



TALK OF THE TOWN

LUTON TOWN v BLACKPOOL

PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINAL SECOND LEG

THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017 | KICK OFF 7.45pm

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME | ISSUE 32 | PRICE £3.50



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OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

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Thoughts, feedback and announcements are welcome by post, phone or email #COYH

The views in this programme are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor and/or Luton Town.

WELCOME TO KENILWORTH ROAD



NATHAN JONES

The boss welcomes Blackpool to Kenilworth Road



WELCOME BLACKPOOL

All you need to know about the boys from Bloomfield Road



BRIAN SWAIN

Tribute to the former Luton News reporter and LTFC programme editor



THE SEASON THAT WAS

We take a look back at the Hatters' 2016-17 campaign

THANK YOU!

As this is the last Talk of the Town of the season, I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to the programme in my first year at Kenilworth Road. It would not be possible to fill each issue without the help of my colleagues Charlie Hanson, Ed Smith, Viv Long, Siobhan Kos-Hodge, Mike Hooker, Kevin Thoburn and Dave Hoskins; columnists Simon Parsell, Jared Roberts-Smith, Andy Awford, Kevin Harper, Nathan, Scott, Cameron and the directors on boardroom notes duty; Simon Pitts for supplying the player stats; Gareth Owen for his phenomenal photography; John Buttle for distributing copies and deadline-day doughnuts; Heather Ellis for her wonderful designs and Raj Koyes and his team at Barthams for printing them. Finally, massive thanks to you, the supporters, for giving your feedback and continuing to buy it. See you back here in late July!

STUART HAMMONDS – EDITOR

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THE MANAGER NATHAN JONES

For the final time this season, good evening and welcome to Kenilworth Road for what promises to be a thrilling climax to the 2016-17 Sky Bet League Two campaign.

Of course, we hope it's not the last match of the season for us and that we'll be preparing for another one next week – but we have plenty of work to do to make that a reality.

For the second time in six weeks I'd like to welcome Blackpool and everyone who has travelled down from Lancashire for the second leg of this play-off semi-final. That goes for supporters, officials, manager Gary Bowyer, his staff and squad.

We know from the two league games we played over the course of the regular season, not to mention Sunday night's first leg, that it'll be a tough 90 minutes – maybe even 120 and then some – to determine who reaches Wembley.

Whatever the outcome, I wish them a safe journey back to the north-west coast tonight.

CONFIDENT

We made that same long trip back into the early hours of Monday morning and although the players had plenty of time to reflect on our first defeat since 25th March, there was no feeling sorry for ourselves.

Yes, we felt a bit hard done by with several decisions in the penalty area – and just outside it – that went against us at both ends of the pitch. But we have had a terrific couple of days' training and the boys are confident enough in the knowledge that our recent form has been first class.

We are a goal down but we are well in this tie and, as we've proved in recent weeks, we have plenty of goals in

our team with three of our in-form strikers well into double figures, and another I am sure would be too if he'd been with us for the entire season.

What we need is one final push from everyone of Luton Town persuasion inside this packed old ground tonight, whether in the technical area, on the pitch or in the stands, because you can be our proverbial 12th man. I talk about our substitutes being 'Game Changers'. You can be too. You can help turn this game around.

UNBELIEVABLE

I always say how proud I am of my players, how proud I am to manage this club and how proud I am of the support we get. Nearly 1,700 making a 400-mile round-trip on a Sunday night was unbelievable. I was bursting with pride when I came out to that wall of sound to my left.

I thank you for your patience, your understanding and your continuous backing since I took over. Finishing fourth is a great improvement on 18th place after my first game in charge in January last year. It can get better still.

So let's make Kenilworth Road a cauldron, let's experience one of those famous Luton Town nights under the lights and move a step closer to fulfilling our ultimate goal for the season. Promotion.

Enjoy the game.



FROM THE BOARDROOM

WITH CHIEF EXECUTIVE GARY SWEET

Good evening and welcome back to Kenilworth Road for what promises to be a memorable end to our home season in this Sky Bet League Two play-off semi-final against Blackpool.

We warmly welcome Gary Bowyer, his management team and their players to Bedfordshire for the second time in little more than a month, and of course their supporters who have made the reverse journey from Lancashire for tonight's game. We fully understand why many Seasiders will have stayed at home to watch the match on television, as they do not currently feel inclined to travel to support their team.

Like Luton Town, Blackpool Football Club is a name synonymous with a more innocent, less financially-driven era and they have been up and down the English football pyramid in a similar way to ourselves. As we heard so audibly from the away end at Bloomfield Road, the wonderfully loyal Luton supporters certainly empathise with them in their current predicament, having experienced troubled times ourselves in the not-too-distant past.

As we travelled back down the M6 late on Sunday night we, along with over 1,700 other Hatters, all shared a slight sense of disappointment at leaving Blackpool a goal down. But we shouldn't and didn't feel at all disheartened with the exciting prospect of a packed and rocking

floodlit Kenilworth Road ahead of us.

We played some very good football in patches, but need to be more like our usual, recent reliable, redoubtable selves in defence with 11 men standing tall from the first whistle tonight.

EXHILARATING

Statistically, our recent form bodes well, having lost only one in eight and taken ten points from the last 12. No-one will be sitting here at kick-off thinking we've nothing but a fair chance of going through to Wembley. It is all to play for, however long the tie goes on for tonight.

The most gratifying hour of our trip to the north-west coast was our group of directors and guests dropping into The Castle before the game. It was a fantastic, exhilarating atmosphere that not only made our hair stand on end, I thought the rendition of 'Hylton's On Fire' was going to raise the pub's old Artex ceiling to the rafters!

The superb support continued in the game too, despite the peculiarity of a mostly empty stadium – with our travelling supporters making up almost half of the 3,882 attendance (and more so in voice).

Tonight, at a sold-out Kenilworth Road, that is one advantage we definitely start with.

What the past 16 months, since we appointed Nathan Jones as our manager, have shown is that the future is very bright for Luton Town. Whilst not especially wealthy or even profitable, the Club is in a sound position financially. We have an excellent manager who is regularly linked to positions higher up the League (which, even though it may only be media speculation, tells us he must be doing a thoroughly decent job here), and we have a very good core squad to build from – statistically, the youngest in League Two.

We absolutely know that promotion to the next level will come. Whether it happens in the next ten days, or we have to wait until this time next year, we firmly believe the Hatters will be a League One outfit within a decade of our last experience in the third tier.

The Club is more of an attractive proposition to incoming players than we have ever been. We already have a good nucleus of a squad who have performed consistently well all season and who have created competition at every position. We have a number of players now with a not-insignificant



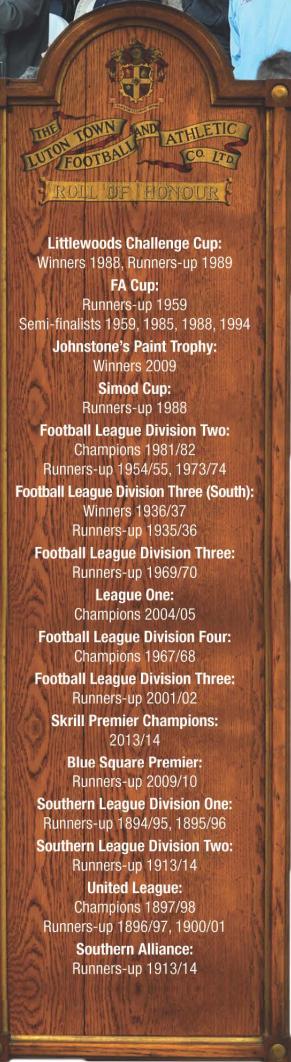
asset value, who are coveted by other clubs currently operating at a higher level to us – but we don't need to cash in to survive and players aren't desperate to leave in order to further their career. They recognise that they are in a place where they have a manager and team of staff who are a delight to work under and be developed by and at a Club that is progressing.

Below the first-team we have a very strong academy set-up with a firm eye on an elevation to EPPP Category 2 ranking. The proof of our youth coaches' ability to develop players, as well as the infrastructure of the academy we fought so hard to maintain in our non-funded Non-League years, comes with a whole XI stepping off the production line to make their senior debuts since Nathan took charge.

Most importantly, we are rapidly improving strong foundations of finance, culture, stadium and training facilities at the Club. On the latter,

with the move to The Brache having taken place a fortnight ago, we are at a watershed moment. This is the first time LTFC has ever had a facility remotely like this. The emphasis has been on quality throughout, from the bricks and mortar to the training pitches. If our standards and environment is anything other than extremely high during the week then we can't expect anything more of our players on a Saturday afternoon. The squad have moved in full-time to prepare for the play-offs in the best possible surroundings, but the whole building will not quite be completed until they return for pre-season in July.

The new training ground was not far below a new stadium in terms of importance to the club's progression, and on the Power Court front, I can assure you that relocation plans are still progressing soundly. As I mentioned in my last boardroom notes, we need to ensure we are robust in every aspect, hence taking



Littlewoods Challenge Cup:
Winners 1988, Runners-up 1989

FA Cup:
Runners-up 1959
Semi-finalists 1959, 1985, 1988, 1994

Johnstone's Paint Trophy:
Winners 2009

Simod Cup:
Runners-up 1988

Football League Division Two:
Champions 1981/82
Runners-up 1954/55, 1973/74

Football League Division Three (South):
Winners 1936/37
Runners-up 1935/36

Football League Division Three:
Runners-up 1969/70

League One:
Champions 2004/05

Football League Division Four:
Champions 1967/68

Football League Division Three:
Runners-up 2001/02

Skhill Premier Champions:
2013/14

Blue Square Premier:
Runners-up 2009/10

Southern League Division One:
Runners-up 1894/95, 1895/96

Southern League Division Two:
Runners-up 1913/14

United League:
Champions 1897/98

Runners-up 1896/97, 1900/01

Southern Alliance:
Runners-up 1913/14

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our time to get it right and making our position unchallengeable. We are hopeful that a planning decision is expected very early into the new season, followed by a short period of review after which we should be good to make absolute plans to relocate.

The character of our culture is now becoming widely recognised and identifiable – whether on the pitch, in the offices or even as a support base. We take pride in creating an environment that is hard-working, team-spirited, driven by success, self-educating, helping others and to be role-models in our community contribution. This is who we are.

On community matters and on behalf of the board, there are a few thank-yous and farewells to bid as the season comes to a close.

First, to Level Trust, whose year as our club charity of the year concludes with one final fundraising event next month. Jane Malcolm leads a wonderful charity that is doing so much for the educational needs of our local children who deserve a fair and equal chance to progress. This vital charity shares a kinship with us by providing opportunities to educate, develop and improve well-being. The same principles apply whether for children living below the poverty-line or for our staff, players and other community partners.

Thank you to Jane and her colleagues for their unbelievable enthusiasm. Despite the end of a successful season, our support will continue in some way just as it has with Chums, who were our first 'charity of the season' partners during 2015-16.

COMMITMENT

I'm sure everyone will join me in wishing youth team manager Paul Driver all the best as he heads north with his family to start a new life in semi-retirement. Paul came to us when Rushden & Diamonds went into liquidation six years ago and his enthusiasm, commitment and coaching ability has epitomised the strength of the academy I talked about earlier.

Seeing James Justin perform so well over almost 40 appearances this season is testament to Paul's impact on our youth system, as is the presence of lads like Zane Banton, Craig King, Frankie Musonda, Tyreeq Bakinson and Akin Famewo around the senior squad on a regular basis. We will never forget the highs of the run to the FA Youth Cup quarter-final last year and the Youth Alliance league and cup double. Thank you Drives and good luck!

We've had a sad and unfortunate season with regards to so many great former players and supporters

passing. I can't mention everyone of course (and forgive me if I neglect to include anyone in particular), but those who the board and I had personal relationships with who gave the club so much more than their support; Jack Sapsworth, Brian Swain, Kevin Catlin as well as Brett Beasey-Webb, Robert Collon, Sara Jaffray, Bob Chowdhury, Ray Woodfield and several other loyal fans – the Supporters' Trust produced a wonderful tribute to at their recent Presentation Evening. Legendary former players like John O'Rourke, Seamus Dunne, Paul Futterer and Dave Pacey – the only man to score for Luton Town in an FA Cup final – have passed on. Let's sing our hearts out as those who've left us would have done themselves.

Finally, regardless of what league we're in next season, thank you so much for your support. Let's remain together whatever. We, the board, are as desperate for success as any one of you, but we also have the patience to see it through come what may. We know we can win tonight and nothing but the opposition being on the form of their lives will be able to stop us.

Come On You Hatters. This is our town!



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GREAT SCOTT

THE CAPTAIN'S LOG

Good evening and welcome back to Kenilworth Road for the final time this season – and we hope we can put on a good show to bring the curtain down on 2016–17 here with a flourish.

We welcome Blackpool back down here for the second time in recent weeks and if we can recreate the scenes we had at the end of that victory on 1st April, we know we'll have done our job.

I've been in the play-offs twice before with Swindon and Leyton Orient and gone into the second leg with everything to play for, just as it is tonight. Very rarely do you get one side running away with it by half-time in the tie. They are always tight, cagey affairs between sides who have finished in the top places for a reason, and this one is no different.



We may be a goal behind but we came away from Bloomfield Road on Sunday night feeling we were more than capable of overturning that deficit in front of our own fans.

We were disappointed to concede three goals, something we have only done twice previously in the league this season, and felt that we were unfortunate to do so considering it shouldn't have been a free-kick leading up to the penalty that won it for them.

James Justin won the ball cleanly and even when the delivery has come in, although I obviously did have my hands on their player as he did on me, I felt aggrieved at the referee awarding a penalty for a foul by myself – especially when you see them not given at the other end.

