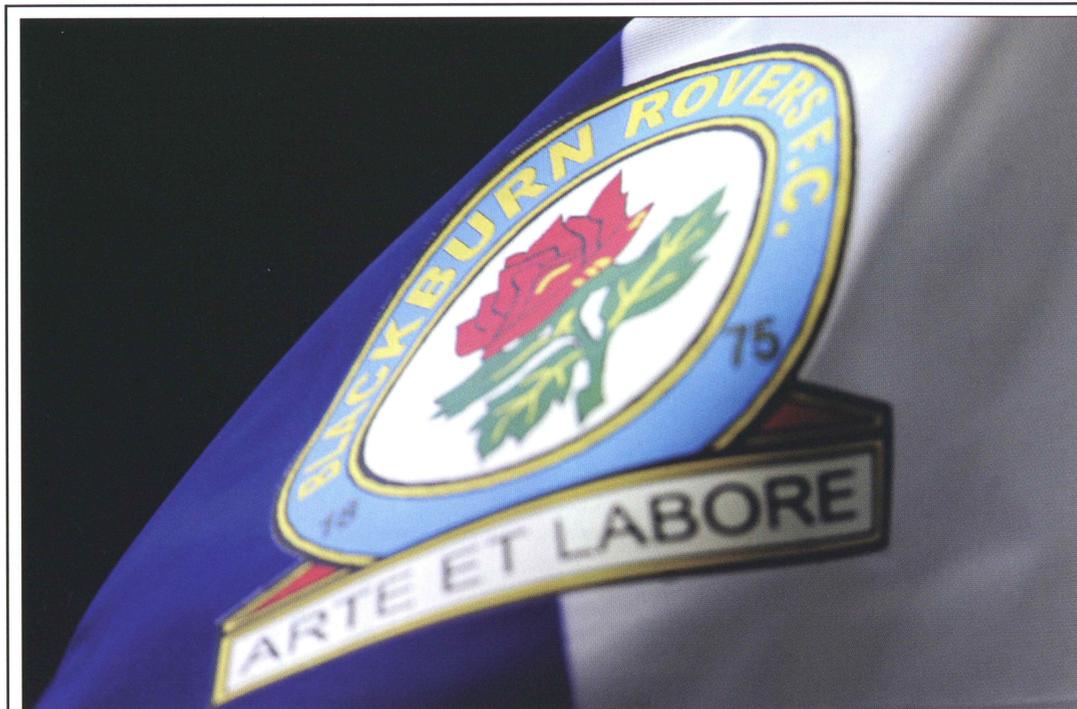
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FA CUP TICKET NEWS



Blackburn bound - got your ticket yet?

Colchester United are now able to confirm ticket prices for the FA Cup match against Blackburn Rovers - and it's good news for season ticket holders!

The U's are set to take their full allocation of 4,900 tickets for the game at Ewood Park next Saturday and, as such, we have decided to make the tickets freely available for all supporters.

Tickets arrived at Layer Road yesterday and were available on general sale to all fans from midday. An initial allocation of 1,900 will be sent to the U's, with more to follow if required.

With a sizeable allocation and only eight days of sales, the decision has been made to allow unlimited purchases per customer.

Prices Are As Follows:-

£20 for adult non-season ticket holders and young adult non-season ticket holders
£15 for adult season ticket holders in advance
£10 for young adult season ticket holders in advance

£10 for senior citizens (in advance and on the day, whether a season ticket holder or not)
£5 for juniors (in advance and on the day, whether a season ticket holder or not)

Age Limits:-

In terms of age limits, 'young adults' are termed as those aged between 16 and 21, whilst 'juniors' are termed as those aged up to 15.

On The Day:-

Season ticket holders should note that their discounted price is only available ahead of the matchday. Should they end up buying on the day itself, they will pay the full £20.

Additional Sales Periods:-

Please note that we will also be selling AFTER the games against Luton and Walsall, allowing supporters maximum opportunity to get their hands on tickets.

Postal Deliveries

We will not be posting out tickets - all tickets purchased should be collected from the Ticket

Office, whilst tickets bought by exiled supporters will be taken up by U's staff to be collected on Saturday. Please also note that we will not be taking e-mail bookings - please call 0871 226 2161 to buy your tickets.

The Blackburn Game

Should the game against Blackburn Rovers require a replay, then the U's League One match against Tranmere Rovers is set to be postponed.

The suggested replay date for Round Four ties is Tuesday, February 8th but, with Rovers already having a number of players called up for international duty that week, that date is one that is unavailable for the Premiership side.

As such, the FA have advised that the replay date at Layer Road should be Saturday, February 12th, meaning that the U's away trip to Prenton Park would have to be called off.

However, the agreement in place is that the Tranmere game will stay in place for now - only being postponed should the original tie between Blackburn and Colchester not end in a definitive result the first time out.

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STUART AYLES



Since my last set of notes, **Hem Izzet** has had to undergo an operation on his right ankle after being unable to make the final step from functional rehabilitation to training.

We took him to see the ankle specialist that we saw back in September regarding his left ankle. He examined Kem and decided that further physiotherapy and strengthening would not allow him to make that final step and therefore suggested an operation would be necessary.

This was carried out last week with great success and Kem has spent seven days in plaster from his toes to his knee. A plaster cast was removed on Thursday and replaced with a lightweight fibreglass cast to allow us to begin rehabilitation.

I was fortunate enough to be present during the operation and the extent of damage to Kem's ankle was quite remarkable. He had damage to the joint surface, the lining of the joint, the bones at the front of the joint, one of the ligaments, right underneath the joint, had partly pulled off the bone and another ligament was so stretched it was totally unable to do its job in stabilising the ankle.

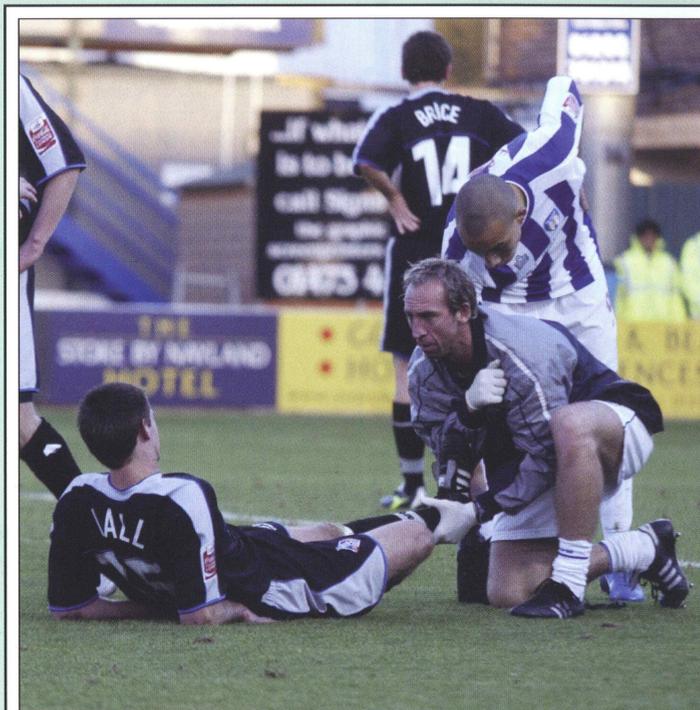
This particular ligament was cut and stitched back together, making it shorter and tighter. Because of the extent of the damage, it means that Kem will unfortunately miss the rest of the season.

It was amazing to see extent of damage considering that during the previous three weeks Kem had been running, twisting, turning and kicking a ball with only mild discomfort. These injuries could only have been fully realised through opening him up with this operation.

The surgeon said he would have advised us to take exactly the same course of action (a long period of physiotherapy to try and settle the ankle down) had we seen him three months prior to this surgery.

Unfortunately that was not going to solve the problem and Kem will now be in progressive rehab for the next three months and we will keep you posted on his progress throughout this time. Obviously this is tough for Kem but he has some closure now and knows what he is aiming for in terms of rehab.

Aidan Davison has missed the last four games with a groin injury he picked up on the training pitch on New Year's Eve - a great way to start the New Year! He has now been back in training for ten days and as all of you loyal travelling supporters will know he was on the bench last weekend of the game at Milton Keynes.



Stuart Ayles - gets confused as to what team to treat!

Richard Garcia was due to see a specialist yesterday having missed the fantastic FA Cup victory at Hull with a vague pain in his right hip and groin. This settled down after ten days of rest and treatment but flared up again after his 15 minutes at Milton Keynes last week and during training at the beginning of this week. I will inform you of the outcome of our consultation in Tuesday's programme.

Wave

If you happen to see an orange hedgehog madly cycling around Colchester give him a wave because it could well be Sam Stockley!

This will be due to Sam's new training programme that we have designed to enable him to deal with an ongoing muscle imbalance problem around the pelvis. We would normally pull somebody out of playing for three months with this condition but as the orange hedgehog is a vital member of the squad we are trying a different approach.

We came up with this idea after discussing Sam's problem with a local bike shop salesman who has

subsequently charged us £3,000 for a bicycle with a nice wicker shopping basket. No, we actually devised this fitness regime following our meeting with a specialist in pelvic derangement.

In all seriousness we need to offload Sam's hip to allow us to re-educate muscles that work around the hip and pelvis, which maintain correct alignment and stability whilst re-training these muscles to allow Sam's body to adapt. If there is anyone out there who is happy to offer us the use of a mountain bike with suspension we would genuinely like to hear from you at the club.

I will let you know how Sam gets on in his cycling proficiency test and bring you up to date with Karl Duguid's progress in Tuesday edition of U's Review.

Stuart

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ONE WORLD



They said it...

*A selection of recent quotes from around the
Coca-Cola League One...*

"Mansfield contacted the club over Christmas after Carlton Palmer got the job there. He'd seen me play when he was at Stockport and it was nice of him to show an interest.

"The gaffer could have sent me there without giving me the option but he said it was up to me if I wanted to go there on loan and I told him I wanted to stay and fight for my place. Other clubs have rang me up a few times since and it's nice to be wanted.

"Mansfield didn't feel right at the time but there are other clubs in League Two that have shown an interest and I might have to consider going to one of them to get some regular football.

"I need to take a look at my options and I've got to be playing games."

Swindon Town defender Andy Nicholas considers his options

"The exposure generated by what happened on Saturday gives me something to build on.

"I don't want to be remembered for just one game. In five years' time, I don't want people to be saying 'what happened to that goalkeeper who played so well against Manchester City'. I don't want to be remembered for just one game.

"Over the last couple of months I have been getting back to my best, although I guess I was under the microscope far more on Saturday because of the importance of the game."

Oldham keeper Les Pogliacomini insists he wants to make the most of his experience in the FA Cup

"The Peterborough match will have to be switched from a Saturday to a Tuesday night, and that will mean a lower gate and around £7,500 in lost income. Although I am green with envy, I have to say 'Good Luck' to Exeter. "But, in slight contrast to City, we made hardly anything from the Hincley tie and the FA Cup will end up costing us money this season. We didn't get through the early rounds this time, and Exeter did."

Gulls chairman Mike Bateson rues the club's contrasting fortunes to local neighbours Exeter in the FA Cup

"We're going through a rough patch, but we're giving it 100%, both in matches and on the training field, and it was a bit disappointing to hear the booing at the end," said Clarke.

"We had a great season last time, ending with a fantastic day down in Cardiff for the play-off final, and it's easy to forget how much progress we've made since the club almost closed.

"Perhaps we've all been spoiled a little, and having moved into a higher division with better and richer clubs, we're holding our own.

"Of course as players, we want to do much better than that, and at times like this, when we don't seem to be getting much luck, we really need the supporters to stick with us. You hear players say good backing is like having a 12th man and it's spot-on."

Huddersfield defender Nathan Clarke pleads for patience from the club's supporters



"He will be out for a long time but it is too early to estimate the length of his rehabilitation. I will be offering him a new contract even though he has this injury.

"I could not sleep at night if I turned my back on a player who was injured while wholeheartedly committing himself on the pitch for this football club. He is upset and, it's fair to say, devastated. But on the other hand, he has been told that he will come back to full fitness a better person and a better player with a career ahead of him."

Brentford boss Martin Allen offers Alex Rhodes a new contract, despite the youngster's serious knee injury



Nathan Clarke - appeal to the fans



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U18'S



Joe Dunne

The lads were back in action last Saturday after a break from competitive action during the festive period.

We ensured that they were kept fit by continuing our training during that time as well as giving them a fitness test just before Christmas.

One thing that I am very much into is the fitness and professionalism of players. You have to keep yourself fit and look after yourself and we spoke to them about that before Christmas. They have come back, been checked again and I'm very pleased with how well they've come back.

It's been proven that that has worked by the way we've trained lately and the way that we performed in our first match of the year against Portsmouth. That is of great credit and great testament to the players.

If you think about what makes a player, it is not

only the skill and ability that counts. They only use that for a certain amount of time during the week and that's on a Saturday afternoon and bits and pieces during the week in training.

Therefore, what else does the week hold? You're going to spend more time away from football than at football and it's what you do in that time away that counts, that is to say your attitude to food and drink.

My players have taken a lot of notice of that and have come back in great shape. The average weight is higher this year than last year, with the players physically stronger and taller than years gone by. You look at the power element and that proved crucial in our win over Portsmouth this time last week.

Chances

The first half saw us spar for a bit, then we started to get on top, creating numerous chances. In the second half, the fitness element came into play and we went on to dominate the game.

Those chances kept coming and we had pace up front and strength in midfield. We play with three strikers and we scored two from set pieces - one from Craig Hughes, the other from Matt Paine - and then Jamie Guy scored another one of his wonder goals. He beat eight players on his way to goal and even if he claims it was nine, we're going to stick with eight!

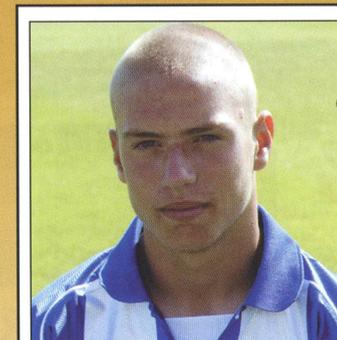
Then to cap it all, we put on the three schoolboys who have been offered terms for next year - Tom Devaux, Tom Webb and Stephen Opoka. Tom Webb scored a fantastic twenty yard lob over the keeper.

It was a great result for the lads and a real boost for everyone involved. It certainly made life easier in the build up to Thursday's game, as it was the system we wanted to play and it meant we had positives to work with during the week.

Joe Dunne



Craig Hughes - set-piece strike



Jamie Guy - wonder goal



2004/2005 League Fixtures

Under 18s

AUGUST

14	Brighton & HA (H)	L0-1
21	Portsmouth (H)	L2-3

SEPTEMBER

11	Southend United (H)	L0-2
18	Wycombe Wdrs (A)	W1-0
25	QPR (H)	L0-1

OCTOBER

9	Leyton Orient (A)	D0-0
16	Gillingham (H)	W5-4
23	Brentford (A)	D0-0
30	Southend Utd (A)	W3-1

NOVEMBER

6	Wycombe Wdrs (H)	W1-0
13	QPR (A)	L0-1
20	Leyton Orient (H)	L0-2

DECEMBER

4	Gillingham (A)	L0-1
11	Brentford (H)	D1-1
18	Brighton & HA (H)	D0-0

JANUARY

15	Portsmouth (A)	W4-1
----	----------------	------

	Pd	W	D	L	F	AGd	Pt
Leyton Orient	15	9	3	3	22	11	30
QPR	15	8	4	3	27	16	28
Brentford	15	6	8	1	26	19	7
Portsmouth	14	6	3	5	26	23	3
Brighton & HA	15	5	4	6	26	21	5
COLCHESTER UTD	16	5	4	7	19	20	-1
Gillingham	15	4	5	6	25	36	-11
Southend United	14	3	4	7	18	29	-11
Wycombe Wdrs	15	1	5	9	15	29	-14

U16'S

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



Youth Team Fixtures - 2004/2005

Under 16s

SEPTEMBER

4	Northampton Tn (H)	W5-2
11	Oxford United (A)	L1-5
18	Wycombe Wdrs (H)	W2-1

OCTOBER

2	Leyton Orient (H)	L0-1
9	Cambridge Utd (A)	L2-3
16	Luton Town (A)	L1-2
23	Northampton Tn (A)	W4-1
30	Rushden & Dm'ds (H)	W4-3

NOVEMBER

13	Oxford United (H)	W5-2
27	Leyton Orient (A)	L1-4

DECEMBER

4	Cambridge Utd (H)	ko 11.00am
11	Luton Town (H)	ko 11.00am
18	Rushden & Dm'ds (A)	ko 11.00am

JANUARY

15	Wycombe Wdrs (A)	W2-1
22	Northampton Tn (H)	ko 11.00am

FEBRUARY

5	Leyton Orient (TBC)	TBC
12	Cambridge Utd (A)	ko 11.00am
19	Luton Town (A)	ko 11.00am
26	Rushden & Dm'ds (H)	ko 11.00am

MARCH

5	Oxford United (A)	ko 11.00am
12	Wycombe Wdrs (H)	ko 11.00am

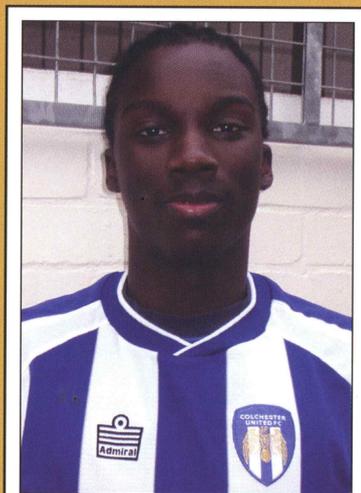
All home games to be played at the Colchester Garrison 'B' Ground

As with the Centre of Excellence, the U16s returned to training a couple of weeks ago, with sessions on the Monday and the Wednesday, before heading to Wycombe on Saturday.

We won that match against Wanderers 2-1 and it was a performance I was very pleased with because it was a young side that we put out on the day. There were four U14s, five U15s and the rest of the squad was made up with U16s players. It was a very good squad performance.

The goalscorers in the victory were Nathan Speed and Russell Malton. Nathan's goal was a superb strike - the ball has come to him some 35 yards from goal and, spotting the keeper off his line, he has hit it first time and it has flown over the keeper into the net.

We went into the game without the likes of Anthony Hughes, Tom Webb, Stephen Opoka and Tom Devaux



Stephen Opoka - signed up for next year

who all travelled with the U18s to Portsmouth. Congratulations must go to Joe's side as they went to Pompey and picked up a resounding 4-1 win.

Anthony played the whole ninety minutes with Mark Cousins away with the first team, whilst the other lads all got some match action - Tom Webb scoring a goal. On the back of their performances, all were set to be given a chance to be involved against Cardiff in the FA Youth Cup on Thursday.

As we go into the new year, we still have a number of trialists turning out for us at the moment. The U18s don't play today, so Joe will be with us to take a look at the remaining U16s and continue to make his decisions for next season.

Congratulations must go to Stephen Opoka, who has been awarded an apprenticeship with us for next year. That takes us to three already signed up for next season with Stephen following Tom Webb and Tom Devaux in putting pen to paper.

Stephen only joined us last season and came to us from London after writing a letter asking for a trial with the club. We receive many of these sorts of letter and every so often you will turn up something special.

He is 6'7 and a very athletic player, who makes the most of a good work ethic. He needs to improve his first touch but has scored nine or ten goals this season and has clearly impressed Joe when he has been watching.

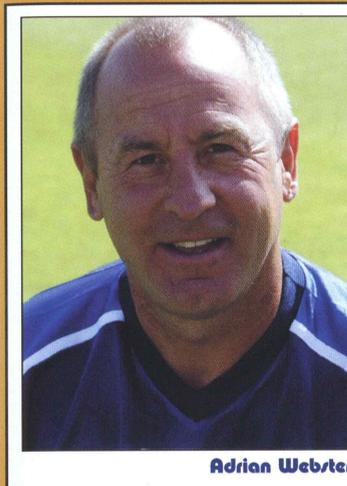
When Phil Parkinson arrived at the club, we had a chat about what his requirements would be for players coming through the ranks and we always bear this in mind when looking at lads at the moment.

Whereas Steve Whitton liked players who were technically good at receiving the ball and passing it on, Phil has asked for players with natural athleticism as he feels that in a full time environment, the technical side can always be improved.

Stephen certainly fits that bill and he will benefit from being in the system full time as of next season.

Make a move.

Adrian Webster
Youth Development Officer



Adrian Webster

We are now into the second half of the season and, looking back at the first half of the campaign, I am pleased with how it has gone, both in terms of results and performances.

After our Christmas break, we started up again last Wednesday with all of the lads from the various age groups training with us on Wednesday and Friday night.

Last weekend, we took on Wycombe Wanderers in games both at home and away. We won two of those matches and lost two and the two games we lost were in the matches involving combined age groups.

Although we had our younger lads out against Wycombe's older players, it was a good experience for the players and one that they will have learned a lot from.

For example, I watched our U11s/U12s take on their Wycombe counterparts in a game which we lost 5-3. The period of the game in which the match was

Centre of Excellence Fixtures...

DATE	OPPOSITION	U9	U10	U11	U13	U15
September						
5TH	Northampton Town	H	H	A	H	A
12TH	Oxford United	A	A	H	A	H
19TH	Wycombe Wdrs	H	H	A	A	A
26TH	Southend United	H	H	A	A	H
October						
10TH	Cambridge United	H	A	H	A	A
17TH	Luton Town	A	H	A	H	A
31ST	Rushden & Diamonds	H	H	A	A	H
November						
7TH	Northampton Town	A	A	H	A	H
14TH	Oxford United	H	H	A	H	A
21ST	Gillingham	A	H	A	A	H
28TH	Leyton Orient	H	H	A	H	A
December						
5TH	Cambridge United	A	H	A	H	H
12TH	Luton Town	H	A	H	A	H

lost was when our younger players were up against their older boys. I felt that we had the best players overall, just the experience of the slighter older lads told on the day.

During the course of that weekend, all of our players will have been given at least forty minutes of match play, before a three week break enforced by the way that the fixtures have fallen.

That sort of break does get in the way of the continuity we like to employ with the kids. We did try to get a fixture somewhere in the middle of the break to keep up fitness levels, but unfortunately, the other sides already have fixtures arranged during the course of the next month or so.

We were supposed to play Northampton but, due to their requirements, that fixture had to be rearranged and therefore we were back to square one with our problem.

To be honest, I think it is the first time I can think

of that we have had such a prolonged break in our fixtures since I have been here. The ironic thing is that usually this is the time of year where the pitches would be frozen and we would be subject to plenty of cancellations!

We now have to focus the lads for the next match on February 13th and ensure that we are ready for the run of fixtures that will take us to the end of the season in April.