There is no point in dwelling on those matters now though. We've got back on the training ground and set about our work with a purpose and plan to put things right, and we know that we have the firepower – as the front boys and Dan Potts showed on Sunday – to come from behind.

I was especially pleased for Pottsy to score his first goal in senior football. He's not had an easy time this season with injury and the concussion at Carlisle.

I travel in with him every day, so I know he's been suffering.

He took a nasty whack again early on again the other night and spilled blood for the cause, but he showed great character to play on and produced a fantastic strike.

We know we need to win the game outright tonight to progress to Wembley, which I can tell the boys is a wonderful experience. I lost there with Orient a couple of years ago so I've got a burning desire to get back there and lay a few ghosts to rest, and I know the club also wants to.

They say it's the best way to go up, so all I ask for tonight is that you continue the fantastic support that was on display to the nation on Sunday and help us book a trip to the national stadium. We are on our own patch and we know that everyone will be desperate for a party atmosphere when the final whistle blows.

On behalf of the squad I thank you for all your backing throughout the season. Let's have one last push to get over the line.

Enjoy the game.

[TOWN V BLACKPOOL | THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017] 11

CLUB STATEMENT ON CHECKATRADE TROPHY

After prolonged consultation with supporters, staff, coaches and the manager, the board of Luton Town voted in favour of the reformation of this season's Checkatrade Trophy format for the following two seasons.

Earlier this season the Hatters were very critical of the EFL in the way the new format was announced, the timing of the announcement and that there was very little consultation with clubs and supporters prior to clubs deciding upon the ultimatum at the League's AGM in Portugal last June.

CEO Gary Sweet said: "To propose a completely new format shortly after the B-Team issue was still raw with supporters and at the time the 'Whole Game Solution' was prematurely publicised I felt was extremely ill-advised, especially as neither clubs or fans were appropriately consulted."

Sweet continued: "Supporters – and many clubs – absolutely needed to be convinced that the introduction of Category One Academy U21 teams was, in no way, related to or a prelude to the introduction of B-Teams into a reformatted league structure.

"We now know it isn't, and we have now been consulted and have been able to consult on revisions to the existing format in order to save the Trophy competition – a trophy we proudly won in 2009 in front of 42,000 of our own supporters – from being erased altogether."

Luton Town made its feelings known over the last season when the club was fined the maximum £15,000 for fielding under-strength teams in qualifying from a group containing two League One clubs and a Premier League's Academy side.



In a review of the competition going forward the Club has been consulted all the way through the process by the EFL and, in turn, have held meetings with a focus group of supporters groups – represented by SoLYD (Supporters of Luton Youth Development), LTST (Luton Town Supporters' Trust), LLSC (Loyal Luton Supporters' Club) and LTDSA (Luton Town Disabled Supporters' Club) – which were then shared with staff, coaches and Nathan Jones, resulting in the Club feeding back its findings to the League.

Other than the Club's vociferous stance on protecting the English football pyramid, our key concerns were to; correct the limitations of team selection for EFL clubs (to allow academy players to be selected); to clarify team selections for EPPP1 invited clubs; to further protect the competition's regionalised format through to the final and for

appropriate compensations to be awarded by the invited teams.

We are pleased that the feedback we have given has been heard, considered and broadly applied to the alterations we, along with other member clubs, were asked to vote on.

We enjoyed our run to the last four of the new-look competition, and the fact that just under 7,000 fans turned out to watch a thrilling game with Oxford United under the Kenilworth Road lights shows that our supporters embraced it too.

The relaxation of the team selection rules would have meant that only two of the total fines handed out to 12 clubs during 2016-17 would stand, had they been applied, and that is something we support as our young players have proved they are good enough to compete against Category One counterparts without fear of sanction.



We also believe the increase in funding from the 16 invited clubs to £3m is a valuable source of income to clubs, and an innovative way of filtering Premier League money down while giving young players from all levels the opportunity to develop in competitive senior football.

From a footballing perspective, Jones and his coaches firmly believe that for more senior players from EFL teams competing against younger players from Premier League development squads is immensely valuable and mutually beneficial.

The Town boss said: "From a footballing perspective, the Checkatrade Trophy was a huge benefit to us as it gave senior players from the lower divisions the chance to play against a younger group from higher levels of the English game, but it also allowed us to pit our talented

youngsters against Category One academies.

"We are pleased that our feedback has been taken on board, with the relaxation of the selection rules allowing us to play the players we choose to. We strongly feel our young players deserve the same opportunity as those from Category One academies.

BENEFITTING

"Just as importantly though, the EFL have assured clubs that it isn't the thin end of the wedge in terms of Premier League clubs being able to enter B teams into the league. I know our supporter groups have been consulted all the way through by the club's board when giving our views, and hopefully any fears they had on that front have been allayed. "These are some of the best young players in the country from the top academies

we are coming up against, and with the prize money increase, it's an excellent way of filtering some of the Premier League cash through to the lower divisions while benefitting our own players on the pitch."

Tony Murray, chairman of LTSC, added: "Not only are we satisfied that this isn't the thin end of any wedge, but the revised format presents a genuine opportunity for a much-needed redistribution of wealth from competing Premier League club to the lower leagues, a notion which every supporter and supporters' trust would agree with."

"We are grateful that supporters were able to be consulted during the process and are happy with the outcome.

"Let's hope we can progress next season as far as we did this, without the fines!"

COMMUNITY SHIELD CHEQUE PRESENTATIONS

At the last home game against Morecambe, the Town's charity of the year Level Trust and the Hatters Community Trust were each presented with a cheque for £1,000 on behalf of Luton Town.

The money is part of the Football Association's distribution to clubs of funds raised from the annual Community Shield fixture at Wembley, with clubs in turn donating their share to local community projects.

"We've had a great year working closely with Level Trust, who are a terrific local charity looking out for children in Luton, while the Luton Town Community Trust team work wonders the 3,500-plus people they engage with each week on various projects," said senior operations manager Kevan Platt, who handed over the cheque to Level Trust.

"We are delighted to be able to help them with the money that we are given from the Community Shield proceeds to distribute, and hope it will go some way to helping both continue to benefit the lives of so many people of varying ages in the local area."

The Community Trust cheque was presented by Trustee Mike McMahon.



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NEIL GAZELEY



Oak Road season ticket holder Neil Gazeley sadly lost his battle with cancer on Sunday 8th May.

Aged just 51, Neil leaves behind his wife Angela and his boys, Lewis and Oliver, who he now passes the baton on to carry on his love affair with the Hatters that began as a boy in the late Seventies.

For all his Town supporting family and friends, Neil's absence will leave a large void on match days and our thoughts are with them.

DEREK AMER



On Saturday 15th April, Town supporter Derek Amer lost his long battle with cancer, passing away in Keech Hospice at the age of 65.

From a young age Derek was a huge supporter, and would listen to how the Hatters were getting on wherever he was in the world – in his wife Krys' words, “relegating her for 90 minutes every Saturday afternoon!”

Condolences go to Krys and all of Derek's family and friends.

RON HEDLEY



Town supporter Ron Hedley has signed up for the March for Men and is looking for sponsorship!

The Diamond

Season Ticket holder is joining Jeff Stelling for the last leg of the walk – a 25-mile distance from Durham City to Newcastle United, via Sunderland and Gateshead – to raise funds for the EFL's partner charity, Prostate Cancer UK.

You can sponsor Ron by visiting his JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Ronald-Hedley



CHRIS HOOD & JAYNE LUCAS

Good luck to a pair of dedicated Luton Town supporters – Chris Hood and Jayne Lucas – who are getting married on 27th May. Both of your families and friends wish you every happiness!

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TODAY'S MASCOTS:

TODAY WE WELCOME SEVEN MASCOTS TO KENILWORTH ROAD. WE HOPE YOU ALL HAVE A GREAT DAY!



CADE EWINGTON AGE: 12
FAVOURITE PLAYER: JAMES JUSTIN



JOHN FRY AGE: 84 | FAVOURITE
PLAYER: CAMERON McGEEHAN



ALFIE MILLER-STEVENS
AGE: 7 FAVE PLAYER: DANNY HYLTON



JAMES GINGER AGE: 10 |
FAVOURITE PLAYER: DANNY HYLTON



FIONA GINGER AGE: 11
FAVE PLAYER: CAMERON McGEEHAN



KATIE GINGER AGE: 12 1/2
FAVE PLAYER: CAMERON McGEEHAN



ROBERT GINGER AGE: 10
FAVOURITE PLAYER: JAMES JUSTIN

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KEY

H: HOME | A: AWAY | G: GLOVES



WELCOME BLACKPOOL

The Hatters would like to welcome today's travelling staff, players and supporters of Blackpool after their long journey from Lancashire today.

It was an incredibly hectic final day of the season, which saw a number of teams move in and then back out of the play-off places. But by the end of the day it was as you were, as both Blackpool and the Hatters retained their original positions of seventh and fourth.

A 3-1 victory over already relegated Leyton Orient on the final day secured that place for the Tangerines, which was their 18th victory of the Sky Bet League Two season.

It's been a slightly turbulent season for the Pool, who at the start of the season looked as if they were going to remain in the division for another term – having been 15th after 15 games – but strong home form and an excellent forward line has seen Gary Bowyer's team make it into the top seven.

In fact, the Town's victory at Bloomfield Road back in December was one of only four league defeats Blackpool suffered all season at home – only Doncaster Rovers suffered fewer losses on their own pitch, having lost just three times at the Keepmoat.

Formed in 1887, the north-west club famously reached the Premier League for the first time in 2010 and

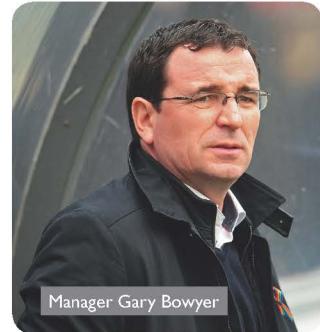
only a late dip in form saw them relegated from the top tier under Ian Holloway. They did maintain their place in the Championship for four seasons, but two successive relegations saw them competing in the fourth tier this term.

The form of 13-goal striker Kyle Vassell and midfielder Brad Potts, who has 12, has certainly helped Pool's cause, with the latter also a creative force having served up nine assists for his team-mates this term. Neither netted in the league since before the Tangerines' last trip to Kenilworth Road in early April, however.

Former Hatter Mark Cullen has also been an important cog for Bowyer's side having notched 12 times, including five in their last four games.

Prior to his departure from Kenilworth Road, Cullen was top scorer for John Still's side in the 2014-15 season netting 14 times, before the Hatters accepted a £180,000 bid from the Tangerines. He also netted nine times for them last season as they were relegated from League One.

The league meetings between the two this season certainly favoured the Hatters, as Nathan Jones' side took all six points available. A 2-0 win at Bloomfield Road followed by a 1-0 victory at Kenilworth Road – courtesy of a late goal from Ollie Palmer – saw the Hatters add to their strong record against Blackpool, before the Seasiders won 3-2 in Sunday's first leg to bring a one-goal lead to Kenilworth Road tonight.



Manager Gary Bowyer



Brad Potts

HATTERS V BLACKPOOL

LUTON WINS: 23 | DRAWS: 12 | BLACKPOOL WINS: 17

LAST MEETING

BLACKPOOL 3-2 LUTON – 14TH MAY 2017

TEAM PROFILE:

NICKNAMES: SEASIDERS, TANGERINES, THE POOL | GROUND: BLOOMFIELD ROAD | MANAGER: GARY BOWYER | LAST SEASON: 22ND IN LEAGUE ONE | LAST LEAGUE MATCH: BLACKPOOL 3-1 LEYTON ORIENT

MEET THE VISITORS

THE BOSS

GARY BOWYER

After calling time on a relatively short playing career with Hereford, Nottingham Forest and Rotherham, the 45-year-old worked his way through the coaching ranks at Blackburn Rovers to manage the first team. Took over the reins at Bloomfield Road in June.

IN BETWEEN THE STICKS

SAM SLOCOMBE

After coming through the ranks at Scunthorpe United where he made over 100 appearances, the 28-year-old went onto have a season with Oxford United last year before joining Blackpool in the summer.

IN DEFENCE

KELVIN MELLOR

A summer arrival from Plymouth, the ex-Nantwich and Crewe man was named in the Football Manager Team of the Season and PFA Team for League Two, and also picked up his club's Players' Player and the Blackpool Gazette's Player of the Year awards. Netted seven times from right-back.

TOM ALDRED

The 26-year-old, who has previously played for Carlisle, Barrow and Accrington, signed for the Seasiders in 2015 and has since clocked up over a century of appearances.

CLARK ROBERTSON

The 23-year-old Scottish defender left Aberdeen to join Blackpool in June 2015, and has this season been their highest appearance maker, playing 54 times.

ANDY TAYLOR

A former England Under-20 international, the former Tranmere Rovers and Walsall defender signed for the Tangerines last year after leaving the Saddlers.

WILL AIMSON

A summer signing from Hull City, the 22-year-old had a loan spell with Blackpool before signing permanently. He has also played for the likes of Tamworth and Tranmere Rovers.

ACROSS THE MIDDLE

BRIGHT OSAYI-SAMUEL

A young talent in the Tangerines' ranks, the 19-year-old who predominantly makes his appearances off the bench scored five times in the regular league season.

NEIL DANNS

A regular in the Championship for much of the past decade, the 34-year-old joined the Seasiders on loan from Bury this year to bolster Bowyer's midfield options.

JORDAN FLORES

A January loan signing from Wigan, the midfielder scored for his new promotion-chasing side in their 4-1 win over Carlisle United in February.

COLIN DANIEL

Since starting his career with Eastwood Town, the 29-year-old has played for the likes of Macclesfield Town, Mansfield Town and Port Vale.

BRAD POTTS

The 23-year-old was a regular for Carlisle before he departed the Cumbrians for Bloomfield Road. He has been in good goalscoring form this season, going into double figures for the first time in his career.