Adrian Webster
Youth Development Officer

"I felt that we had the best players overall, just the experience of the slighter older lads told on the day."



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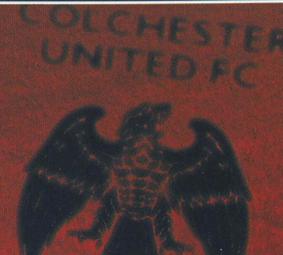
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FAN POWER



Football fans unite for Clubs in Crisis

As the U's head to Blackburn Rovers next Saturday, thousands of football fans from the country will be putting aside tribal differences in a day of unity for clubs on the brink of financial ruin.

On Saturday 29 January, fans from all over the country will descend on Wrexham's Racecourse Ground - for their match against Doncaster Rovers - in a mass display of solidarity to tell the Football Association and Football League: "Act now or clubs across the land will go out of existence".

Two months ago more than 10,000 fans gathered at the same ground in a Fans United day to draw attention to Wrexham's FC's own plight. The 132 year old club is in financial administration, has been docked 10 points by the Football League and faces eviction from its ground in just 183 days, on 21 July 2005.

Unless a buyer for the club is found Wrexham - who the U's will take on in late February - faces liquidation and will be the first football league club to go out of existence since Aldershot FC in 1992.

Many fans believe the club's plight is due to its owner Alex Hamilton, who wants to sell the ground for over £6million to property developers and has served the club an eviction notice.

But Wrexham is not alone.

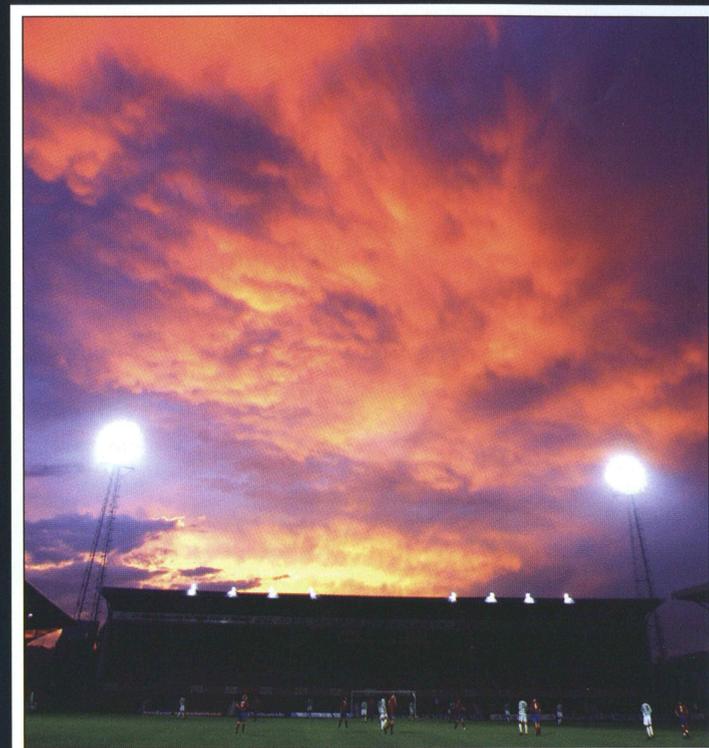
Clubs the length and breadth of the UK are in a similar plight: Brighton and Hove Albion, Burnley, Bury, Cambridge United, Dover Athletic, Hendon FC, East Stirlingshire, Gateshead, Grimsby Town, Rotherham and even former Premiership giants Leeds United are all currently facing uncertain futures.

Many more clubs have come close to collapse in the past year - Bradford City, York City and Notts County are high profile examples - while Telford United FC actually folded.

Fans from all these clubs are now being invited to gather at the Racecourse Ground and stand in their team colours alongside Wrexham and Doncaster fans in what promises to be a festival of a day.

Supporters from other clubs are also urged to attend to show their solidarity in the biggest display of fan unity ever seen. Those that cannot get to the game are asked to send a scarf, banner or team shirt to show support.

A Fans United spokesman and Brighton supporter Nic Outterside said: "It is 12 years since Aldershot FC went bust and in that time many other



The Racecourse Ground - uncertain future

football clubs have gone to the brink. In many cases these crises have been due to mismanagement or sheer greed by club owners or chairmen.

Homeless

"When we lost our own ground - sold by our chairman Bill Archer to build a retail park - we came within inches of going out of existence. Even now our club is homeless and survives on a season by season basis.

"The danger of Wrexham folding after 132 years of league football is real, and others are close behind in what could be a domino effect which would see many towns lose their football clubs forever.

"I urge every football fan to take part in the Clubs in Crisis day and tell the Football Association and Football League that the time has come to step in and save the heart of British football."

Simon Johnson of the Wrexham Supporters Trust added: "Football fans have had enough of being ignored. These are our teams and our stadiums and

we won't let the incompetence or greed of a few wealthy individuals take them away from us.

"Let us all stand together and show the powers-that-be that we are desperate to safeguard our clubs for future generations and we need their help."

The game against Doncaster Rovers is particularly poignant as the South Yorkshire club were themselves on the brink of extinction in 1998 with spiralling debts, relegation to the Vauxhall Conference and their owner Ken Richardson jailed for conspiring to set fire to the club's grandstand.

Bob Gilbert, an organiser and veteran of Doncaster Rovers own fight for survival, said: "Like at so many other clubs, nothing more than personal gain lay behind the ruin of Donny Rovers.

"In seeking that gain one man trampled on the dreams of thousands. And neither he, nor the FA nor the Football League ever cared.

"So I urge you, passionately, to turn up at the Racecourse on 29 January to show all these people that millions and millions of us do care."



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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Good Afternoon and welcome to Layer Road for this afternoon's clash with Luton Town.

Those of us chose to avoid the post-Christmas sales and ventured off to Luton on the 28th December will certainly be hoping for a similar performance from our lads this afternoon and hopefully this time we will secure a win over the high flying Hatters.

Talking of good performances, our trip to Hull City last week was nothing short of fantastic. A really excellent spirited display from us shook the Hull fans and had them shouting obscenities at their Manager and their team!

Even though they are currently top of the league it was our Col U lads who looked Championship material and the Tigers were certainly tamed. What a great day, and Parky has achieved another first by getting us into the Fourth Round for two consecutive seasons.

Executive Trip

Talking of the FA Cup — and isn't it nice that we're nearly at the end of January and can still talk about cup competitions! - we will be running an executive trip to Blackburn Rovers to cheer on the team in the Fourth Round. These trips have proven to be very successful in the past couple of years with visits to Coventry, Sheffield, Southampton and Hull all being enjoyed in some style and comfort by those who fancied a little bit extra for their cup experience. See Schultz's Shorts for more details.

Match Sponsor

It's a great pleasure to welcome back to Layer Road for this afternoon's game, Chris Ivory and his guests from Tolway Fixings. Tolway Fixings are based in Ipswich and have just completed fifteen years trading. Great U's supporters, Chris and his son

Josh are regulars at Layer Road. Many thanks Chris for the loyal support, enjoy your afternoon.

Matchball Sponsors

Joining us as Match Ball Sponsors for the first time this afternoon, welcome to Christine Smith. Christine is proprietor of Margery's Day Care Nursery based in Thorpe le Soken. Providing quality child care in secure and stimulating surroundings with full day care provision for children age 0-5 years. Christine is one of our Vice Presidents and her son, Mark is one of our mascots this afternoon. Have a great afternoon and thank you for your avid support of The U's.

Player of the Month

Greg Halford was voted Player of the Month for December and he is pictured below receiving his award from Alan Greenwood of the Co-op and Pam Laurie.



Greg is your top man - Greg Halford was voted your Player of the Month for December. He is seen here getting his award from Alan Greenwood of the award sponsors Co-op and lucky U's fan Pam Laurie who received a watch.

COMMERCIAL NEWS



Match Sponsor - Our Match Sponsors for the match against Oldham Athletic were our very own Colchester United Community Sports Trust. Their party is pictured here with John Schultz and the mascots of both sides

Get Involved!

With positive news relating to our move to a new stadium, it's a fantastic time to get involved with The U's. We must all pull together as supporters and get behind our club NOW if we want to see our team progress.

Whilst we may only have a short time left to play at Layer Road, we must still actively seek new support and sponsorship from businesses who wish to become part of our ever growing band of sponsors and play a part in our progression in the move from Layer Road.

The following packages are available:-

- Perimeter Board & Stand Sponsorships available - for remainder of current season and next season
- Programme Advertising available - promote your business from £100 + VAT
- Kit Sponsorships - for as little as £150 you can still sponsor the shirt of a first team player



Face in the Crowd - is it you?

Face in the Crowd

Is this you ringed above pictured sporting a new hairstyle at the Milton Keynes game? You have just won a meal for two at the Huntsman's Tavern! Call Julie on 01206 715306 to claim your prize.



Lawrence Bloomfield - receives a post-Christmas treat from Eddie the Eagle



Fore! - Winners of our recent Golf Day, Gary Moyes and Bill Woods, are presented with their awards by John Schultz

What a weekend lined up for the end of January.

Some of us will be doing both to support the club - would you like to join us?

C.U.F.C. 'BOXING DINNER' EVENING

Friday 28th January 2005 at Princes Theatre, Town Hall, Clacton-on-Sea. 7.00pm for 7.15pm start Black Tie/Dinner Dress Evening
We have a limited number of tables left for this night which in conjunction with The Essex A.B.A., which includes various Essex Championship Finals at Senior and Cadet Level at our Boxing Evening in Clacton-on-Sea.

Tickets are priced at £47.50 each or a Table of 10 is £450.00. This is a great chance to support the club and be involved in a Championship Boxing Event at the same time. Bout Sponsorship and Programme Advertising is also available so please do not hesitate to contact me to confirm your requirements.

EXECUTIVE TRIP TO BLACBURN ROVERS

Saturday 29th January 2005

Leave Layer Road at 7.00am

This executive trip includes the following:

- Three course meal in our own Private Lounge at the ground.
- Matchday programme.
- Seat with our OWN fans.
- Pick of own 'Man of the Match'.
- Private Pay Bar and bookmaker facility.
- Return to the lounge to relax after the game, before the return journey.
- Executive Coach Travel with hot drinks and toilet facilities.

This type of facility on a Premiership Match Day would cost from £100.00 + V.A.T. without any form of travel covered in that cost. We are pleased to confirm that the cost including travel and V.A.T. is £97.50. If you want to see and support the lads in style please contact me as soon as possible.

Look forward to hearing from you on either of the above or join the those of us doing both to support the club.

Up the U's.

John H. Schultz
Corporate and Promotions Consultant
Tel: 01206 767678
email john@colchesterunited.net

SUPER U'S GO SO CLOSE

LUTON TOWN 1 COLCHESTER UNITED 1

(LUTON WIN 2-1 ON AGGREGATE)

FROM THE EVENING GAZETTE, WEDNESDAY 27TH AUGUST 1997

THERE will be no Coca-Cola Cup glory for gallant Colchester United this season.

But the loyal band of travelling U's supporters who journeyed to Luton Town's Kenilworth Road ground last night stood as one to loudly cheer their heroes from the pitch as though they had triumphed in the Wembley final itself.

And rightly so - for Steve Wignall's brave and skilful Layer Road men produced some of their best football to date to dominate the second half of this First Round, second leg tie against their highly fancied Second Division hosts.

Luton found few answers to the powerful, surging runs of Steve Forbes; the tigerish tackling and midfield superiority of man-of-the-match Richard Wilkins and Paul Buckle; the energetic bustling and aerial dominance of big Mark Sale; the polished play of left-back Scott Stamps and a stunning 52nd minute equaliser from Ian Hathaway.