UP FRONT

KYLE VASSELL

The 24-year-old former Sutton United and Bishop's Stortford man is the Tangerines' top scorer after netting 13 times in the regular campaign, his first at Bloomfield Road since joining from Peterborough.

MARK CULLEN



The former Hatter left Kenilworth Road in 2015 for Blackpool and was their top scorer last season as they were relegated from League One. Has 12 to his name for the current campaign.

NATHAN DELFOUNESO

In his second spell with the Tangerines, the Aston Villa academy graduate has played for a host of EFL clubs including Blackburn and Swindon. Netted five times this term.

FROM THE OAK ROAD

WITH **IAN CHISNALL**

Ian Chisnall, BBC Radio Lancashire's Blackpool correspondent for over 25 years and fan of 50 plus, gives us his thoughts on how this season has gone for the Bloomfield Road side in Sky Bet League Two, and how he expects their visit to Kenilworth Road this evening to pan out...



► THIS SEASON

Your campaign in 100 words...

It's been a campaign of changing priorities...initially to stop the rot of back to back relegations and stabilise. Then, one of a growing belief that this squad could challenge for promotion even when down in the bottom half of the table. Now, there is a fierce determination to see the job through.

After a few years of struggle at the bottom of each division you've been in, how has Gary Bowyer steadied the ship this term?

Brilliantly by adopting a calm and methodical approach and somehow managing to focus on things he could influence on the pitch and the training ground, rather than the well documented politics surrounding off the field issues.

How difficult has it been for the players with so many issues going on off the pitch?

They have been well prepared for the lack of atmosphere on home match days...but it still must be difficult playing to a largely empty stadium. The players have done an excellent job in entertaining the faithful.

How nerve-wracking was the final day when so many clubs could have taken the final two play-off spots – or did you always feel comfortable?

Seasoned Blackpool supporters have grown accustomed to not knowing the meaning of the word "comfortable" but, once the early goal went in, Leyton Orient's gutsy youngsters never really mounted a threat. Pool were professional and, for once, I always felt they had enough to stay above the line.

Which of Bowyer's signings for 2016-17 have you been most impressed with over the whole season?

Kelvin Mellor has had an outstanding season as a goal scoring full or wing-back and thoroughly deserved his selection in the EFL Divisional Team.

Which player have you been most disappointed to lose this year?

Kyle Vassell had scored ten goals by November before picking up a number of niggling injuries which have hampered the second half of the campaign. He's still the leading scorer and, despite too many absences for his liking, he's been a shrewd addition by Gary Bowyer.

Who do you think Hatters fans will watch today and think 'I wish we had him' in our team?

If Brad Potts can put together all the component parts to his game then anybody in the division would take him. He's still young and well capable of playing higher.



► SEASONS PAST...

Tell us about you. Why do you support Blackpool? Where did it all begin?

What was your first game? What do you remember about it?

Holidays in Blackpool with my parents in late August to coincide with the start of the season in the old First Division. Like Emlyn Hughes, I was



born in Barrow and my big mate at school was his brother. I remember watching Blackpool v Liverpool on a Tuesday night...and Bill Shankly signed Emlyn for Liverpool after the match.

What do you love most about the Tangerines?

Because they're MY club. Fractured at present, surrounded by discord, but still MY club.

Who's your favourite Blackpool player of all time?

Can't choose between two Scots from different eras... Tony Green from my youth, Charlie Adam from more recent times.

What has been your favourite season following the Pool?

The season in the Premier League will obviously live long in the memory. With due respect, trips to the Emirates, the Etihad and Old Trafford just have the edge on Kenilworth Road. Did I forget to mention a double that season over Liverpool!

If you could invite five former Blackpool players and managers to a dinner party, who would they be?

Our current gaffer Gary Bowyer (cos he'll be reading this,) Jimmy Armfield, Simon Grayson, Alan Ball and... of course...the madcap Ian Holloway.

► LUTON AND BLACKPOOL...

The Hatters have done the double over Blackpool in the regular league programme this season. Do you think that will have any bearing on the overall outcome of this semi-final?

No. These two games are a totally different kettle of fish. The team that keeps their nerve well enough to allow themselves to play their football on the two match days will end up at Wembley.

Our former striker Mark Cullen is the only current player in either squad with a link to both clubs, but who is your favourite ex-player or manager with a Luton connection?

Over the past years there's been remarkably few who have represented both over a reasonable period of time. The one who stands out is Gary Brabin, who developed cult status in his time at Bloomfield Road.

What do you expect from tonight's game? What's your prediction?

A nervy, tight affair which could well be decided by a piece of magic...or a horrible mistake.

I've been watching Blackpool far too long to make predictions...so I'll risk splinters by sitting on the fence and saying it will go right to the wire.

► QUICKFIRE:

Terrace or seats? Definitely terrace

Who are your rivals? Preston North End...but I cover them regularly and don't see them as rivals.

Who is your player of the season? Kelvin Mellor

If you could bring one player from the past back in the Blackpool team, who would it be?

Alan Suddick...he could bend a 1970s football better than Beckham and Bale could with these lightweight affairs.

Who is your favourite all-time manager?

The late, great Billy Ayre.

Most treasured Blackpool piece of memorabilia?

The fans presented me with my old seat in the press box when the stadium was modified.

Are you happy with your final league position?

Yes...but it could have been so much better.

Who will be promoted through the Sky Bet League Two play-offs this season?

The winner of this semi-final

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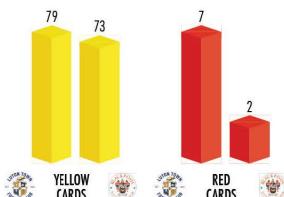
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BLACKPOOL



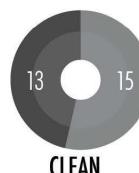
MATCH FACTS

Luton have won nine of their last 10 home games against Blackpool in all competitions (L1).

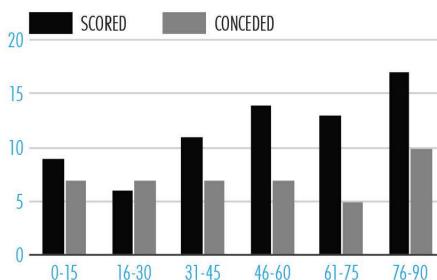


MATCH FACTS

The Tangerines' only victory in their last 14 trips to Kenilworth Road in all competitions came in February 2003, a 3-1 win courtesy of a hat-trick from John Murphy.



GOAL TIMES



GOAL TIMES



OPTA
OFFICIAL DATA

[TOWN V BLACKPOOL | THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017] **25**

PICTURE THE PAST

CLUB HISTORIAN ROGER WASH DELVES INTO HIS PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES





So near yet so far at the Conference play-off final against AFC Wimbledon at the Etihad Stadium, Manchester in 2011. Jason Walker watches as his header is about to hit the base of the post and roll along the line.



Andrew Fotiadis fires in a shot at Crewe in 1997

THE HATTERS IN THE PLAY-OFFS

CLUB HISTORIAN ROGER WASH LOOKS AT THE TOWN'S PREVIOUS PLAY-OFF CAMPAIGNS

In the past, a great many clubs knew by Christmas each year that they were not likely to win promotion, and as the season was effectively over for them, attendances normally dropped away alarmingly.

In order to keep interest going until the bitter end, play-offs were introduced in 1987 but it was to be ten years before the Town tasted what is now regarded as the annual end of season nail-biter.

We had been relegated to Division Two (now League One) at the end of the 1995/96 campaign and in spite of a valiant effort to win immediate promotion, were destined to finish in

third spot behind Bury and Stockport.

Sixth-place Crewe had lost 17 games that season, including a 6-0 mauling at Kenilworth Road and the play-off semi-final first leg against the Railwaymen was looked on as a formality by the Luton supporters who travelled to Gresty Road!

All seemed to be going to plan when, after only three minutes, Crewe goalkeeper Jason Kearton parried a

low Andrew Fotiadis cross into the path of David Oldfield who made no mistake. From then on it all started to go wrong....

Firstly, the influential Garry Waddock was forced to go off after suffering a gashed leg and then Mark Rivers, whose father played for the Town in the 1960s, forced an equaliser following a mistake by Luton full-back Julian James.



George Pilkington goes close at York in 2010

It was to get worse for James who was dismissed for a second yellow card soon after, and from then on it became one-way traffic as Crewe laid siege on the Luton defence. Fortunately only one further goal was scored when Colin Little was presented with an open target, but how big striker Dele Adebola failed to make it 3-1 with a shot that hit a post is anyone's guess. He probably felt obliged after standing on my toes in the Gresty Road club shop beforehand!

It was therefore back to Kenilworth Road for the second leg and a relieved Hatters side re-grouped, confident that they would not play as badly again. Again, it all started well with Oldfield putting the Town 2-0 up after half-an-hour only for Little to pull a goal back a couple of minutes later. After Shaun Smith levelled the score on the night after 61 minutes, there was no way back for the Town who were well held by their increasingly classy opponents.

It was to be another 13 years before the Town tasted the play-offs

again and by this time we were experiencing our first season out of the Football League since 1920. Our initial season in the Conference of 2009/10 saw us finish in second spot behind Stevenage, and we were down to play York at Bootham Crescent in the semi-final first leg.

On the night the Town, who had gone 14 games unbeaten, did everything but score but were killed off by a sucker punch in the final minute. A long punt out of the York defence skidded off the top of Shane Blackett's head into the path of Richard Brodie, who up until that point had been starved of the ball all evening.

Brodie took the chance well to set up an intriguing second leg in front of a near capacity crowd at Kenilworth Road.

York had done their homework and limited the Town to only a handful of chances before getting a lucky break when a clearance from George Pilkington cannoned off Chris Carruthers into the net. At 2-0 down there was no way back for the Town

and it was scant satisfaction that York lost to Oxford in the final.

In the following season the Hatters finished in third spot and were due to take on fourth-placed Wrexham in the play-off semi-final with the first leg at the Racecourse Ground.

A RELIEVED HATTERS SIDE RE-GROUPED, CONFIDENT THAT THEY WOULD NOT PLAY AS BADLY AGAIN

In an amazing first 45 minutes the Town stunned the crowd of 7,211 by taking a 3-0 lead with a scintillating display of attacking football. Alex Lawless with a 25-yard piledriver, Claude Gnakpa with an equally impressive strike, and a first-ever goal for Ed Asafu-Adjaye gave the Hatters a commanding lead which they held on to with ease.





Alex Lawless opens the scoring at Wrexham in 2011



Although the Town were leading 3-0 on aggregate, the nerves certainly started jangling in the crowd of 9,078 in the second leg when Andy Mangan pulled a goal back in the eighth minute as Wrexham attacked with a will during the opening period.

Worse was to come soon after when Dan Gleeson was penalised for handball but Mark Tyler, in the Luton goal, saved Gareth Taylor's spot-kick and from then on the Town fought their way back and more or less killed the game with Zdenek Kroca's header from Asafu-Adjaye's 29th minute free-kick.

Jason Walker netted the Town's second in the closing minutes to confirm a 5-1 aggregate win and set up a play-off final against AFC Wimbledon at Eastlands, Manchester.

Easy trip up, lovely stadium, pleasant atmosphere – but what a tedious game. With the two sides cancelling each other out the game hinged on

two incidents as the contest was approaching 90 minutes.

Firstly, Walker was blatantly upended by Dons goalkeeper Seb Brown in the area only for the referee to wave play-on with Matthew Barnes-Homer being crowded out as he tried to get his shot away.

PENALTY

Secondly, Walker climbed highest to meet a Jake Howells cross only to see his header hit the base of the post and roll along the line into the grateful arms of Brown.

Extra-time could not separate the sides leading to the dreaded penalty shoot-out which we lost 4-3 to send the Dons back to the Football League, and 12,000 Hatters fans to slink off home to lick their wounds.

Up until this point, with our previous three failed attempts, we knew that the play-offs were to be our likely destination long before the season was

over. Season 2012/13 was different in as much that at Easter, following an awful 3-1 defeat at Braintree, the play-offs were far from our minds.

New manager Paul Buckle, watching the Braintree debacle, immediately switched Stuart Fleetwood to his rightful position up front and Robbie Willmott back out to the wing, and with it came an upsurge in fortune as the battling Hatters attempted to make up lost ground.