Add that little lot together and you've got 45 minutes of thrills and spills, non-stop action and excitement unequalled on any other ground in the country. But when your luck's out - your luck's out!

It simply wasn't meant to be Colchester's night from the moment young striker Karl Duguid cried off ill and skipper Wilkins found his car brakes seized on to the wheels.

Wilkins made it to the ground in his wife's car in the end, but the off-colour Duguid - who was due to make his first start of the season - was sent home within minutes of arriving at the team's pre-match hotel. Trailing by a Tony Thorpe goal to nil from the first leg tie at Layer Road two weeks earlier, the U's had to shuffle their pack just before kick-off, Hathaway coming into the side for Duguid.

Forbes taking the place of the injured ex-Luton midfielder Aaron Skelton and assistant manager Steve Whitton on the subs bench. Luton were forced

to make three changes. David Oldfield and Paul McLaren coming in for Graham Alexander and Andrew Fotiadis, plus 19-year-old third choice goalkeeper Nathan Abbey making his debut in place of Ian Feuer and the cup-tied England Under-21 International Kelvin Davis.

The changes didn't matter, for both teams set about their task with great relish - too much relish in McLaren's case. The Hatters striker was lucky to escape with a booking when he should have been shown the red card after only ten minutes for a deliberate kick and unprovoked attack on Buckle who had already been tackled to the ground.

Colchester should have snatched the lead inside the first 15 minutes. Paul Abrahams fired a great ball into the Luton area where Sale with time and room to do better screwed the gilt-edged chance inches wide with only Abbey to beat. Another great move involving Wilkins and Sale on the left resulted in Wilkins picking out Paul Abrahams on the angle of the 18-yard box.

Impressive

Abrahams volleyed wide again when he really should have scored. Impressive U's keeper Carl Emberson earned his corn with a great save down to his left to thwart a dangerous shot from Thorpe on the half-hour followed moments later by more swift reactions to snuff out the dangerous Marshall.

Abrahams clipped another angled shot just over, but the quicksilver Thorpe snatched the lead on the night ten minutes before the break to put the Hatters 2-0 ahead on aggregate. David Oldfield picked the top scorer out in great style and Thorpe turned towering U's defender Peter Cawley inside out before slipping the ball past Emberson from 15 yards.

Industrious U's deserved a better fate and Sale threatened to haul them back into the game three more times in quick succession just before the break.

Whatever U's boss Wignall said to his team at the interval clearly had a great effect and Abbey was forced to throw himself full-length to smother a dangerous effort from Hathaway only four minutes after the restart.

Minutes later the scores were level again on the night and what a cracking Hathaway goal it was. Abrahams won the ball near the right corner flag before hanging a long cross over the Hatters defence where Hathaway waited for the ball to drop before rifling a vicious left-foot volley across Abbey into the net.

It was all Colchester at this point and Sale had a shot cleared off the line by Steve Davis just past the hour after Abbey made a hash of an attempted punch. Luton hit back momentarily and Thorpe rattled a rasping 20-yard shot against the base of a post with Emberson well beaten.

The U's keeper brilliantly blocked another piledriver from substitute Stuart Douglas ten minutes from the end and followed up minutes later to deny Thorpe again. Thorpe was in the thick of the action yet again four minutes from the end but angled his shot just wide of the far post.

By then the U's fans were already on their feet hailing their vanquished heroes - whatever the score was destined to be.

Luton: Abbey; James, Thomas, Waddock, Davis, Johnson, Davies, McLaren, Oldfield, Thorpe, Marshall. Subs: Douglas (Davies 73). Not used: Evers, Showler.

U's: Emberson; Gregory, Stamps, Forbes, Greene, Cawley, Wilkins, Buckle, Sale, Abrahams, Hathaway. Subs: Adcock (Abrahams 68), Lock (Hathaway 83). Not used: Whitton.

Referee: David Orr (Ivor)

Attendance: 2,816

FRANCIS PONDER



Carl Emberson - inspired performance



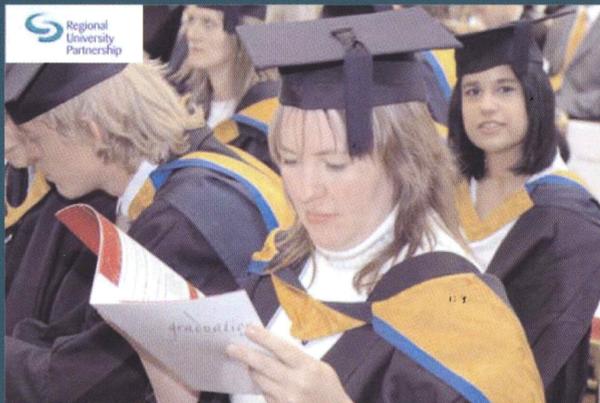
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- ◆ Music and Performing Arts

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 Health and Care, Mon 21st Feb 2005, 14.00 - 16.00; Education, Mon 21st Feb 2005, 14.00 - 17.00

Spring Open Event, Clacton Campus: Tues 15th Mar, 17.00 - 20.00
 Spring Open Event, Colchester Campus: Thurs 17th Mar, 15.00 - 20.00



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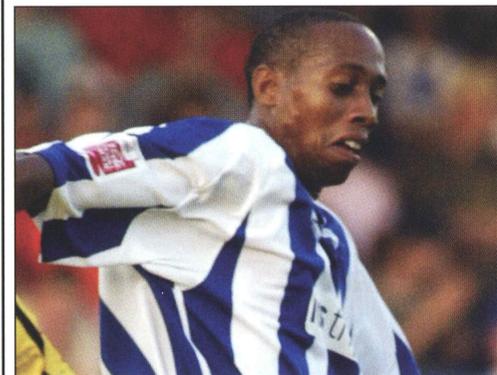


MY MATE...

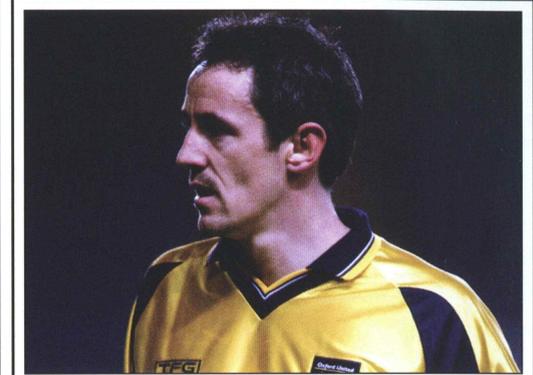


In the latest of our My Mate features - where we talk to U's players about their best friends in football and then find out the views of the other player involved - we catch up with Bobby Bowry.

The player he has chosen as his best mate is midfielder Dave Savage, who is currently attempting to get out of League Two under the leadership of former U's boss Ian Atkins.



Bobby Bowry - disappointing on the dancefloor



Dave Savage - injury woes

The Player

How did you meet Dave?

It was when I signed for Millwall - Dave was already established there as a player, and he made sure that I was made to feel welcome and helped me settle in at my new club. That's something you definitely appreciate as a player.

Why is Dave such a good friend for you?

Dave is someone I got on with straightaway when I was at Millwall and we've stayed mates ever since. I'm quite a laid back person, but he's even more laid back than I am! I went to his wedding and I also went along to his daughter's christening as well.

How often do you keep in touch?

We probably speak once or twice a week. Dave moved away from Millwall to Northampton and then onto Bristol Rovers, so we're not able to get together as much as we used to, so we try and keep in touch on the phone to see how each other are getting on.

Have you ever played against each other?

I think that we've probably only played against each other a couple of times and, after thinking about it, I seem to remember a time where Millwall and Northampton came up against each other and, although we absolutely murdered them, they still came out with a 2-0 win. I'd say we came out on top, but I bet he says something different!

How do you think Dave will get on with his football this season?

He's been in and out of the team and has been injured, much like myself. He's an important player for Bristol Rovers and he's a big part of their plans, although there are a couple of other teams looking at him. Once he's fit, I'm sure he'll be important in their promotion push.

The Friend

What did you think of Bobby when you first met him?

I thought he was a bit cocky and brash to be honest - he had just come down from Palace and was pretty confident about himself. But it was justified because he was a good player and backed it up on the pitch. Once I got to know him, then we started to become good friends.

What can you tell us about Bobby that we don't already know?

There's not that much really, he's usually alright! His taste in clothes is good, although I'd say that's because his mate owns a clothes shop and Bobby ends up getting them for free - he definitely doesn't pay for them! And he's a pretty poor dancer - you know, you think he might be a good mover, but for some reason it just doesn't happen for him!

How are things going personally for you in football at the moment?

I'm injured at the moment, so it's not going great just now. Before I got injured, I was doing alright, my form was good and the team was in mid-table. We can do better and it's a fairly tight division, so if we can get three or four wins under our belt, we'll be right back up there.

Have you ever played against Bobby and who came out on top?

When Millwall played at Northampton, I was on the bench and when Northampton went to Millwall, he was on the bench. So our two teams have come up against each other, but I don't think that we've actually locked horns on the pitch.

How do you think Bobby will get on this season?

Well, I know Sam Stockley quite well as well and he said that, before his injury, Bob's form was very good. He is a player who looks after himself and thinks about his game quite a lot, so I'd say once he gets fit, he will be useful for Colchester's season. He is in good nick and probably has another couple of years left in him and, with Colchester having a young squad, his experience is very important.



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START THE BIDDING.



Colchester United's online auctions are back for 2005 with some very enticing pieces of memorabilia for you to get your hands on.

Three of our current auctions feature signed match worn shirts of players who have played for both Colchester United and Luton Town.

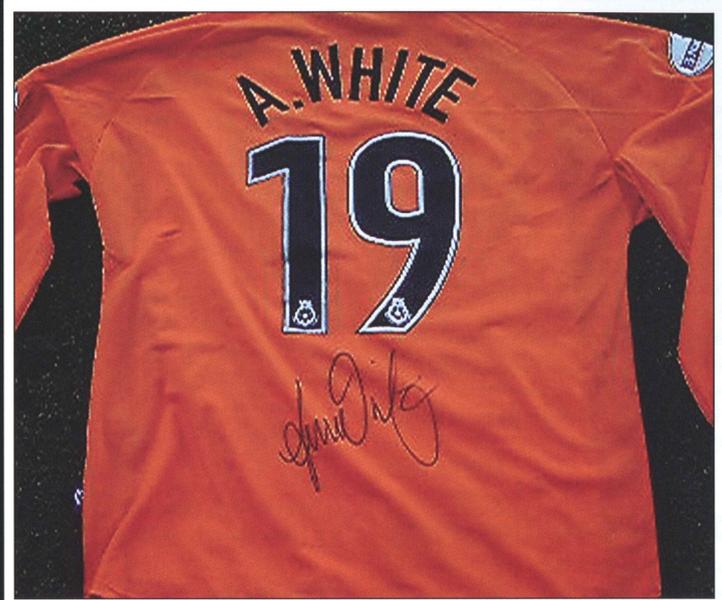
Our first auction expires tomorrow so you will have to be quick to get in a winning bid but it is certainly worth it!

Supporters were universally disappointed when Alan White departed Layer Road in the summer to play for Leyton Orient but we have two final mementos of Whitey's time with the U's.

Esteem

The defender, who came to Colchester after playing under Lennie Lawrence at Kenilworth Road, has signed his white away shirt from last season and it could be yours. Whitey captained the U's with esteem last season and we are sure this item will prove very popular so do not hesitate in logging on to QXL.com when you get home.

If you are not quick enough to get a bid in on Alan's white shirt then we also have the opportunity to win his long-sleeved orange shirt from last season. The U's orange away kit proved one of the



Captain Marvel - why not bid for this Alan White signed shirt

most popular for some time and holds great memories, such as the great results on the road at

Coventry, Wycombe and Chesterfield to name just a few.

All of our match shirts come with a letter of authenticity from the club and you could be the owner of some very special items of memorabilia.

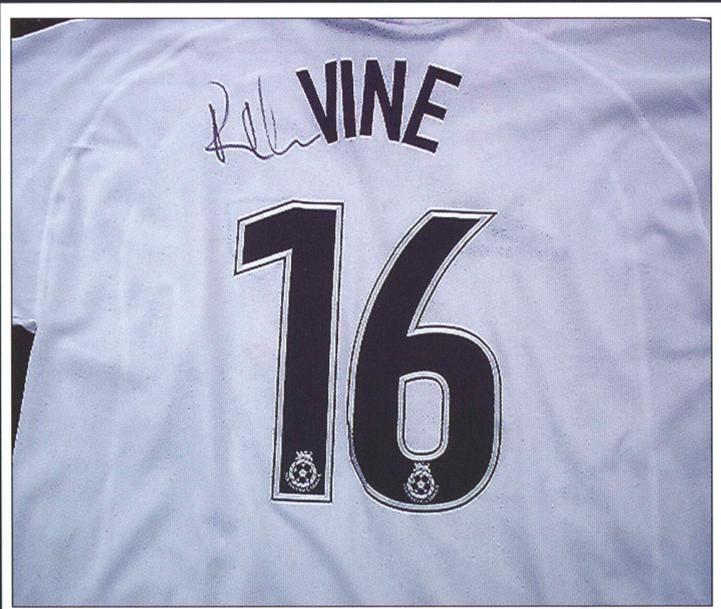
Impact

Our third shirt that connects the U's with the Hatters is that of Rowan Vine. The Portsmouth forward made a big impact at Layer Road scoring some truly memorable goals and providing plenty more for his team mates.

Viney is currently wearing the number nine shirt for Luton Town and scored twice against Colchester United when Parky's team travelled to Bedfordshire less than a month ago.

You can currently bid for Rowan's number 16 shirt, which was part of the U's white away kit last season. The shirt is short-sleeved, complete with name, Football League badges and has been signed by the player on the left shoulder.

What are you waiting for? Make sure you check out these exciting auctions via the official website at www.cu-fc.com when you get home. We also have a number of other special auctions coming up, including some of this season's match shirts and the actual match ball from the superb FA Cup victory at Hull City! Keep your eyes peeled.



Make a bid! - this is your chance to hold on to the memories of Rowan's time at Layer Road

Hi Kids!

Welcome back to Layer Road for another league match - can you believe we're already over halfway through the season? It all seems to have gone so quickly. Here's hoping that the lads do a great job in the remaining games and that we have plenty more to cheer about!

I've been to a few of the away games recently and it was great to see so many of you younger U's fans up at Hull a couple of weeks ago. What a fantastic performance the lads put in on that day and I thought the fans made a brilliant noise throughout the game. You should all be proud of yourselves!

We go to Blackburn Rovers in the next round - I hope to see you all there!

Eddie the Eagle x

Daniel Gets Poetic!

During the course of this season, we've asked you to send in poems, pictures and a whole lot more. And, in this afternoon's matchday magazine, we've got a great poem from two of our younger U's supporters.

Daniel Barratt and Martin Hales, who are both in Year Five at Great Clacton Junior School, put together the poem during one of their recent classes. Daniel has been playing football with Colchester United at his school, so when he was asked to write a poem with his friend, football was the subject!

And it seems that Dean Gerken and Aidan Davison have a bit of an admirer too!

FOOTBALL POEM

I'm the goalie,
I can jump, dive,
And fly across on my side.
I think I'm the best,
I train with Colchester United.
I have to save the goals,



Daniel & Martin

The score was the same,
One minute to go,
And they were going to score,
Oh no!

All up to me,
Can I save this goal?
Hope so,
Or no one will speak to me.

I close my eyes,
Stretch out my arms,
Cross my fingers,
And stand and wait.

A big cheer,
I've saved the day,
What happened?

I'm on the floor,
Holding onto the ball.
WE WON!

By Daniel Barratt & Martin Hales
Year 5 Great Clacton Junior School

Mascots

Mascots at our last game against Oldham were William Payne and Max Taylor. Once again, even though it was a bit chilly, the boys really enjoyed their day. They got to warm up on the pitch, meet the players in the dressing room and then lead the teams



Eddie the Eagle

out at the start of the match.

They even got to meet the referee Paul Danson before kick off and they're pictured here shaking hands with the match official.



How do you do! - the mascots meet the referee before the Oldham game

Nosey Parker

Hey everyone!

So, from the sublime to ridiculous within a week, it's been a topsy turvy seven days for us U's fans. Having drawn away to Hull in the FA Cup, I went to Hull looking to what in my opinion was a poor draw, and to be honest, one that had defeat staring us in the eye.

In blustery conditions, we trekked the distance, and made it in good time, and as a bonus even managed to sneak in the end of the Sheffield United tie with Aston Villa due to the TV's underneath the stand! The ground itself is very impressive, although I was rather surprised to turn around and only see a couple of rows before you reached the back having come out of the entrance!

We 'mauled the Tigers' throughout the ninety minutes, as they had sung at Layer Road the previous month, as a gritty Colchester side pulled Hull apart

during an exciting encounter. The Ginger Ninja looked on top of his game as a great goal put the U's in front, only for Craig to extend the lead, and silence the home fans.

But no matter how good it got at Hull, it was an opposite at MK Dons as a lacklustre side went out and embarrassed themselves against a side that were clearly there for the taking. Had Williams' sitter gone in, it would've been a completely different game, with the momentum taking a turn in our favour, however it wasn't to be as we failed to create any chances of a real threat, allowing them to soak up the pressure and take all three points.

However, today we face a team who have propelled themselves back to the top of the League One table, and another difficult challenge that will see us pushed to the limits once more.

Up the U's,

Nosey Parker

Today's Mascots

We have three mascots for this afternoon's match and they are as follows:-



Kieran Bull

Name: Kieran Bull
Age: Eight
From: Colchester
Hobbies: Football, horse riding, Formula 1, swimming
Favourite U's Player: Craig Fagan/Karl Duguid



Kieran Bull

Name: Mark Smith
Age: 12
From: Colchester
Hobbies: Football/Golf/Rugby
Favourite Other Team: Chelsea
Favourite U's Player: Joe Keith



Kieran Bull

Name: Aidan Manley
Age: Eight
From: Colchester
Hobbies: Football/Space
Favourite U's Player: Greg Halford

Tornadoes

Tornadoes Football Club, based at Greshams Sports Club in Ipswich, were thrilled to be a part of our recent match against Oldham, where they were presented with their FA Charter Standard Award. Tornadoes, who recently had Gavin Johnson and Wayne Brown visit for a training session, are an independent club and play in the Felixstowe and District Youth League in Suffolk.

Chairman Russell Wheatcroft is pictured here with captain Karl Duguid receiving the award before the match against the Latics.



Well done! - Tornadoes FC pick up the FA Charter Standard Award

The Sports Trust provides football opportunities for all special schools in Essex as part of the Equity and Social Inclusion programme. The Special Schools League came to a close just before Christmas with Marketfield School taking the honours...

The "Special Schools League" is open to all special schools in Essex and provides competitive playing

opportunities for young people aged 14-16 years old.

The League, which was originally funded by the Football Foundation, was set up by Social Programme Coordinator Steve Bartlett as there were no opportunities for youngsters with special needs to take part in football activities. There are now four schools taking part in the league, which has been running since 2001, with over 65 young people participating in a structured league that runs for six weeks every year between October and December.

The league is run on a six-a-side basis and there are three games every week offering competitive football and an opportunity for the children to socialise with other young disabled children for other schools and areas.

Steve Bartlett explained the benefits of the league: "It's really good for their health and gives them a great sense of achievement to represent their school."

Festivals

There are also one off festivals during the year where representative sides selected from all of the schools are offered further opportunities to play. The players are also able to participate in additional evening sessions run at the Community Soccer Centre and the FA. Mini Soccer Centre in Clairmont Road, for those children who are interested in playing on a more regular basis.

Some of the players from the "Special Schools League" have also gone on to represent Colchester United in the Pan Disability Squad.

More information on the Equity and Social Inclusion programme can be obtained from the website or by contacting Steve Bartlett by email sbartlett@cucst.org.uk or telephone 01206 572378.

February Half Term...

There are loads of activities going on over the half term and we are taking bookings now...

Soccer Schools

The Sports Trust's F.A. Charter Standard coaching courses give your children the chance to participate in fun football activities in a safe environment and for this half term there are brand new "Rooney" & "Henry" competitions. The courses are run six at different venues and cater for children aged from four to 12 years old.

Community Holiday Club

This fantastic club for children aged 8-13 years of age provides safe learning childcare during the school holidays while you are working. Based at the Community Soccer Centre in Layer Road, the children are cared for in a safe environment and have the opportunity to participate in sports and activities every day.



Opportunities for all - action from the Special Schools League



Join in the fun! - Why not book in for one of our half-term Soccer Schools?

Girls Only Coaching Course

This half term we have a special two day football coaching course just for the girls. The course is being run at the FA. Mini Soccer Centre in Clairmont Road, and is for "Girls Only" aged 7-14 years old. With an all female coaching staff, this course offers girls the opportunity to experience an all girls football environment whilst learning new skills and tricks.

Two Day Soccer School

A special "one off" soccer school for boys and girls aged 7-12 years old which is being held at the FA. Mini Soccer Centre in Clairmont Road. Children will be

coached by the qualified CUCST staff and take part in champions league games, challenges, quizzes and competitions. Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd February only.

● BOOKING FORMS FOR ALL OF THE COURSES CAN BE OBTAINED FROM OUR WEBSITE, www.cucst.org.uk, OR BY EMAILING info@cucst.org.uk, OR TELEPHONE THE COMMUNITY SOCCER CENTRE ON 01206 572378.

For more information on our many activities simply visit our website or contact the Community Soccer Centre on info@cucst.org.uk, telephone 01206 572378.

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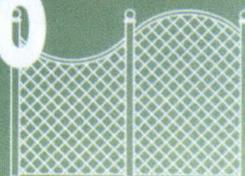
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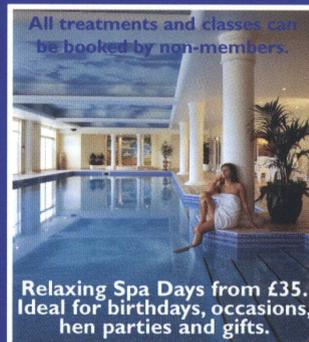


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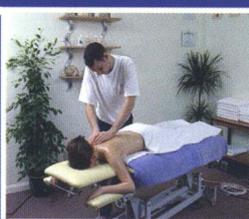
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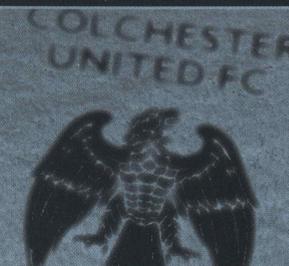
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U'S LADIES



The high flying ladies club is still on the lookout for a club sponsor to help them in their push for promotion and to secure the future of their blossoming squad...