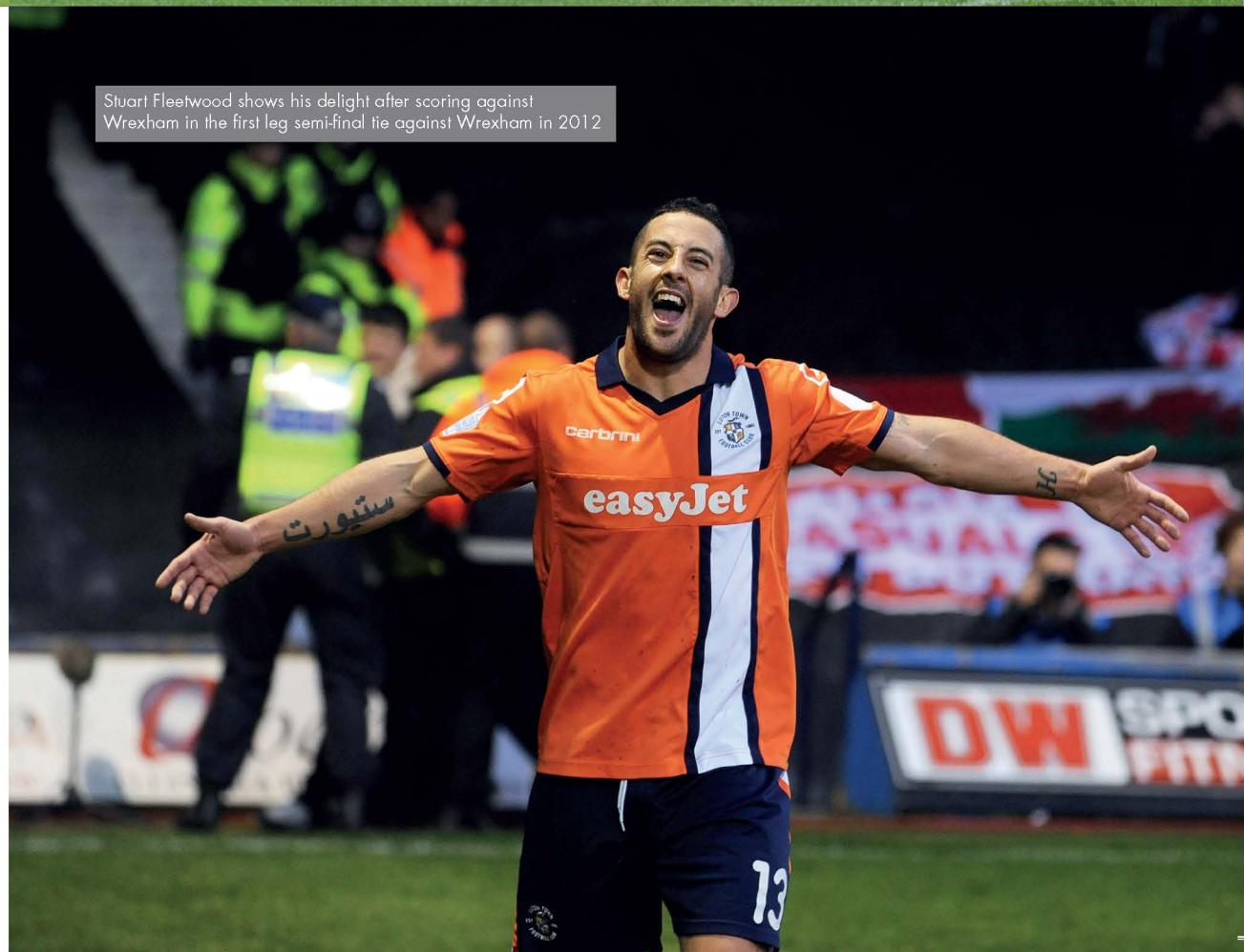
Three home wins in a row, including a vital three points against promotion aspirants Kidderminster, wrapped around a pair of away draws still left the Town needing to win a point at the home of runaway champions Fleetwood on the final day.

The Town players applauded the Fleetwood team on to the pitch with a guard of honour, and then proceeded to outplay their illustrious opponents with an own goal and a strike from new scoring sensation





How to take a penalty. George Pilkington coolly slots the ball home at Wrexham in 2012



Stuart Fleetwood shows his delight after scoring against Wrexham in the first leg semi-final tie against Wrexham in 2012



New scoring sensation Andre Gray tries to breach the York rearguard at Wembley in 2012



from Hinckley, Andre Gray, sealing a brilliant victory and with it a play-off place at the death.

Their opponents were to be Wrexham again, but this time in different circumstances.

ON THE BIG DAY A CROWD OF 39,265, INCLUDING 30,000 FROM LUTON, GATHERED UNDER THE ARCH TO SEE THE GAME GET OFF TO A BLISTERING START

The Red Dragons were a little miffed at not winning the title as in any normal season their 98 points, 17 ahead of the Town, would have made them champions.

But instead they were needing to take part in the play-off lottery which we were more than happy to participate in given the despair following the Braintree defeat only a few weeks before.

The first leg this time was to be at Kenilworth Road and on one of those famous nights under the lights, an expectant crowd of 9,012 gathered to see a battle of styles with Wrexham favouring the direct route against the Town's passing football.

It was to be the Town's cultured football that was to win the day though. In a breathless first half, Keith Keane's delightful pass found

Fleetwood, who managed to keep the ball in play then beat his man before haring to the byline before crossing to Gray who made no mistake.

Fleetwood then took centre stage a few minutes later when he accepted a clever backheel from Gray and ran through a statuesque Wrexham defence before firing a clever shot past Joslaine Mayebe in the Red Dragons goal.

As to be expected, Wrexham came out in the second half with all guns blazing, pumping high balls in to the Luton defence, which held firm and in truth sporadic Luton breakaways could have resulted in a more comfortable result.

'2-0 is a dangerous scoreline' is the old cliché which was repeated many times by the 1,219 Luton Supporters who made their way to Wrexham for



the second leg, but any nerves were soon settled when, after weathering an early onslaught, the Town took the overall score to 3-0 in the 23rd minute.

Alex Lawless was brought down in the box by Wrexham centre-half Mark Creighton, with skipper George Pilkington coolly netting from the spot – and with it came the hope that the contest was as good as over.

Wrexham had other ideas, however, and a double substitution on 56 minutes with player-manager Andy Morrell and the mobile Adam Cieslewicz replacing the ineffective Danny Wright and Mathias Pogba, with man-mountain Creighton being pushed up front, certainly threatened a change in fortune.

The pressure on the Town defence finally told when Cieslewicz's

misplaced header looped over Mark Tyler in the Luton goal on 63 minutes with Morrell netting a second with 13 minutes left to play.

The game was now set up for a grandstand finish, but the Luton defenders held out heroically and even managed to cope with eight minutes of added time to book a place at Wembley.

NEMESIS

We were due to meet our old nemesis York City in the final, and surely we owed them something after they had completed the 'double' over us in league games that season as well as knocking us out of the FA Trophy at the semi-final stage?

On the big day a crowd of 39,265, including 30,000 from Luton, gathered under the arch to see the

game get off to a blistering start with Gray sidefooting Willmott's clever pass home after only 75 seconds.

After this shock start York gradually got back into the game and levelled on 26 minutes when Ashley Chambers rammed the ball into the net after hesitation in the Luton defence following a free-kick.

Straight after the interval, York scored what was to turn out to be the winner in controversial fashion when a long throw was flicked on at the near post to the waiting Matty Blair, more than a yard offside, who tapped the ball past Tyler.

Although the Town huffed and puffed after this, the Minstermen held out fairly comfortably to seal a return to the Football League leaving the Town to wait a further two years before joining them.

I wonder which team these people support?
Fans at the Etihad Stadium, Manchester in 2011



THE CAMERA NEVER LIES

CLUB HISTORIAN ROGER WASH DELVES INTO HIS PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES





Brian as MC on the occasion of the celebration of '100 Years at Kenilworth Road' in 2005

BRIAN SWAIN

9TH MAY 1938 – 30TH APRIL 2017

Everyone at Kenilworth Road has been saddened to learn of the death of Brian Swain, who was the voice of Luton Town for many years in his role of Sports Editor of the Luton News, in the days before the internet and instant news, Chiltern Radio, Club Call and latterly as editor of the club's programme. Luton born, Brian was given his dream job, that of Sports Editor of the Luton News, at the end of 1972 and so began a 25-year stint

at the paper where he covered all the highs and lows of the Hatters, which included the near demise of the club in 1975, that glorious day at Wembley in 1988 and several promotions and relegations along the way.

Many Luton Town supporters grew up hanging on his words and it was a sad day when he left the paper in 1997, but he continued as a freelance reporter as well as editor of the club's programme,

before finally hanging up his pen in 2004 after covering an amazing 1,629 consecutive domestic Hatters matches.

Brian retired to Falmouth in 2004 but still made the long trip to Kenilworth Road a couple of times a year to meet up with his old friends.

Our condolences go out to his wife Rosemary and the rest of his family.

ROGER WASH

BRIAN SWAIN – AN APPRECIATION BY DENIS O'DONOGHUE, FRIEND, WORK COLLEAGUE AND FELLOW LUTON TOWN FAN.

Born in Luton, Brian attended Dunstable Grammar School from 1949 until 1954.

His love affair with Luton Town began during the Second World War when, aged five, he drifted into Kenilworth Road for a now long-forgotten reserve match and was hooked. Later, he even joined the St John Ambulance so that he could sit by the touchline at matches.

He wanted to be a journalist right from the outset. There were no vacancies at the Luton News at that time, so he joined Whitbread Brewery in the town for a few months until one arose. At that point he became a copy boy in the Readers' department. His long-time sports desk colleague Eric Norris was already working in the department.

He became a reporter and after his indentures, moved to a Manchester evening newspaper based in Bolton. He did his National Service in the Intelligence Corps while based in Cyprus.

The Bolton paper closed and Brian returned to Luton as deputy chief reporter before becoming industrial

correspondent. In 1972, sports editor Eric Pugh (bylined as Chiltern) died and at Christmas of the same year, Brian was appointed in his place.

He said: "It was my dream job and the best Christmas present I ever had." He also became the first Luton News sports editor to write under his own name.

AWARDS

For 25 years, Brian drove the highways of the country to report on Luton home and away, and after leaving the Luton News in 1997, he spent a further seven years as a freelance, working for a variety of national papers and at the same time becoming programme editor for the Town, unsurprisingly winning awards for his work on it.

His last home game before retirement was Luton's 3-2 win over Sheffield Wednesday on 1st May 2004 and the following week, he brought down the curtain on 1,629 domestic matches at Chesterfield, where the hosts acknowledged his

service and presented him with a bottle of champagne.

Brian and his wife, Rosemary, left for Falmouth, the Cornish town that Brian had fallen in love with as a youngster on family holidays, to fulfil a plan to settle there. Not long after the move, Brian received a payment out of the blue from the pension fund of his old northern paper – he'd forgotten that he'd even joined the fund – and joyfully treated himself to a Yamaha motorbike and zoomed around the Cornish lanes, recalling the pre-M1/M6 days when he'd driven up and down from Luton to Manchester.

**"IT WAS MY DREAM JOB
AND THE BEST CHRISTMAS
PRESENT I EVER HAD."**



Brian with work colleague Eric Norris at Newcastle

Even in retirement, and ever the long-distance traveller, Brian would set off early from Falmouth a couple of times a year, present himself at the Rising Sun in Slip End or the now-defunct Harrow at Woodside at opening time, have a few drinks with old friends, go down to Kenilworth Road for the match, return to the pub for one final drink, set off for Cornwall and be home in time for Match of the Day.

Brian's travels were legendary. He would use the train but mainly it would be a series of heavy-duty





Brian pictured at Kenilworth Road in 1980. Back row (left to right): Brian, Eric Harris, Denis Mortimer (Chairman), Roy Bentley, Roger Duckworth and Tony Read. At the front is Chief Executive John Smith



cars that took the strain. His most memorable journey was when he battled through the snow to Anfield in 1987, only to find that the game was off because the Hatters' flight from Heathrow had been grounded. An incandescent Kenny Dalglish, the Liverpool manager at the time, kept pointing at Brian and shouting: "He managed to get here!"

The boredom of the travelling was enlivened by the company Brian kept. If the match was in the North, Brian would often meet up with the late Roger Duckworth, formerly of the Evening Post and The Sun. But his constant companion was the late Roy Bentley, former sports news editor of The Sun and Luton Town "nut". Over the years, he would be joined by any combination of Luton News photographer Mark Richards, deputy sports editor the late Eric Norris,

Evening Post reporter the late Eric Harris, former LN deputy editor Denis O'Donoghue and press box assistant Danny Fallon.

Over the course of 25 years Brian reported faithfully and honestly on the highs and lows at Kenilworth Road – the dark days when the sale of midfielder Peter Anderson staved off bankruptcy, the acrimony over the proposed move to Milton Keynes, the plastic pitch and the ban on away fans, as well as promotion and relegation.

During this time Brian had also become the voice of Luton Town on Chiltern Radio, and his most memorable moment came in 1983 when Luton had to beat Manchester City to remain in the First Division. In those pre-internet days, Brian's bulletins were the only way those

who couldn't attend knew what was happening. With five minutes to go Mike Vince, the studio presenter, said: "Well, we're hearing that a goal has been scored at Maine Road and we'll go over to Brian Swain after this record", at which point Brian could be heard shouting in the background: "Put me on! Put me on! Put me on NOW! Luton have scored!"

A later innovation with which Brian was connected was Club Call, a premium-rate line on which Brian would update callers on Luton developments. He cunningly spun out his intros to make sure that subscribers paid a good sum to find out the latest.

I helped Brian in the press box for 25 years, and said at the time of his retirement: "He is an absolute professional. In all the years I've been

with him while he's broadcasting and filing reports, I haven't seen him actually write down a single word of copy! He dictates everything off the top of his head. And it's all totally accurate, beautifully constructed and a pleasure to read and hear. He is a remarkable journalist who would have been a great asset to any Fleet Street newspaper, but who chose to stay with the life and club he loves. On top of that, he has a heart as big as a house."

Brian was a sociable man who loved his football and the company of football fans. Once settled in Cornwall, he would walk up to Falmouth Town's ground and smoke a cigar, drink a Scotch and get to know the people – so much so that he was asked to become the club secretary. He accepted and for a few years ran the club, reuniting with Luton Town legend Bruce Rioch, who had moved

Brian had two send-offs at the end of his long career. The first was at the Town's final home game of the 2003/04 campaign against Sheffield Wednesday when, before the start, he was presented with a signed, framed shirt by the club.

The second came the following week before the game at Chesterfield which marked the end of his remarkable 1,629 game run. He received an ovation from both the home and away



Brian is presented with a signed shirt on the occasion of his final home game reporting on the Town

to the area, and who came in to help with the training just to keep his hand in.

Brian had been a respected local league referee in Luton, who was often told to "take your glasses off, ref!!", and was a founder member and later Life President of the Luton Town Supporters Club. For many years, he was also secretary of the Luton Midweek Cricket League. He

was a keen trade unionist and held positions at regional level in the National Union of Journalists.