The U's Ladies are one of the most successful and established female football clubs in Essex with big aspirations of competing in the National Premier League in the very near future.

The girls currently ply their trade in the Women's

Eastern Region Premier league and under the careful guidance of flamboyant manager Steve Downey, they are in the midst of a 13 game unbeaten run with two games in hand on the leaders Cambridge Utd.

The Ladies club is poised to take the title and with it the chance for promotion to the South East Combination League, which is the first rung of the National League ladder.

Colchester United Ladies F.C. are one of just a few Ladies Clubs in the country who enjoy the 100%

support (non financial) of our male counterparts and, with U's Chief Executive Marie Partner as the Patron of the club, we are able to offer all of our sponsors unrivalled exposure across many different mediums.

Our Media Coverage

We are very well supported by both the local and regional press and publicise our activities and news on our own award winning website www.culfc.com and also the official website www.cu-fc.com as well as the relevant football websites for the women's game. As well as this you will also enjoy regular exposure in the Men's Match Day Programme.

With a total of nine teams (two Senior sides, three Girls sides and four Centre of Excellence sides) who play their football all over the South East of England, this is an excellent opportunity for you and your company to get on board and make a difference in the Women's Game!

Readers of both the Evening Gazette and Essex County Standard as well as the East Anglian Daily Times cannot have failed to notice our weekly exposure in these popular papers. We also enjoy our very own sections in the official Colchester United Matchday Magazine and the official website. Regular news stories and match reports also appear on the Essex FA Website, FemaleSoccer.net, Fair Game Magazine and Women's Soccer Scene.

We have also staged six ladies days at Layer Road and finish off our season with a game here as part of a double header with the Men's team.

All of the above gives our Sponsors the type of advertising that is just not available anywhere else.

Did you know?

Football is now officially the biggest girls' and women's sport in England. The total number of women and girls has now leapt above the 100,000 mark with 101,173 females playing in the 2003/04 season. That's almost 7,500 registered clubs in total. This compares with figures of 84,566 for 2002/03; 61,667 in 2001/02; and 53,336 in 2000/01. This figure is set to grow with England hosting the UEFA European Women's Championship in June 2005.

To find out how you can become involved in our highly successful club simply email Press Officer Krista Hultquist at krista@cucst.org.uk for further information. All the info you need on the Ladies side can be found on their award winning website...

www.culfc.com



Girls' football - getting increasingly popular

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BO'S MEMORIES



Brian's adventures in football

This afternoon's match sees us take on Luton Town, where I worked alongside David Pleat in the early 1990s.

I had played with David for the England youth team in 1963 and we had been friendly ever since. I nearly signed for him when he was at non-League Nuneaton Borough but it wasn't until he moved to Kenilworth Road that we started working together on a formal basis.

At the time he got the job at Luton I was living in the USA and he contacted me to ask if I would come back to England and be physio for him. As it happened I came home from the States and went straight to Luton from the airport to sign my contract.

One story I remember from my time at Luton was when we were in Sweden on a pre-season tour. We had played a game near the Norwegian border and as we were travelling back to our hotel by coach in the early hours of the morning we came across a serious road accident.

A woman motorist had hit an Elk and the impact had sent her car off the road into a tree. Our driver stopped the coach and I went over to see if the driver was injured. Remarkably, the woman's son, who was sat in the passenger seat, was completely unscathed but the driver had smashed her face in the accident. As physio I was able to tend to the woman and did what I could to tend to her gashed face while we waited for the ambulance to arrive.

Thankfully, the woman was not too badly injured and we made sure she got into the ambulance without any trouble. In the mean time, unbeknown to me, our inquisitive bunch of players had gone off to discover what had become of the elk involved in this accident.

As the ambulance left a bunch of lads came up to me and asked if I could now tend to the elk, which I thought was rather amusing of them. I told them to administer a couple of Nurofen and see how it goes but it was apparent that the elk had come off worse than the car. I suggested they may be

should put it under the coach and have it for lunch later on that day.

During my time at Luton we had a very good squad with some excellent young prospects coming through such as Mark Pembridge, Paul Telfer, John Hartson and Kerry Hughes. The Hatters were a top flight side at the time and would often get a full house of 13,000 when we played the likes of Manchester United and Liverpool so there was usually a great atmosphere around the place.

Purist

Unfortunately the club were relegated during my brief time there. There seemed to be a number of occasions when we narrowly lost games. David Pleat was always something of a football purist and I think there were a few games that we could have won if we had used a bit of time wasting and things like that.

We had gone in front at Liverpool and Nottingham Forest but conceded a lot of late goals. Despite doing well in many of our games we ended up losing a lot of games 1-0 or 2-1 against big teams. Every year it was a battle to stay up and that has not changed for the small teams in the Premiership now. For teams like Norwich it is

still very hard to maintain that top flight status. In the end we were relegated to the old Second Division when Luton were looking to get new ground. I had offers to go to Southend United or Cambridge United and decided to join up with Ian Atkins at Cambridge.

As a player, one of the biggest games I remember being involved with was during the 1963/64 season. I was a young player at Watford back then and we had to win at Kenilworth Road at the end of the season to gain promotion.

As you will probably know, there has always been an intense local rivalry between Luton and Watford and this match had extra spice because the Hatters also had to win to ensure that they were not relegated from the old Third Division.

The place was buzzing and we went into the last 20 minutes with a 1-0 lead thanks to a goal from John O'Rourke. Agonisingly for us though, Luton scored two goals late on to keep them in the division and prevented us going up.

After the game, the Luton manager, Bill Harvey, sent some Champagne into the away dressing room as a good will gesture. Our boss Bill McGarry did not accept this gift with any grace and told Harvey he could stick the bottles 'where the sun don't shine.' Bill was always a bit of a sore loser.

All the best

BO



The elk - came off second best in Swedish car crash

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C.U.S.A.

On behalf of the Colchester United Supporters' Association, I would like to welcome every U's and Hatter's fan to Layer Road this afternoon.

I feel it in my bones that this is going to be a cracker of a match, as we were more than a match for table-topping Luton back at their place a month ago. Also, it will be interesting to hear the reaction that former U's loanee Rowan Vine gets on his return - I'm sure it will hugs and kisses all round!

After our four match unbeaten run, which I hasten to add included two tremendous victories at Swindon Town and Hull City, the U's were brought back down to earth with a huge bump last Saturday. Again we struggled with the nastier side of the game against a side battling for the drop, but should we be surprised for it's been that way for as long as I can remember?

Such a pity though, because the CUSA Ladies had the Anglia Soccer Night Fan Cam for the day. You may have seen them stagger out of the white limo, half cut and half dressed in some cases, but I understand they did a good job. I've heard that the uncut version of their trip will be available for sale shortly in the U's Club Shop - 18 certificate, naturally!

It was such a bitter pill to swallow after the exemplary victory at Hull City in the FA Cup, which I must add was one of the finest away wins I have ever witnessed. What was nice about the Hull trip in particular was the tremendous support from the fans.

Struggle

The CUSA organised four coaches for the day, with another three for MK Dons and it wasn't so long ago that we would struggle to fill one or two coaches for those sorts of trips. Well done to you all, and a quick well done to our Supreme Coach drivers for battling with the gales on the A1.

Of course, this has given us yet another FA Cup Fourth Round tie next week and, what a surprise, we're on our travels yet again! With time being limited, I strongly urge you to book your place on the CUSA coaches today or within the next few days, otherwise you might be unlucky.

Also, it is worth noting that you may be allocated a particular coach and that we'll be taking the monies in the CUSA Corner Bar on one or two evenings this week. Please look for details on www.cu-fc.com or www.cusa.co.uk.

CUSA travel bookings can be made on 07778 018834 or 07752 531600 (7pm to 9pm) weekdays.

CUSA Travel Detail
Saturday January 8th – Blackburn Rovers FA CUP
Coach leaves Layer Road at 7.30am
Adult Members £25
Concession Members £23

Saturday January 12th – Tranmere Rovers
Coach leaves Layer Road at 8.00am
Adult Members £23
Concession Members £21

Tuesday February 22nd – Wrexham
Coach leaves Layer Road at 1.00pm
Adult Members £22
Concession Members £20

Apart from the MK Dons result, it has been a historic week for the U's with the significant progress made on the Community Stadium. Crucially, it will not now be held up by John Prescott's office and the dreams of every U's fan could be realised in just over two years. Much work still to be done, but for now, the gods are smiling on us.

Let's all get behind the U's and make plenty of noise.

Up the U's,

Jon Burns



U's faithful - travelling in better numbers this season



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RED ARMY
ON THE MARCH!

THE U'S WILL BE WEARING THEIR RED KIT ON
SATURDAY AT BLACKBURN - HAVE YOU GOT YOURS YET?
THE CLUB SHOP IS OPEN AFTER TODAY'S GAME FOR YOU TO
GET YOUR MERCHANDISE READY FOR THE BIG FA CUP GAME!

COLCHESTER
UNITED FC



PLAYING AWAY...

...with steev tovey

Performance wise, it's been much more rewarding to be a traveller with the U's than a homebody this season. With one of the best away records in the division, Colchester are, at time of going to print, still to be beaten by more than one goal away from home this season, and a recent internet posting mentioned we have the 7th best away points tally in the division. The A1(M) posse have been rewarded with some of the season's best performances.

And the fixture list was to test this resolve around the festive period. With the home match vs Bournemouth ("You must have prayed for frost" anyone?) fortunately called off on Boxing Day (fortunate, cos I would have missed it... selfish?! Me? Never! Haha!) it meant a U's side that had somehow fallen to 18th in the league had to face three tough away trips on the bounce around the turn of the year, with play-off chasing Brentford and Swindon sandwiching a trip to tonight's visitors, and then-table-toppers, Luton.

Coming away from Brentford with nothing, courtesy of an unmarked John Salako's first half injury time winner, was a bit gutting. To be fair, the day hadn't gone our way from the start, as we were 20 minutes late for the train from Colchester. The fact it was my fault and that Mr Squire had lost his scarf (and, unsurprisingly, his humour) running to the station from home to be on time, added to the annual post-work Xmas meal excavation dig that was going on inside my head, meant for a quiet journey.

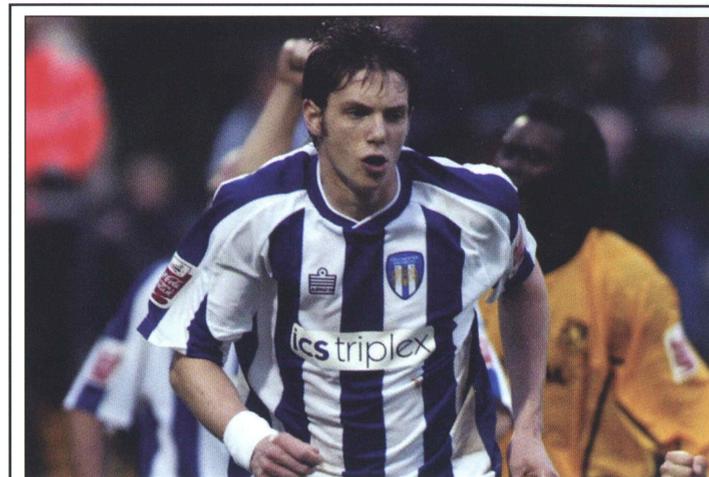
The much anticipated "All Day BoozeFest" was a couple of quiet moments of hair of the dog in one of Griffin Park's corner pubs. And the terraces were silent. Maybe a few others had hit the town for works do's the night before...

It's All About The "He Said, She Said..."

And so to December 28, and the toughest challenge yet, high-flying Luton. The early runaway leaders had been pegged back in the weeks before, but boast an excellent home record. And of course, the hosts' number nine was guaranteed some tough-loving from the travelling supporters after his spoilt brat antics at Layer Road.

Hatters' fans should avoid being near a certain Portsmouth loaneer's pram, and watch out for flying toys, should he not get his own way. Despite his impressive performances up until February last season, Rowan Vine's big head could no longer fit through the door by the time he went back to Portsmouth.

To be fair to Vine, he had a point of sorts to prove, and it was inevitable he would bag the goals, and



Greg Halford - header silenced the Kenilworth Road faithful

make a fool of himself running 60 yards to gloat in Parky's face after the second. And, no bones about it, he was the man of the match. But what he, and you Hatters fans in the crowd today didn't count on was a powerful performance from Colchester who refused to be rolled over when Luton came out blitzkrieg style at the start of the second half, and a brave Greg Halford header silenced Kenilworth Road.

Stockley, Baldwin, Brown and Chilvers didn't just draw a line in the sand at 2-1, they erected a motte and bailey, with a huge moat around it. Gav Johnson carried on his electrifying Brentford performance, while Garcia in particular stood out in midfield.

What was that song? 2-1 and we what?

It's Just One Of Those Days (Like A Freight Train...)

Back at Brentford, Colchester had been unlucky not to snatch a point, as first Fagan, then Halford, then Fagan again went close, but the day had continued regardless. After trawling across London, both over and underground, but not Wombing free (just yet), thoughts turned to that night's inaugural Blue Boar FC Pro-Evolution Soccer 4 Knock-out Challenge Tournament Party. Thing.

And it was to prove an expensive night...

Much more rested on the semi-final of the exclusive tournament that night than just pride. With the final tinkerings to my Manchester United side (Saha in, Scholes out, Giggs to centre mid) a heavy weight was on my shoulders, and my wallet screamed in pain, as Shevchenko slipped a perfect through-ball into the path of Gattuso... AC won 1-0 as Dida produced late

great saves to deny Ronaldo and Ruud... and I had to remortgage my parents house to stump up for the most expensive away day in the division for Martz...

As a result of losing the match to my away day buddy, I'd be paying for us both to go to Swindon (£23 each, no less...). I gained no satisfaction as Martz lost in the final (well, maybe a little...)

To say conditions affected the game is like saying Danny Coid is slightly unwelcome at Layer Road. Hell yeah they affected things - one Gerken goal kick curled back so far in the driving wind it first bounced five yards from the box. But while Swindon toiled through treacle, first wildly over-hitting passes to Sam Parkin, who was marshalled superbly by Wayne Brown, then running backwards, Colchester coped better.

Keeping it simple, and on the deck, with a few long rangers, United's midfield ran the game.

Going in 2-0 up against the wind helped, as a short passing/pressing game, with the defence dropping deep when Swindon went long, was rewarded with a slaphead bullet header from the impressive Gavin Johnson, before Neil Zidann(e)s seized on a loose ball from a Halford long throw to ping in the second. Danns quick feet and ball skills created space for Garcia to slam home the third.

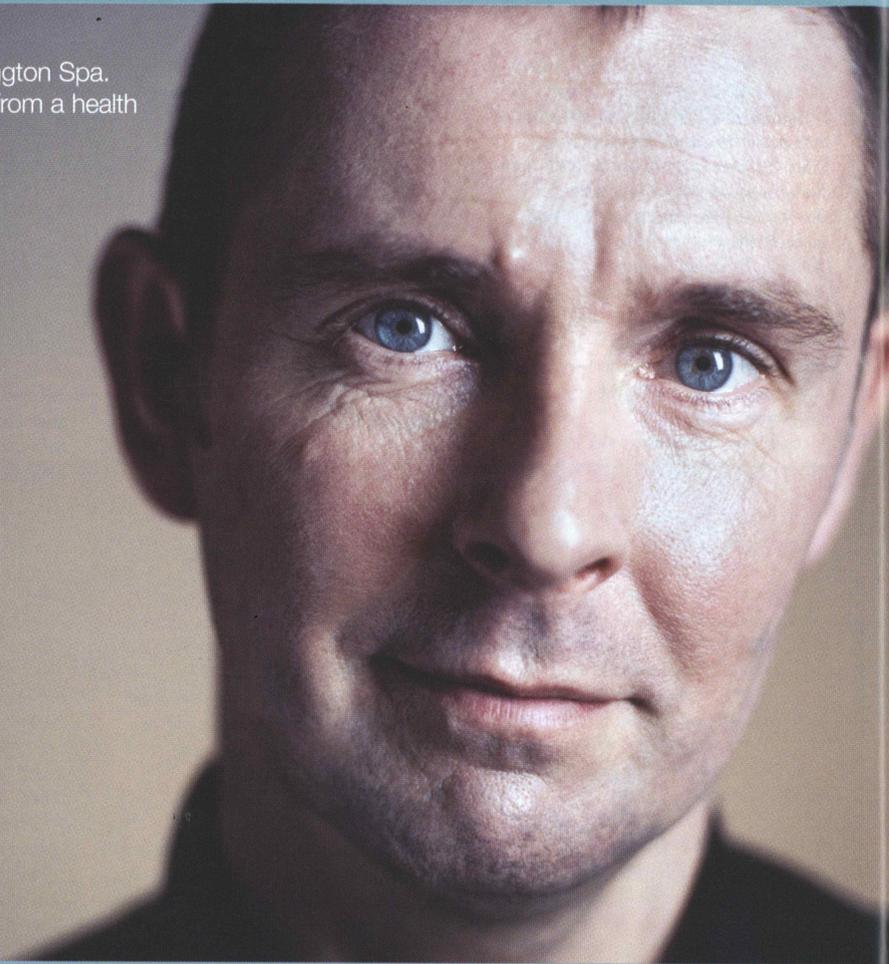
Colchester don't do well against Swindon, and hadn't won at the County Ground for over a quarter of a century... and there we were, heading home with one of the most of matter of fact three nils you'll see to our name...

In Tuesday's programme, Playing Away comes from the FA Cup match at Hull City and the League One visit to MK Dons...

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ON THE ROAD



Blackburn Rovers

Having not played a Premiership team for nearly ten years in competitive action, Colchester United take on top flight opposition for the third time this season in a week's time.

Having seen off Hull City at the KC Stadium, the U's will now take on Mark Hughes' Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on January 29 in the fourth round of the famous competition. It is bound to be another popular trip for Colchester United's travelling army..

GROUND NAME: Ewood Park
CAPACITY: 31,367 (all seated)
ADDRESS: Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 4JF
MAIN TELEPHONE NO: 08701-113-232
TICKET OFFICE: 08701-123-456
PITCH SIZE: 115 x 76 yards

WHAT IS THE GROUND LIKE?

The ground is quite impressive, having had three large stands built during the 1990's. These stands are at both ends and at one side of the ground. They are of the same height and roughly similar in design, being two-tiered with a row of executive boxes and similar roofs.

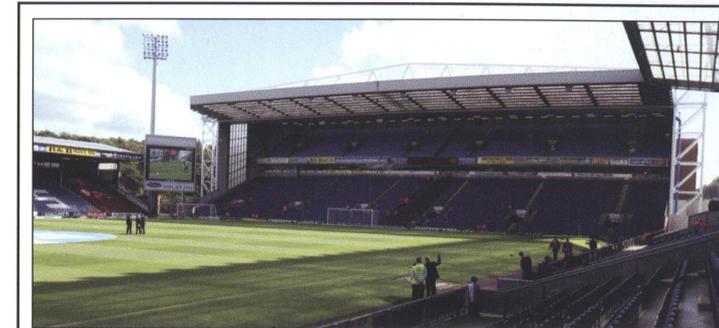
Both ends are particularly impressive, both having large lower tiers. The only downside is the open corners, although there is a superb Sony Jumbotron screen at one corner by the away end, which shows an excellent pre-match programme and the teams emerging from dressing rooms and onto the pitch. There is also an electric scoreboard at the Darwen End of the ground.

The Riverside is the only undeveloped stand, running down one side of the pitch. This is a smaller, single tiered stand and is not as pleasing to the eye as its modern counterparts. It also contains a fair number of supporting pillars and is partly covered.

One other interesting feature of the ground, is the fact that the pitch is raised. This means that players have to run up a small incline, whilst taking throw-ins and corners. Outside the stadium behind the Blackburn End there is a statue of former club owner Jack Walker.

WHERE WILL THE U'S FANS BE SITTING?

Away fans are housed at the Darwen End, where the facilities provided are good. However, the spacing between the rows of seats leaves a lot to be desired, being quite tight. The Darwen End



Ewood Park

is shared with home supporters, but if demand requires it the whole of the stand can be made available. Normally the away allocation is for three quarters of the stand, at just under 4,000 tickets, which are split between the whole of the upper tier and part of the lower tier (with the lower tier being allocated first). If you have not bought a ticket in advance, then you need to buy one from the away supporters ticket office at the ground as you can't pay on the turnstiles. The ticket office is located on the corner of the Darwen End & the Jack Walker Stand.

Alcohol is available on the concourse as well as the normal range of pies, burgers, hot dogs and chips. If you are looking to eat something prior to entering the ground, then there is a baker in Bolton Road selling hot pies from one of its windows.

FANCY A PRE-MATCH PINT?

The Fernhurst is really known as the 'away supporters pub'. It is on the Bolton Road (A666) just across from the ground at the Darwen End. You can also park at the there for £3, but you will be delayed in getting away after the game. Most other pubs in the area have large signs outside showing that they are for home fans only but if you are arriving at Mill Hill station, then you might want to give the Navigation pub a try.

It is a Thwaites pub which sits on one side of a canal and on my visit had a good mix of home and away supporters. It is about a five-minute walk way from the station. As you exit the station turn left and just keep straight on up the road in front of you. As you approach a bridge going over the canal, the pub can be seen just over on the right.

HOW TO GET THERE BY CAR?

Use Motorway M6 to junction 29, then onto the

M65 towards Blackburn - leave the M65 at Junction 4 (A666) and follow signs towards Blackburn. Turn right at the first set of traffic lights and Ewood Park is about one mile down the road on the right hand side.

Various private Car Parks are available around the ground, costing in the region of £3. If you want to get away reasonably quickly after the game (the roads immediately around Ewood are closed off for crowd safety for around 30 minutes after the game) then as you come down the hill on the A666, you will pass a Total garage on your left. Turn right at the next traffic lights and down on your left there are some industrial units where you can park for £3. After the game turn left out of the car park, so that you are going away from Ewood, turn right at the second mini roundabout and this will take you back up to the M65.