His health declined over a number of years but Brian was still determined to make one more day trip to Kenilworth Road. Sadly, it was not to be, but he was proud to be able to make the drive to Plymouth in August last year to see his beloved Hatters one more time.

supporters and was presented with a bottle of champagne by the host club.

He said afterwards: "It was a lovely way to bow out. I wasn't happy with the result obviously (we lost 1-0 to a last minute goal which saved the Spireites from relegation) but I was very impressed with Chesterfield.

"It reminds you of what football is really about and the friendships that you make over the years travelling up and down the

country. I was just disappointed that we didn't reach the play-offs. I was convinced a few weeks ago that I would end my time with Luton with a visit to Cardiff.

"That was disappointing, but on the other hand I'm so chuffed that we weren't anywhere near relegation. That was the big worry with all that happened in the summer when we didn't know if the club would even still exist."

ROGER WASH



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TOWN 3 : MORECAMBE 1



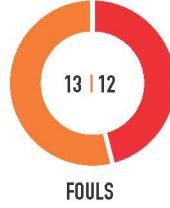
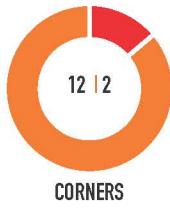
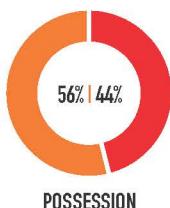
SATURDAY 6TH MAY | KENILWORTH ROAD | ATTENDANCE: 8,399 | AWAY: 187

TOWN GOALS: VASSELL 29, MARRIOTT 74, 87 | **MORECAMBE GOAL:** ROSE (PEN) 58

TOWN: MOORE, JUSTIN (O'DONNELL 63), REA, CUTHBERT, POTTS, LEE, MPANZU, GRAY, GAMBIN (D'ATH 78), PALMER, VASSELL (MARRIOTT 72). SUBS NOT USED: SMITH, BANTON, FAMEWO, KING (GK)

YELLOW CARD: POTTS, CUTHBERT

MORECAMBE: ROCHE, MCGOWAN (DUCKWORTH 90+3), KENYON, EDWARDS, MULLIN, MOLYNEUX, ELLISON, WILDIG (HEDLEY 88), WHITMORE, EVANS (FLEMING 70), ROSE (C). SUBS NOT USED: NIZIC (GK), WAKEFIELD, TURNER, JORDAN | YELLOW CARDS: WILDIG



Isaac Vassell puts the Town in front

STORY OF THE MATCH:

The Hatters secured fourth place in the Sky Bet League Two table with a 3-1 final-day win over Morecambe at Kenilworth Road, sending them into a play-off semi-final with Blackpool on the back of an impressive seven-game unbeaten run.

For the opener, Luke Gambin pinged a corner in from the left that Dan Potts met with a firm header down that Barry Roche saved low, but only into the path of Isaac Vassell to poke over the line from a yard out for his 13th goal of the season.

The visitors were back on level terms after 58 minutes, with Michael Rose slotting home from the penalty spot after Scott Cuthbert had tripped Paul Mullin in the box.

Town restored the lead when Gray threaded it through for Marriott to race on to in the 74th minute. The former Ipswich striker took the ball in his stride and slipped his 11th of the season through Roche's legs from a tight angle.

The Hatters rounded off the scoring when Pelly-Ruddock Mpanzu found Ollie Palmer, who fed the ball through to Marriott on the right side of the area and the striker did the rest, standing still and unleashing a low shot from 20 yards that beat Roche's outstretched arm, with the ball nestling in the bottom corner.

The Hatters were reduced to ten men in injury-time when Hylton received his second yellow of the afternoon, but managed to see the game out and secure three points.



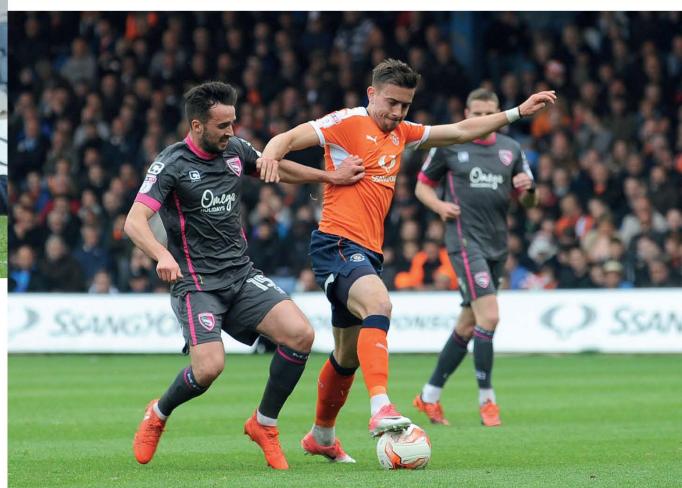
Jack Marriott scores the first of his two goals



JONES: I was very pleased with the first half

"Overall I am very pleased. First half I thought we were very good, we got the goal. Possibly with the amount of the game we had we should have been further ahead, so I was very pleased with the first half.

"Second half again we came out sloppy and allowed them through our own mistakes back into the game. We made it a little bit difficult for ourselves. Then we picked it up immediately and when we brought Jack Marriott on we had a real cutting edge."





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MARRIOTT'S EVEN MORE CONFIDENT NOW!

STRIKES AGAINST SHRIMPS BOOST JACK BEFORE THE PLAY-OFFS

After making it into double figures against Accrington Stanley in the penultimate league game of the season, Jack Marriott added two more to his goal tally with a brace against Morecambe after once again coming off the bench.

The ex-Ipswich Town and Woking forward said the goals have given him the edge heading into our play-off semi-final against Blackpool.

Marriott explained: "It did the world of good for my confidence against Accrington. But like I said then, you get setbacks, it's how you deal with them.

"I have been confident all week, had a good week's training and really took it into today's game and thankfully I scored twice."

For his first finish against the Shrimps, the 22-year-old powered onto a through ball from Jake Gray, before hammering an angled shot from the right side of the Morecambe box past Barry Roche to restore the Hatters' lead after Isaac Vassell's close range strike had been cancelled out by Michael Rose's penalty.

"The keeper is a big lad so I thought from a tight angle hit it low and hard and he might struggle to get down," Marriott continued. "But it was a great ball from Jake Gray. He's got that quality about him, if you make the run he will find you.

"He did a couple of times in the reserve game against Derby and he's done it again for me today and I am pleased."

Jack wrapped up the scoring with a low driven effort from 20 yards, putting him on 12 goals for the season – a strike that he thinks really shows other teams how difficult it can be to take on the Hatters.

He said: "It seemed to me like it took an age to go in, but it was a great passing move, the build-up towards the goal.

"I think that shows what we are about. We play football, we play through teams and we have got the clinical edge as well, which is really pleasing for me to get another goal – I can't complain!"

The game against Jim Bentley's team did have a sour note however, as James Justin sustained what looked like a serious ankle injury at the time – an injury that didn't prove to be as bad as first thought after x-rays showed the 19-year-old hadn't broken anything.

Marriott has been impressed by the former Town youth teamer, who has made 37 appearances this season, netting his first senior goal in the 4-1 win at the Wham Stadium.

Marriott said: "It's never nice to see someone to go down, especially after he's had such a good season – a breakthrough year. He has been excellent."

"He had a little break out of the team. He's come back into the team, he got his first goal for the club last week, so I am really disappointed for him.

"He deserves all the plaudits that he gets, because he has been superb this year, let's just hope he gets back quickly."



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THE HARD YARDS ARE PAYING OFF FOR VASS

TWO CLOSE RANGE FINISHES AGAINST MORECAMBE THIS SEASON FOR ISAAC

Town forward Isaac Vassell capped off a superb debut season with the Hatters – notching his 13th goal of the season against Morecambe as his team went charging into the play-offs in a rich vein of form.

Victories over Notts County, Accrington Stanley and the Shrimps put the Town in a strong position heading into the play-off semi-finals against Blackpool, with Vassell believing the form is a real bonus.

He said: "I think it's important going into the play-offs with good form and all the strikers firing them in as well, which is good!"

"It's good for us, because some might find it daunting, but we are going in with that good form behind us and it just rolls us into it nicely. We can take that momentum into the play-offs and we are all flying."

This term has been a hugely successful one for the 23-year-old, who netted his first goal of the season against Jim Bentley's side back in November.

"I think I was a yard out," Vassell said of his goal last week. "It's quite funny because my first goal was about the same distance out and that was against Morecambe as well!"

"This season has definitely been a good achievement. I know there's more I can do and I am going to keep working on my game and keep trying to improve and be the best I can be."

After giving his side the lead against Morecambe, the forward got an extra cheer from the Kenilworth Road faithful for a fantastic acrobatic celebration, but since having a word with Nathan Jones about it, we're not so sure we will be seeing it again anytime soon!

"Probably not no!" Vassell joked. "It's one I have had in the pocket for a little while and I told a couple of the lads, so they knew about it.

"I don't think they believed I could do it. Like the gaffer said though, I probably won't be doing that one again!"

Fellow forward Jack Marriott made it three goals in two games, coming off the bench for a second successive week to score – netting two minutes after his arrival before sealing the result ten minutes later with a low drive.

Vassell was over the moon to see his replacement come on and make an impact, after what has been a somewhat frustrating season for Marriott – but he certainly seems to be finishing it with a flourish.

The former Truro City man explained: "I am delighted for Jack as well, he's had a bit of an unlucky time, I am buzzing for him. He needed that and we have got Hylts who is firing them in for fun and Ollie is chipping in as well."

FORM

"It's good to have us all in good form, because when you're going into play-offs, Blackpool will look at that and won't want to see all of us banging in goals."

"It's good for us as well because there is a healthy competition between the lads. It keeps us all on our toes and it makes us want to do better."



TRICK OR TREATMENT

A HUMOROUS INSIGHT TO PHYSIO SIMON PARSELL'S WORK



It's been 50-plus matches, over 7,400 miles travelled during the season and it now boils down to this game. It's a great climax to the season on the pitch and with the new training ground now in full swing as well, things are looking bright.

When I came here, these were the nights people spoke of – a full house and the Old Lady rocking under the Luton roar. So, as Shalamar would say, "Let's make it a night to remember!"

Talking of big events, I must mention my buddy Darren Cook's wedding, also starring the lovely Kerry. Thankfully she has taken care of everything. With Daz being a massive Luton fan it's taken us weeks to persuade him not to have the wedding list at the club shop. Which I am pleased about because we already spent the weekend there on the stag do. With the wedding on 27th May, should we be fortunate to get to Wembley, he had better get Kerry up early to help with the kit. Remember Daz, behind every successful man is a surprised mother-in-law.

Talking of surprises, Tyreeq has now failed his driving test twice. On the first occasion it was a parking issue. He manoeuvred the car into a space and the examiner informed him: "You've failed because you have parked on the kerb." Tyreeq replied: "That's how they park round where I live so I thought it was normal." Good answer.

Cookie managed a round of golf recently and was proud to announce that he had scored a hole in one. He was asked the question 'What do you get for that?' Rapidly he responded, 'Just one'.

Injury wise things are good with Cameron and Danny getting themselves back involved with ball work during a first team session. They still have work to do but it was a nice landmark. They will continue during the summer and hopefully be ready for pre-season.

The off season also gives us time to prepare for the following season, looking at new equipment that might help us (yes, Bobbers already know as I have been on to them), changing prehab/rehab programmes with Jared and making sure we are ready to kick on from day one.

Last week's gym session was interesting as Luke Gambin sat on Isaac's back whilst he was doing press-ups. Don't worry, we helped Luke down afterwards. The new gym is looking good but I normally have to exercise in the morning early before my brain works out what I am doing – or just pass.

It was interesting if you saw it in The Sun last week that Isaac moves at 10.1 metres per second and Usain Bolt at 12.1. So, by the time Isaac leaves the blocks, Usain is halfway down. But what it does say is that Isaac is rapid. Just a quick mention for the sports science department there, as they produce great info like that but also keep his fitness programmes right so he can do it.

Another gym experience was watching Glen Rea producing some kind of dance routine. The style is difficult to nail down – a cross between Acid house, hip-hop and a fit, but he seemed to be enjoying himself.

Finally, I have to say a big thank you to the players and staff of Luton Town for providing me with the material for the column, and hopefully we will be back next year – if selected by Mr Hammonds (*Editor's reply: Get your agent to call me*).

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ACCOMPANIED JUNIOR (UNDER 10)*†	£60.00	£70.00	£70.00	£80.00
OAK ROAD ADULT	£260.00	£290.00	£290.00	£340.00
OAK ROAD UNACCOMPANIED 10-21	£110.00	£120.00	£120.00	£130.00

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ADULT								
GOLDEN SENIOR (75+)								
SENIOR (65+)								
YOUNG ADULT (19-21)								
UNDER 19 (17-18)								
UNACC. YOUTH (10-16)*								
ACC. YOUTH (10-16)*†								
ACC. JNR (UNDER 10)*†								
DAK RD ADULT								
DAK RD UNACC. (10-21)								
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BLOCK	ROW		SEAT			CONCESSION		+ £130
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The away season ticket box should only be ticked if you wish to automatically purchase tickets for all away league games (only 6 cancellations permitted per season). One additional payment of £35 will be taken - the ticket office team will contact you by phone for payment by card.	DIAMOND TICKET HOLDER		INCLUDED
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HOME CUP AUTHORISATION FORM	YES PLEASE	NO THANKS
Do you want the ticket office to automatically book and forward you your home cup match tickets? Please tick the appropriate box. The ticket office team will contact you by phone for payment by card.		

PAYMENT CARD DETAILS											
If you wish to use a payment card for any purchase of your season ticket, Trust in Luton membership, Academy donation, Away Season Ticket or Cup Authorisation form please complete the details below. The ticket office will contact for further details if required.											
LONG CARD NUMBER											
EXPIRY DATE				VALID FROM							
CARD HOLDER'S NAME											
CARD HOLDER'S SIGNATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> I agree that Luton Town Football Club 2020 Ltd may use the card details provided for payment for this season ticket application. For terms and conditions please see page 11										

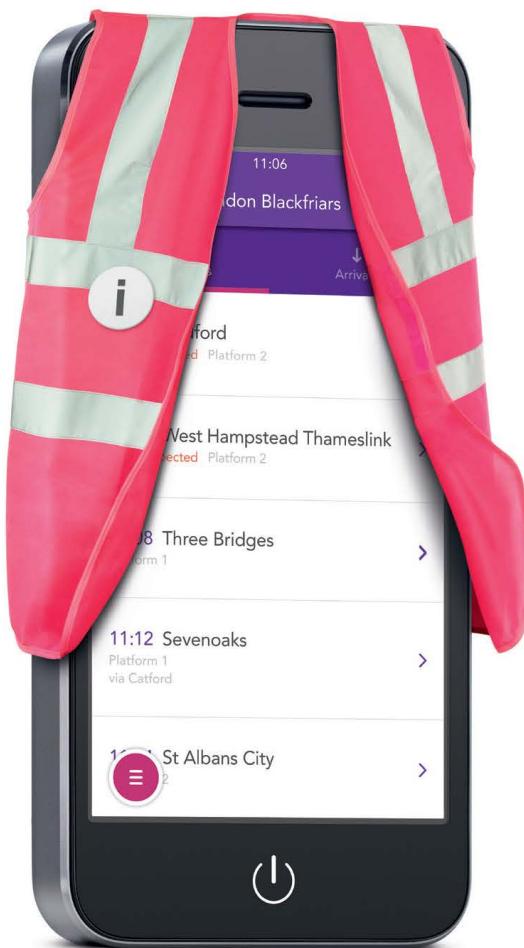
CHEQUE PAYMENTS: Please make cheques payable to Luton Town Football Club 2020 Ltd

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If you wish your season ticket to be sent to you please enclose a self addressed envelope to the value of 95p (large letter) otherwise your season ticket will be held at the ticket office for collection. If posting please return all application forms to Luton Town Ticket Office, Kenilworth Road, Luton, Beds, LU1 1DH.

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The first payment will be taken on the first of the month after your application is received, followed by the next 3 or 10 months depending on the scheme you choose.



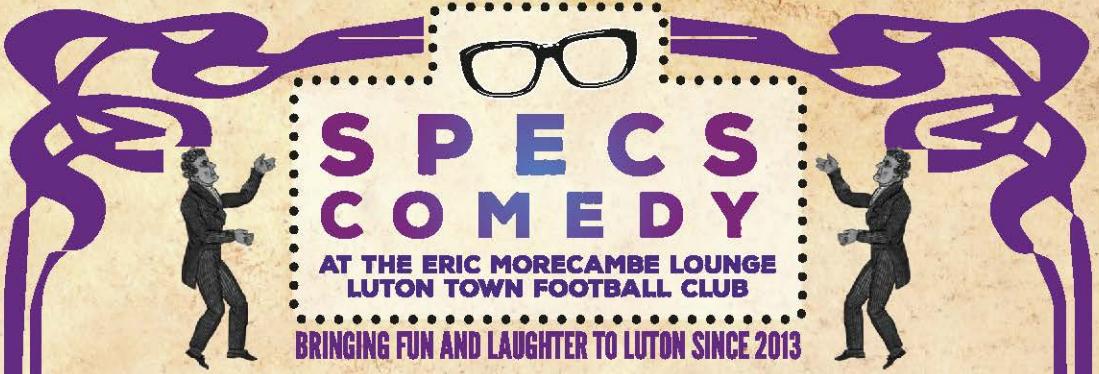


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BLACKPOOL 3 : TOWN 2



SUNDAY 14TH MAY | BLOOMFIELD ROAD | SKY BET LEAGUE TWO PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINAL FIRST LEG
ATTENDANCE: 3,882 | AWAY: 1,648

POOL GOALS: CULLEN 19, 47, 67 (PEN) | **TOWN GOALS:** POTTS 26, VASSELL 28

BLACKPOOL: SLOCOMBE, MELLOR, AIMSON, ALDRED, ROBERTSON, TAYLOR ©, DANNS (FLORES 80), PAYNE, POTTS, VASSELL (DELFOUNESO 68), CULLEN (BLACK 86). SUBS NOT USED: LYNESS (GK), NOLAN, OSAYI-SAMUEL, GNANDUILLET

TOWN: MOORE, JUSTIN, REA, CUTHBERT ©, SHEEHAN, POTTS, LEE, MPANZU, D'ATH (PALMER 86) HYLTON, VASSELL (MARRIOTT 74). SUBS NOT USED: O'DONNELL, SMITH, GRAY, GAMBIN, KING (GK) | YELLOW CARDS: SHEEHAN, D'ATH



JONES:

We are still in the tie

“It’s disappointing, because how we defended was totally out of character for us. We’ve got the second best defensive record in the league and I didn’t envisage that. Little mistakes, little errors and they cost us, and that was the frustrating thing.

“We showed some wonderful play to get back into the game and then to take the lead into half-time, 2-1. Then there was just a bit of naivety in the second half, pretty much straight from the kick-off we concede. From a poor throw and a knock inside, it was out of character for us, but we are still in the tie.

“We went behind through little errors. We should have snuffed that out, it shouldn’t have happened. Then we showed real character to come back into it and then we showed naivety.

“I don’t think it was a penalty. You can see they’re both pulling shirts. To give a penalty is a big, big call.

“We had a penalty shout late on, but that’s what sometimes happens in these games, things sometimes happen that don’t usually happen. But we will be ready for the next game.

“We have got a massive game at Kenilworth Road on Thursday night that we are going to need to show up for.”





STORY OF THE MATCH:

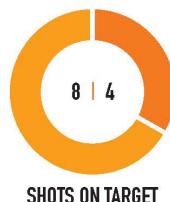
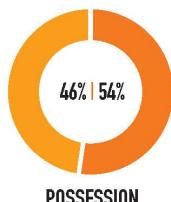
The Hatters' seven-game unbeaten run came to an end at Bloomfield Road as former Town striker Mark Cullen bagged a hat-trick to give Blackpool a one-goal advantage at half-time of the Sky Bet League Two play-off semi-final.

Dan Potts' first goal in professional football and Isaac Vassell's 14th of the season had given the Hatters a first-half lead after Cullen had initially shot the Seasiders in front. The 25-year-old added two after the break to ensure his side come to Kenilworth Road with a lead.

Cullen was in the right place at the right time to profit from some nervy defending by the Hatters in the 19th minute, the ex-Town striker firing into the bottom left corner.

Seven minutes later, however, the Town were on terms as Justin cut the ball back for Potts who fired in off the underside of the crossbar, then two minutes later Vassell slotted home another right-wing cross from the teenager to make it 2-1.

Blackpool were level two minutes into the second half, Cullen bending a superb effort into the top corner from 22 yards. He then completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot midway through the half after Scott Cuthbert was adjudged to have brought down Tom Aldred.



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POTTS POPS ONE IN AT LAST!

FIRST PROFESSIONAL GOAL FOR DAN IN FIRST LEG AT BLACKPOOL

It was a bitter-sweet match on Sunday evening for Dan Potts, who smashed home his first goal in professional football, but was unable to prevent Blackpool from taking a one-goal advantage at Bloomfield Road as Gary Bowyer's side ran out 3-2 winners.

After going a goal down from Mark Cullen's close range finish, the Hatters responded in excellent fashion, as Potts thumped home from James Justin's cut back after 26 minutes.

The 23-year-old looked more than happy with his goal – and indeed to still be on the pitch having received a nasty cut across his eyebrow after colliding with a Pool player early on in the game.

Potts said: "I think he caught me with his elbow, I don't think it was intentional. Obviously in the first minute you want to leave your mark on the game.

"We have both gone up for the ball and I have come off worse and he has caught me in a naughty position. I've got a little cut there, it's not the best start but it's one of those things.

"It's probably bad luck, I have had my fair share of knocks this season. Definitely this calendar year anyway. Hopefully this one will settle down and I can train Tuesday and I will be all good."

The ex-West Ham man has really impressed on the left flank in recent games, giving Nathan Jones' side width that helped exploit the Seasiders' defence.

"When we go three at the back, we have got the wing backs, we have got the license to get forward especially when the ball is on the other side and we have been working on it in training a lot," Potts explained. "JJ has done well, he has cut the ball back, I've come on to it and luckily the ref has given it this time as it was over the line.

STIRRING

"I knew it was in. We didn't need any goal line technology for that one. I had one last week that I thought was in. It was nice to get off the mark though."

The 3-2 defeat was a hard one to take for the Hatters after such a stirring first half performance, but Potts knows full well that his team are still very much in the tie.

"You want to be going into the second leg with some kind of



advantage," he added. "We have got the disadvantage I suppose, but we have certainly got the advantage of a home leg.

"It's one goal, we are still in it. We showed there we were one down and then we were 2-1 up within ten minutes – anything can happen.

"We will look back at the game in detail and see what we could do better, but we are going to have to take the initiative.

"The last couple of games we have played well at home. We have played good football, we have been clinical. You'd definitely back us to score at home."

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CUTHBERT'S CHARACTER CALL

THIS YOUNG SQUAD HAS A NEVER-SAY-DIE ATTITUDE, SAYS SKIPPER

Hatters captain Scott Cuthbert wants the abundance of character the current Town squad has to help carry them through tonight's match against the Pool and onto Wembley.

The 3-2 defeat at Bloomfield Road on Sunday saw the Hatters go behind, before taking the lead and then eventually conceding twice to lose the first leg.

Although frustrated by how the game panned out, Cuthbert hopes the youthful exuberance and talent among his teammates will help carry them over the line at Kenilworth Road.

He said: "We have got great character in this team. It's a young squad, never say die. We put the disappointment of going a goal down behind us and shot straight into a 2-1 lead. It was a fantastic response.

"We felt like we were in the driving seat then and we needed to keep it tight for the first 15-20 minutes of the second half, but didn't do that.

"I think it's from our throw in. Instead of going down the line, we have given the ball away, they've thrown it in and we have given Cullen too much space and he has curled it into the top corner. It's a fantastic goal, but it's still one we could do better with."

The former Swindon Town and Leyton Orient defender was adjudged by referee Nigel Miller to have brought down Tom Aldred in the Town penalty area with the score at 2-2, which Cullen converted. However, the free-kick which saw the ball crossed into the box for the penalty award, shouldn't have been given in Cuthbert's eyes.

"It wasn't a free-kick and I was there, JJ has won the ball," the 29-year-old said. "The ball has stood still as soon as he has made contact with it, so it's not a free-kick to begin with.

"The referee has given a penalty against me for holding my man, but I thought the two of us were holding each other.



"I gave the ref an opportunity by putting my hands on him, I can't deny that. He's took the opportunity, he has seen the tug and given a penalty. Just two minutes before that, Aldred has run into me and the ref has warned him to stop the tugging otherwise he is going to give a foul.

"So I am disappointed I have given him the opportunity. But we're one game into it and there's another game to go on Thursday, it's all to play for. We back ourselves at Kenilworth Road to get the win and get through to the final."

The captain added: "This is my third play-offs and I know more than anyone there are so many ups and downs. One minute you think you're out the tie, next minute you're back in it. It'll swing and swing and swing.

"This isn't dead yet. We have got a lot to play for, we have got 90 minutes at home. We back ourselves to go and win the game, it's as simple as that. Let's go and win the game, let's get to Wembley."

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TRAVELLER'S TALES

HATTERS FAN KEVIN HARPER BOARDS THE BOBBERS COACH AND HEADS TO BLACKPOOL FOR THE FIRST LEG OF THE PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINAL...

THE JOURNEY

7.25am – 11.20am – Time to board the coach for the final away match of the season – the play-off semi-final first leg at Blackpool. I'm on at Ampthill and it is off through the usual villages to Luton. Nerves are already starting to build!

12pm – Three coaches are all loaded and it is off to Blackpool for the second time this season. Everyone is praying for the same result as before!

4.35 – After a stop at Norton Canes we've arrived in Blackpool on a glorious sunny day. My good friends Pam and Barry have come up and catching up with them makes time pass quicker and allows me to forget how nervous I am!

THE GROUND

4.40 – Before we go in the ground there is enough time to kill down at the seafront so it is off down there for a quick whirl in the arcades, beer and fish and chips before the big game!

5.40 – We're in the pub down the road from the ground. Team news comes in. James Justin is fit to play! Didn't expect that when he was stretchered off last week. Cider drunk and now off to the ground.

6.10 – Inside the ground. Town fans can sit where we like so we go 2/3rds up the stand. Feeling proper nervous now!

THE MATCH

6.30 – Out come the players and we're off and running. Quiet start to the match until Potts gets wiped out by an elbow. No free-kick, booking or anything. Inauspicious start from the arbiter...

6.49 – Uh oh. Town go a goal down against the run of play. Inevitably Mark Cullen scores it. Scrappy goal too. Not good.

6.56 – We're level!! Dan Potts is the unlikely hero! Amazing ball from D'Ath gets Justin in at the by-line. His cross eludes Hylton but Potts is following up and slams in off the bar for his first Town goal!

6.58 – Dream land! Town go 2-1 up! Vassell is sent through. He cuts inside the defender and finds Hylton who has a shot saved by the keeper. The ball comes out to Justin who crosses to Vassell. He fires home to send a packed away end absolutely mental!

7.19 – HT. 2-1 Town. Stuart Moore made a few saves but we were the better side in that half.