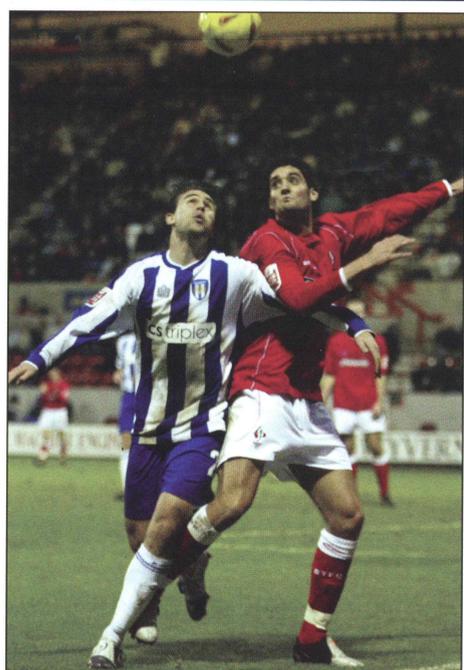
ROVERS FACTFILE

LAST FIVE GAMES: LWDWW
LAST FIVE AT HOME: LDDWW
TOP SCORER THIS SEASON:
Paul Dickov (seven goals)
LEAGUE POSITION: 16th

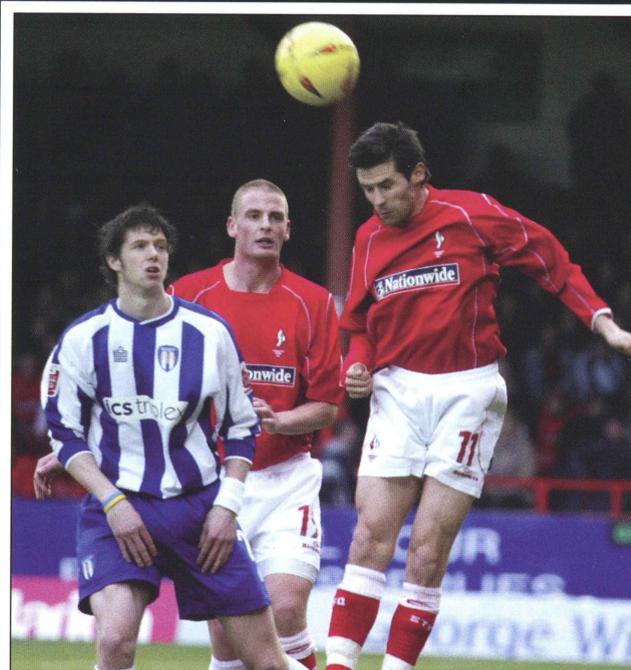
RECENT NEWS: While preparing for their FA Cup replay victory over Cardiff City, Blackburn completed the signing of Birmingham City's Robbie Savage. The move reunites Savage with his former Wales boss and the lively midfielder was relieved when the move came to fruition.

"This has probably been the longest two weeks of my life and to go from maybe hero status to probably the most hated man in Birmingham in the space of two weeks was hard to take. But now it has all been worthwhile," Savage said.

U'S ACTION



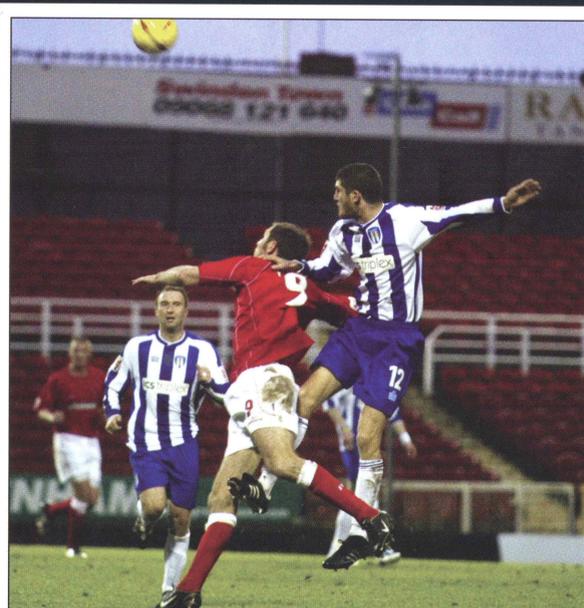
Richard Garcia - battles for the ball



Greg Halford - loses out this time



Kevin Watson - takes charge in midfield



Pat Baldwin - rises highest

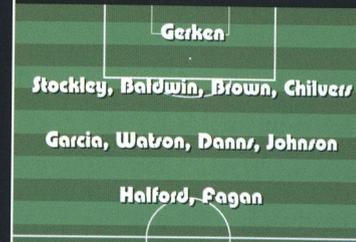


Incoming! - Watson, Baldwin and Garcia close in



Neil Danns - keeps his eye on the ball

THE WAY THE U'S LINED UP...



SUBS USED:

White for Garcia 82, Hunt for Johnson 85

SUBS NOT USED: Cousins, Keith, Williams

GOALS: Johnson 31, Danns 38, Garcia 47

YELLOW CARDS: Danns, Stockley

SWINDON TOWN:

Evans, Garrard, Duke, Ifil,

Heywood, Howard (Nicholas 72), Hewlett,

Robinson (Slabber 45), Igoe, Holmes, Parkin

SUBS NOT USED: Book, Fallon, Reeves

GOALS: None

YELLOW CARDS: None

ATTENDANCE: 6,468

● Colchester United started 2005 in uncompromising fashion, beating Swindon Town away from home for the first time in 20 years by a 3-0 score line on very windy New Year's Day.

Goals from Gavin Johnson, Neil Danns and Richard Garcia proved the difference for the U's, putting a winless streak of four matches behind them in style. And it was the first win for young goalkeeper Dean Gerken who, despite his previous good form during his time in the first team, had not actually experienced picking up three points!

Phil Parkinson: "We knew character would be needed in these conditions and I thought it was a classic away performance. When we had the chances we took them and once we'd gone three up you're comfortable as a manager.

"I thought Neil Danns' performance was excellent. He wins headers, tackles and gets forward to score goals. That's not a bad combination is it?"

Andy King: "It is very difficult to defend that because it was absolutely atrocious. And I'm fed up with using that word. It was like the Notts County performance three weeks ago.

"It was unacceptable and I have been as harsh in that dressing room today as I have been for a long time. I really am dumbfounded because I don't like performances like that and I have seen them more this season than I ever have before."

WWW.CU-FC.COM MAN OF THE MATCH:

Neil Danns

NEXT UP



Walsall

Relegated from Division One last season, Colchester United's next opponents Walsall have found life far from easy since dropping down to the third tier of English football.

Going into the weekend's fixtures a point ahead of the U's, Paul Merson's side have only ventured into the top half of the table for two weeks of the season so far.

However Merson, who was close to leaving the club after their shock FA Cup exit to Slough in the First Round of the famous competition, refuses to bow down to his critics who are linking the Saddlers to a second successive relegation.

Like the U's, the Midlands based club harbour ambitions of a strong second half to the season and Merson has one eye on a push up the table. He knows it is a big task to get up to the play-off spots, but insists that is what he wants from his squad.

"I've heard a few people talking about relegation but I'm not even thinking about that," he told the local press. "People have said we're a million miles away from the play-offs. Well, if that's true, then we're a million miles away from relegation as well."

"We've got 20 matches to go and if we win seven of them we will have no problems with relegation. If we win 14 that would be enough to put us in the play-offs. That's a big ask for the players, but that's what I'm looking at."

Rocky

The former Arsenal midfielder has had a rocky ride as manager so far and will be crossing his fingers for a change in fortunes in the remaining fixtures of the season. However, he will have to keep his players together - there were strong words after the Saddlers' Bank Holiday defeat to Brentford three weeks ago.

Midfielder Darren Wrack was less than impressed by his team-mates' display against the Bees and insisted that they need to pull their socks up as the season moves towards its final third.

"We've been through this before and the same things were said again," he told the Express & Star.

"I don't think enough people care enough or want it enough, and until that sinks in with people then to an extent they are going to be wasted words."

"A few people said things and had a bit of a chirp, and I agreed with a lot of it. But some people don't seem to get it. The perks of being in football seem to mean more than actually being a footballer, getting stuck in and wanting to win football matches."



Paul Merson - hoping for a change of fortune

"Some people have got to have a hard look at themselves. It is a problem with one or two. We've got to go out on the pitch wanting to win and believing that we're going to win."

"It's not enough just to turn up, play football and then go home, win lose or draw. I'm 28 now - I want to be playing at the highest level I can. I want the players around me to want to play at the highest level they can as well."

The game on Tuesday night is likely to be one with a special edge to it, due to the return of former U's midfielder Mark Kinsella. The Irishman will return for the first time for a competitive fixture at Layer Road, hoping that he can lift his new side up the table.

It is highly unlikely, though, that ex-goalkeeper Richard McKinney will be back with his gloves on. Richard injured his knee in a reserve match at the tail-end of 2004 in what has been a tough year for him at the Bescot Stadium and he faces a prolonged spell on the sidelines.

STOP PRESS!

Tickets for this game are on sale now, with the match against Blackpool on February 5th also due on sale soon. If you've not got your ticket yet, don't leave it too long - call the Ticket Office on 0871 226 2161 now!

CAN'T MAKE THE GAME?

If you're unable to make the game - or perhaps you're waiting for the FA Cup game - then why not sign up for 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 THE CUP?

Ahead of the FA Cup trip to Blackburn, the U's are rated at 750/1 to win the famous trophy! Just visit www.layerbet.co.uk today for more details!

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THE SQUADS

Colchester United

Manager: Phil Parkinson

Colours: Blue & White

	Pld	Goal
1. Aidan DAVISON	●	■
2. Greg HALFORD	●	■
3. Joseph KEITH	●	■
4. Gavin JOHNSON	●	■
5. Wayne BROWN	●	■
6. Kevin WATSON	●	■
7. Karl DUGUID	●	■
8. Gareth WILLIAMS	●	■
9. Craig FAGAN	●	■
10. Kem IZZET	●	■
11. Jamie CADE	●	■
12. Pat BALDWIN	●	■
13. Dean GERKEN	●	■
14. Stephen HUNT	●	■
15. Ben BOWDITCH	●	■
16. George ELOKOBI	●	■
17. Bobby BOWRY	●	■
18. Liam CHILVERS	●	■
19. Garry RICHARDS	●	■
21. Robbie KING	●	■
22. Ross CROUCH	●	■
23. John WHITE	●	■
25. Sam STOCKLEY	●	■
26. Neil DANNS	●	■
27. Craig JOHNSTON	●	■
28. Richard GARCIA	●	■
35. Mark COUSINS	●	■
37. CUFC FANS	●	■

Luton Town

Manager: Mike Newell

Colours: White, Black & Orange

	Pld	Goal
1. Marlon BERESFORD	●	■
2. Kevin FOLEY	●	■
3. Alan NEILSON	●	■
5. Russell PERRETT	●	■
6. Paul UNDERWOOD	●	■
7. Paul HUGHES	●	■
8. Kevin NICHOLLS	●	■
9. Rowan VINE	●	■
11. Steve ROBINSON	●	■
12. Chris COYNE	●	■
14. Michael LEARY	●	■
15. Stephen O'LEARY	●	■
16. Enoch SHOWUNMI	●	■
17. Lee MANSELL	●	■
18. Ahmet BRKOVIC	●	■
19. Steve HOWARD	●	■
20. Curtis DAVIES	●	■
21. Keith KEANE	●	■
22. David BAYLISS	●	■
23. Ian HILLIER	●	■
24. Sol DAVIS	●	■
25. Dino SEREMET	●	■
27. Peter HOLMES	●	■
29. Calvin ANDREW	●	■
33. Dean BRILL	●	■
36. David DEENEY	●	■
37. Stuart SINCLAIR	●	■
45. Leon BARNETT	●	■
46. Max HOWELL	●	■
47. Rob BECKWITH	●	■

Match Official

Referee: Mr M. Dean (Merseyside)
 Assistant Referee: Mr P. Sharp (Herts)
 Assistant Referee: Mr M. Tingey (Bucks)
 Fourth Official: Mr F. Graham (Essex)

Next Here

v WALSALL

COCA-COLA LEAGUE ONE
 TUESDAY JANUARY 25TH - 7.45^{PM} KICK OFF

Evening Gazette