7.35 – Back underway. Immediately it is 2-2. Cullen unleashes a wonder strike from 25 yards which arrows into the top corner. Just our luck. He'll never score a goal like that again!

7.56 – Penalty Blackpool. Came in a melee from a free-kick so hard to see who did what. It was never a free-kick though. Poor from the ref who has been bad all night. Cullen steps up for his hat-trick and buries it.

8.30 – FT. Massive amount of stoppage time but Town can't find an equaliser despite two great penalty shouts. Work to do on Thursday but we're still in it.

MAN OF THE MATCH

8.40 – James Justin gets it for me. Two great assists, complete composure on the ball and looked the real talent we all know he is.

SUMMARY

1.35am – Back home after a long and ultimately frustrating day. At 2-1 we were in position to kill the tie but we're left with work to do. All isn't lost though so here's to a huge performance on Thursday!

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BY KEVIN HARPER

TRAVELLER'S TALES

SEASON REVIEW

WE'VE REACHED THE END OF THE SEASON AND HAVING COVERED EVERY AWAY LEAGUE MATCH IN THE PROGRAMME THIS SEASON IT IS TIME FOR MY PERSONAL AWARDS!

BEST AWAY TRIP

Barnet. This was one of the shorter trips of the season but it doesn't get the award for that – although it certainly helped. It was a glorious sunny day at the start of April and Barnet's new stand behind the goal which had a wonderful bar was the perfect place to spend a Saturday afternoon before the footy. We won too, which helped!

BEST HOME GAME

Easy one this. Villa in the cup. They named a strong side, we made a couple of changes but once we got into the game there was only one winner as the Town ran out impressive winners in front of the TV cameras (a repeat tonight would be lovely!).

BEST SAVE

We've had three great keepers this season and each have made important, top-drawer saves. Matt Macey's from the overhead kick at home to Blackpool was excellent, as was Stuart Moore's from John Akinde at Barnet...but Christian Walton's penalty save at Notts County was superb and wins this.

BEST MOMENT

Honourable mentions go to Jores Okore and Omar Beckles for their quite brilliant own goals, but for me it was young Connor Tomlinson breaking the record for being the youngest player in Town's history when he came on at Gillingham. Our production line is something we're all proud of and this move highlighted the quality of it.

BEST FOOD

Obvious Grimsby's fish and chips are well known, but this can only be won by the pies up at Crewe. My good friend Mr Smith referred me to them on the coach on the way up and he had it spot on. Easily the best grub of the year!

BEST PROGRAMME

It hasn't been the best of seasons for away programmes but I did enjoy the nostalgic element to the Doncaster one, so that gets the award this season. Hopefully we're enjoying many different programmes from the league above next season!

BEST FREEBIE

You can't beat a good freebie at a football match and the free cider that was on offer at Yeovil went down an absolute treat. If every club offered free cider before a game this writer would be a very happy man! Hats off to Yeovil that afternoon.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

And so we've come to the big award. Christian Walton was terrific between the sticks, while Scott Cuthbert has been colossal at times this season. Pelly-Ruddock Mpanzu has really grown into the midfield as the season has gone on, but there can only be one winner and that is Danny Hylton. He tires me out just watching him at times, so what opposition defenders feel like I've no idea. He works his backside off but he finds the onion bag too. We all knew he was going to be a great signing but he's gone above and beyond all expectations. He's the POTY.



THAT WAS THE SEASON THAT WAS!

EDITOR **STUART HAMMONDS** LOOKS BACK ON THE 2016-17 CAMPAIGN



AUGUST

The campaign kicked off with one of the longest trips in the bright August sunshine and produced one its best results, Danny Hylton – one of four new signings making his debut – Jack Marriott and Jonathan Smith netting in a 3-0 win over the previous season's beaten play-off finalists.

The Sky cameras were in for the first home game of the season, with Championship big guns Aston Villa the visitors for an EFL Cup first round tie. Teenager James Justin was thrown in for an impressive full debut at left-back and Cameron McGeehan bagged his first of the campaign, along with summer recruit Jake Gray, before a Jonas Okore own goal sealed a famous 3-1 win.

Nathan Jones' side were the early pace-setters, Stephen O'Donnell's stunning strike in a 1-1 home draw

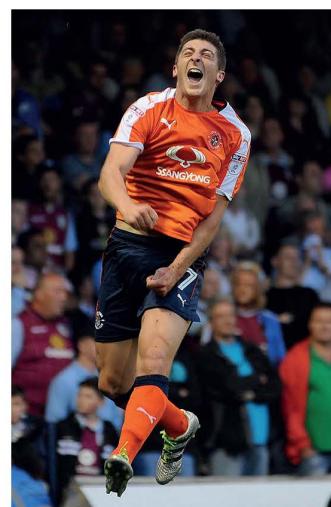
with Yeovil – the eventual goal of the season winner – and McGeehan's two penalties in a 2-1 win over Newport, keeping the Town top of League Two.

Last-gasp defeat at Stevenage followed, then an impressive performance but solitary-goal loss to a second Championship giant, Leeds United, in the EFL Cup second round, before another 3-0 success on the road at Cambridge – the Hatters Hotel front two Hylton and Marriott on the mark again – saw Town back up to second by the month's end.

Oh, and the Checkatrade Trophy kicked off at Gillingham and it was a landmark night in Luton Town history.

Seven academy graduates started the game, with another seven on the bench, as 18-year-old Frankie Musonda scored his first senior goal

in a 2-1 win over a strong League One side, and Connor Tomlinson became the youngest ever Luton player, appearing as a substitute aged 15 years and 199 days old.





SEPTEMBER

Was summer signing Hylton going to prove a rubbish recruit?

Certainly not with his tendency to put the ball in the back of the net, a hat-trick in a 4-1 home win over Wycombe – with Jordan Cook registering his first in an orange shirt



– got September off to a flyer as a feel-good factor with the launch of a campaign to get the local residents onside with planning applications for Newlands Park and Power Court during the public consultation period.

Successive defeats followed at home to Grimsby, in which the striker suffered a fractured cheekbone, and at Crawley, when he appeared as a second-half substitute after only receiving his soon-to-become famous protective mask on the morning of the game.

Then, in a resounding 3-1 win over Doncaster – with McGeehan scoring twice and Marriott the other – Hylton

received a red card in the closing stages for hurling a litter picking stick he'd slid into at the side of the pitch!

The decision was garbage, and it meant Hylton would miss the midweek trip to Hartlepool on which more history was made as the youngest side Luton have ever fielded in the Football League, averaging just over 22 years, took to the Victoria Park pitch.

Seventeen-year-old Akin Famewo made his first senior start at centre-half alongside Alan Sheehan, who would net the first of a series of stunning free-kicks as Town finished the month in second spot courtesy of a 1-1 draw.



[TOWN V BLACKPOOL | THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017] **65**



OCTOBER

The month kicked off with a return for Hylton, and another goal – this time with a couple of nutmegs and a stroll around the keeper – in a 1-1 draw at Cheltenham, where Smith clocked up his 150th appearance for the club.

Another scalp arrived in the Checkatrade with West Brom's Academy (plus four star names) beaten 2-0 at Kenilworth Road, Newcastle loanee Alex Gilliead netting his first Town goal.

A 2-1 win at Leyton Orient on 15th October pierced four draws in the month – the 1-1 stalemate at Cheltenham followed by the same score at home to Crewe and Mansfield, then a goalless draw at Notts County, the point – and first clean sheet in nine league games – preserved by a brilliant late penalty save by goalkeeper Christian Walton.

The on-loan Brighton stopper had become the first Luton Town player in 20 years to be capped by England Under-21s earlier in the month when he played in the 5-0 win over Bosnia & Herzegovina at Walsall.

With strikes against Orient and Mansfield, McGeehan was in fine form and on eight goals already for the season as the Town ended the month in fourth spot.





NOVEMBER

Two more Hylton goals, both penalties, and a far-post finish from Glen Rea set the Hatters off and running in the FA Cup, beating Exeter 3-1 at St James Park in the first round.

A 2-1 home defeat in the Checkatrade against Millwall soon followed, but with both clubs having already qualified for the knockout stages, it mattered little – and paled into insignificance when the EFL announced the Town were being fined the maximum £15,000 for fielding supposedly under-strength teams in the three group games.

McGeehan bagged the winner at home to Accrington on Remembrance weekend, then Isaac Vassell opened his account following his summer switch from Non-League Truro in the 2-0 win at Morecambe – when many Town fans missed Hylton's first-half opener after being held up by M6 traffic.

There was disappointment in a terrific advert for League Two under the Kenilworth Road lights when Portsmouth came from a Hylton goal behind to win 3-1, before a goalless draw back at Exeter in the league.

McGeehan made his 100th appearance for the club on the second trip of the month to Devon, but couldn't come up with the trademark goal that would lift the Town above fifth.





DECEMBER

An FA Cup giantkilling looked on the cards as National League Solihull Moors took a 2-0 first-half lead in the second round tie at Kenilworth Road, only for a pair apiece for Marriott and O'Donnell, a standard Hylton strike and a rare blast from Johnny Mullins to turn the tie around to the tune of 6-2.

Another Checkatrade upset did follow in the midweek, however, as Josh McQuoid – with two – and Vassell, with his second Town goal, helped see off League One side Swindon 3-2 in the first knockout stage.

A 1-1 draw at home to high-flying Carlisle was built upon with a superb performance in the 2-0 victory at

Blackpool on the Saturday before Christmas, with captain Scott Cuthbert and discoveries of the season Justin and Vassell penning new contracts, before Boxing Day disappointment arrived with Colchester winning by the only goal in front of the first 9,000-plus crowd of the season.

The year ended on a high, though, with Gilliead on target, Sheehan posting a second entry into the goal of the season competition with another free-kick into the top corner, and McGeehan registering his 11th of the campaign, as Barnet were beaten 3-1 on New Year's Eve and the Town ended 2016 in fifth.



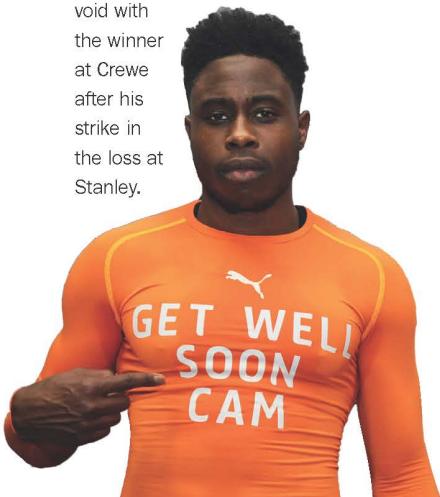


JANUARY

The New Year couldn't have started in any more disappointing fashion as arguably the month that dealt the biggest blow to the Town's automatic promotion hopes kicked off not only with defeat at Pompey, but a broken leg for McGeehan – just days after his manager described him as a "phenomenon" and the "best attacking midfield player in the division".

A third defeat in four matches came a week later as Accrington ended the Hatters' FA Cup run at the third round stage, but Checkatrade progress was made with another demolition job, this time on League One strugglers Chesterfield.

Midfield reinforcements started to arrive in the form of Lawson D'Ath from Northampton and Luke Gambin, bought for an undisclosed fee from Barnet, but Gray was filling the goal void with the winner at Crewe after his strike in the loss at Stanley.



As well as D'Ath, left-back Jack Senior made his EFL debut in the 2-1 victory at Gresty Road, coming on after Sheehan had been sent off – and the same fate befell Mullins a week later as Wycombe fought back after falling behind to Scott Cuthbert's first goal in his 65th game for the Hatters to claim a 1-1 draw.

Cook and Vassell were on target as Town completed a first league double of the season, beating Cambridge 2-0 to move up to fourth on January 28th.



Then, a turbulent transfer deadline day – in which Brighton recalled Walton and Town had to bring in two keepers, Reading's Stuart Moore and Arsenal's Matt Macey, as well as Orient striker Ollie Palmer – ended with a 3-2 home defeat to struggling Cheltenham, and the Hatters still fifth.





FEBRUARY

After a dry January, Hylton – who had signed a new contract to 2019 – had the perfect chance to break his seven-game drought in the 95th-minute at Grimsby. Unfortunately, home keeper James McKeown saved his penalty and Vassell's second-half equaliser remained just that in a 1-1 draw.

A semi-final spot in was secured in the Checkatrade, however, with a 5-2 win over the manager's former club Yeovil – Vassell netting twice, Cook one, Sheehan's third brilliant free-kick of the campaign and Hylton back on the scoresheet to book a home tie with his old club Oxford.

Hylton, who had stopped his by-now superstitious wearing of the mask, netted twice in a 2-1 home win over Crawley and again, along with Gambin and Palmer netting their first goals for the club, in a 3-0 stroll over Hartlepool, Pelly-Ruddock Mpanzu the latest to reach a century of Town appearances on Valentine's night.

February finished with a trip to leaders Doncaster and a home date with second-placed Plymouth, both matches finishing 1-1 and the Town's tendency to turn up against the top teams coming to the fore with Cook and Hylton on target. Unbeaten in the month, the Hatters remained fifth.





MARCH

A mad March set off at a hare-like pace with an end-to-end Checkatrade Trophy semi-final at home to League One Oxford, the Hatters fighting back from two down to level through Vassell and Hylton – only for the League One side to grab a late winner to reach Wembley.

An automatic promotion spot was back in the Hatters' hands after a

Hylton double and goals from Rea and Mpanzu – the midfielder's first of the season – saw Yeovil suffer once more in a 4-0 formality at Huish Park.

Unfortunately, just as Jones – who had signed a new contract to boss the Hatters until 2020 – talked of the need to go on the kind of winning run the other teams at the top had and take up the opportunity that had

presented itself, Town embarked on their worst sequence of the season.

Three draws with Carlisle, Exeter and Newport were book-ended by a 2-0 home defeat to Stevenage and a 2-1 reversal at Colchester – five games without a win that ultimately cost the chance of hunting down Pompey, Donny and Plymouth, as the Hatters sat in sixth.



[TOWN V BLACKPOOL | THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017] 71



APRIL

Now there was a danger the Hatters could drop out of the play-off places altogether, as the chasing pack closed the gap on the top teams.

Palmer popped up with a 90th-minute winner against Blackpool that set Kenilworth Road rocking, however, and the Town were on the march to an unbeaten end to the season.

Injuries to Petr Cech and David Ospina meant Macey was recalled by Arsenal after that win, but Moore was recalled and put his disappointing debut against Cheltenham behind him to pull off a string of super saves to keep a clean sheet at Barnet, as Olly Lee produced one of the moments of the season to net the winner against his old club.

Town were back up to fourth, but a poor second half show against crisis club Leyton Orient – who should have been put to bed by half-time but fought back from a Hylton goal

behind to lead 2-1, before Vassell rescued a point – made Good Friday a bad day.

Three days later a 13th 1-1 scoreline of the season at play-off chasing Mansfield – and 17th draw overall – meant Jones and his squad knew it was to be play-offs at best.

A Panenka penalty took Hylton to 26 goals in the most prolific campaign of his career, which resulted in him being on the shortlist of three for EFL League Two player of the year and selected in the PFA Team of the Season.

He received his second red card of the campaign in the 2-1 home win over Notts County that virtually guaranteed play-off qualification, Palmer and Mpanzu on target, before Justin's first senior goal, a comedy OG from Omar Beckles, another for Vassell and Marriott becoming the fourth Town player into double figures secured it with a 4-1 win at Accrington.





MAY

With fourth place almost guaranteed by the Stanley win, Town made light work of Morecambe on the final day to cement it – Vassell's 13th goal of the season and a Marriott brace from the bench, taking him to 12, earning a 3-1 victory.

It meant Jones' squad finished fourth on 77 points – eight below third-placed Doncaster but eight above Colchester just outside the play-offs. Most importantly, however, they completed the regular campaign with the momentum of a seven-game unbeaten run and three successive league wins for the first time behind them.

At the end of the marathon, seventh-placed Blackpool would be the semi-final opponents with a Sunday night trip to the Golden Mile followed by tonight's climax...COYH!

LEAGUE TABLE 2016/17										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS		
P	Portsmouth	46	26	9	11	79	40	39	87	
P	Plymouth Argyle	46	26	9	11	71	46	25	87	
P	Doncaster Rovers	46	25	10	11	85	55	30	85	
4	LUTON TOWN	46	20	17	9	70	43	27	77	
5	Exeter City	46	21	8	17	75	56	19	71	
6	Carlisle United	46	18	17	11	69	68	1	71	
7	Blackpool	46	18	16	12	69	46	23	70	
8	Colchester United	46	19	12	15	67	57	10	69	
9	Wycombe Wanderers	46	19	12	15	58	53	5	69	
10	Stevenage	46	20	7	19	67	63	4	67	
11	Cambridge United	46	19	9	18	58	50	8	66	
12	Mansfield Town	46	17	15	14	54	50	4	66	
13	Accrington Stanley	46	17	14	15	59	56	3	65	
14	Grimsby Town	46	17	11	18	59	63	-4	62	
15	Barnet	46	14	15	17	57	64	-7	57	
16	Notts County	46	16	8	22	54	76	-22	56	
17	Crewe Alexandra	46	14	13	19	58	67	-9	55	
18	Morecambe	46	14	10	22	53	73	-20	52	
19	Crawley Town	46	13	12	21	53	71	-18	51	
20	Yeovil Town	46	11	17	18	49	64	-15	50	
21	Cheltenham Town	46	12	14	20	49	69	-20	50	
22	Newport County	46	12	12	22	51	73	-22	48	
R	Hartlepool United	46	11	13	22	54	75	-21	46	
R	Leyton Orient	43	10	6	27	45	78	-33	36	

	PLAYER STATS 2016/17									
	LEAGUE		CUP		TOTAL		DISP.		LTC CAREER TOT.	
	APPS	GLS	APPS	GLS	APPS	GLS	Y	R	APPS	GLS
Alex Atkinson	0 (0)	0	0 (1)	0	0 (1)	0	0	0	0	1 0
Tyreeq Bakinson	0 (0)	0	3 (1)	0	3 (1)	0	0	0	0	5 0
Zane Banton	0 (0)	0	2 (2)	0	2 (2)	0	1	0	0	14 0
Jordan Cook	31 (4)	3	5 (1)	1	36 (5)	4	5	1	41	4
Kavan Cotter	0 (0)	0	1 (0)	0	1 (0)	0	0	0	0	1 0
Scott Cuthbert	37 (1)	1	4 (3)	0	41 (4)	1	7	0	85	1
Lawson D'Ath	8 (3)	0	1 (0)	0	9 (3)	0	1	0	12	0
Akin Famewo	1 (2)	0	3 (0)	0	4 (2)	0	1	0	6	0
Luke Gambin	8 (8)	1	0 (1)	0	8 (9)	1	2	0	17	1
Alex Gilliead	10 (8)	1	3 (0)	1	13 (8)	2	3	0	21	2
Jake Gray	11 (8)	1	9 (0)	3	20 (8)	4	0	0	28	4
Danny Green	0 (0)	0	0 (0)	0	0 (0)	0	0	0	30	6
Freddie Hinds	0 (0)	0	0 (2)	0	0 (2)	0	0	0	2	0
Danny Hylton	38 (1)	21	7 (0)	5	45 (1)	26	13	2	46	26
James Justin	24 (5)	1	8 (1)	0	32 (6)	1	2	0	39	1
Craig King	0 (0)	0	4 (0)	0	4 (0)	0	0	0	4	0
Olly Lee	24 (9)	1	6 (1)	0	30 (10)	1	9	0	79	4
Matt Macey	11 (0)	0	2 (0)	0	13 (0)	0	0	0	13	0
Craig Mackail-Smith	0 (2)	0	2 (2)	1	2 (4)	1	1	0	40	5
Jack Marriott	25 (14)	8	4 (4)	4	29 (18)	12	1	0	91	28
Cameron McGeehan	24 (0)	10	4 (0)	1	28 (0)	11	7	0	106	31
Josh McQuoid	1 (2)	0	5 (0)	2	6 (2)	2	2	0	43	7
Pelly-Ruddock Mpanzu	34 (8)	2	7 (2)	0	41 (10)	2	6	1	117	7
Stuart Moore	8 (0)	0	1 (0)	0	9 (0)	0	0	0	9	0
Johnny Mullins	21 (2)	0	6 (0)	1	27 (2)	1	2	2	29	1
Frankie Musonda	0 (0)	0	5 (0)	1	5 (0)	1	0	0	8	1
Stephen O'Donnell	27 (3)	1	6 (3)	2	33 (6)	3	1	0	72	4
Ollie Palmer	4 (13)	3	0 (1)	0	4 (14)	3	1	0	18	3
Dan Potts	22 (1)	0	3 (1)	1	25 (2)	1	4	1	43	1
Glen Rea	36 (3)	2	9 (0)	1	45 (3)	3	11	1	58	3
Arthur Read	0 (0)	0	0 (1)	0	0 (1)	0	0	0	1	0
Jack Senior	9 (1)	0	6 (0)	0	15 (1)	0	3	0	16	0
Alan Sheehan	31 (3)	2	6 (0)	1	37 (3)	3	4	1	60	4
Jonathan Smith	12 (13)	1	8 (2)	1	20 (15)	2	7	0	176	11
Jack Snelus	0 (0)	0	0 (1)	0	0 (1)	0	0	0	1	0
Connor Tomlinson	0 (0)	0	0 (1)	0	0 (1)	0	0	0	1	0
Isaac Vassell	22 (18)	8	7 (5)	6	29 (23)	14	2	0	52	14
Christian Walton	27 (0)	0	6 (0)	0	33 (0)	0	1	0	33	0



ANDY AWFORD'S ACADEMY

UPDATE

Good evening everyone and welcome to tonight's play off semi-final, 2nd leg, versus Blackpool..

ACADEMY ROUND-UP

With this being the last first team home game of the season (fingers crossed we've all still got another game to watch in ten days' time!) and therefore my final programme notes of the season, I would like to use this opportunity to say a few thank-yous...

PLAYERS

Well done to all the players (we have 118 in total) across all the age groups, who have represented the Academy with pride, passion and enthusiasm. We have been delighted, in general, with the levels of play that has been on show this season. The U18s side, understandably receives the highest level of exposure, however I must say that there are some very good individuals right across the whole Academy and we are all looking forward to seeing them progress over the coming seasons.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

A massive thank you to the parents/guardians of all our boys. As the parents are aware a huge level of commitment is required to get the boys to and from training and matches, reviews and tours, sometimes at unsociable hours. Therefore we are thankful that we have a

good group of supportive parents who are willing to support us and the boys throughout the season.

SPONSORS & PARTNERS

The Academy works alongside some fantastic external sponsors and partners. The support we receive is second to none and on behalf of the Academy I would like to thank the following:

SoLYD, Central Beds College, SKF, Bedfordshire University, Barnfield College, Cedars College, Stockwood Park Academy, Chalk Hills Academy, GSR, Richard Ware, Arriva, Vauxhall, Luton 6th Form College, Creasey Park Community Football Centre & Bobbers Travel Club.

Hopefully, I have not missed anyone, apologies if I have. We look forward to working with you all again next season.

THE BOARD

A sincere thank you to Gary Sweet and the board of directors for their continual backing and support. At every opportunity, everyone involved at board level is always wanting to know anything and everything about the Academy. The involvement and willingness is refreshing and the work that has been done at our new training base 'The Brache' is unbelievable. The facility is amazing, to be able to work with all Academy age groups out of one training venue will be so beneficial to everyone. We are all very excited and so looking forward to getting going at The Brache – thank you!

1ST TEAM STAFF

A positive relationship between Academy and first team staff at any football club is fundamental to allow for the progression of young Academy players. Thankfully, at our club, this is 100 per cent in place. The superb support we receive from the Gaffer, Paul Hart, Joaquin Gomez, Kevin Dearden, Simon Parsell, Jared Roberts-Smith, Mick Harford, Pete Booker, Darren Cook and all the support staff is as good as I've ever known it. A massive thank-you from me on behalf of the Academy. We are all firmly behind you and the players in your quest to get what you deserve – promotion!

CLUB STAFF

There are too many club members of staff to thank and name individually. Therefore, thank-you to everyone who helps and supports our Academy. However, I would like to thank the following who have been on hand all season:

Kevan Platt, Chris Clark, Simon Gibb, Dave Hoskins, Dave Romans, Stuart Hammonds, Charlie Hanson, Ed Smith, Paul Goodwin, Michelle Nixon, Sascha Gustard-Brown, Peter Kemp, Siobhan Kos-Hodge, Richard Bird, Tania Buonpane, Viv Long and Kevin Thoburn.

ACADEMY STAFF

Well done and thank you to all the Academy staff. Again, both full and part time Academy staff have shown high levels of skill and commitment, knocking down barriers, finding solutions, working unseen hours, allowing our young players to thrive in a positive working environment. The challenge remains to improve, to get better, to produce more players for the first team, which I am confident we can continue to do in the coming years. Well done everyone, have a good break, recharge over June and come back re-energised to go again in July!

PAUL DRIVER

Finally, I would like to wish our Under-18s coach Paul Driver the very best of luck as he departs after six wonderful years of service to the club. Since becoming Academy Manager two years ago, Paul has been nothing short of fantastic



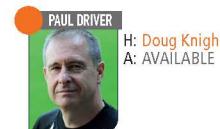
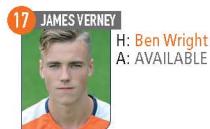
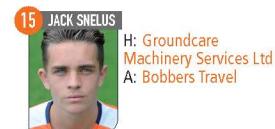
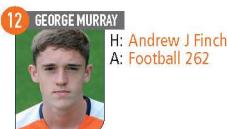
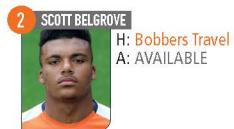
for me. His passion, dedication and commitment to the job has been remarkable at times and I thank him from the bottom of my heart for everything he has done and achieved for the club. Good luck Drives, enjoy those new golf clubs!

Enjoy tonight's game, get behind the lads and hopefully see you all at Wembley Stadium on May 28th!

COYH!

ANDY

YOUTH TEAM KIT SPONSORS 2016/17



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FAREWELL

FROM YOUTH TEAM MANAGER PAUL DRIVER

I was genuinely touched by the rousing reception I got at the recent Kit Sponsors' Dinner, which was totally unexpected and, being completely unprepared for the honour, I didn't feel I did my best in thanking those that have been so supportive to me during my time at this brilliant club, so I now have the opportunity to do this farewell column which I will start by reminiscing on some memorable times.

The obvious highlight was the FA Youth Cup run last season which, coupled with the league win, the long unbeaten run and 23 clean sheets for Liam Gooch and his defence, will do well to be beaten in the future

Not only were this group of players exceptional on the pitch but, ably led by the immense Frankie Musonda, they were a coach's dream to be involved with off the pitch and they have set a very high standard for our squads in future years.

In my mind, though, much more important than these achievements are the 39 first team appearances of James Justin this season, the full debut for Akin Famewo at Hartlepool and the performances of all the Academy graduates in the Checkatrade Trophy – especially the game at Gillingham because that is what a successful youth system is all about. Hopefully these players kick on along with Tyreeq, Zane, Kingy, Liam Gooch, Arthur Read and Kavan Cotter.

Now to the list of thank-yous and, to start with, an apology if I don't mention you personally, but everyone I have met at LTFC have been a pleasure to know and work with.

Most importantly, my job has always been made easier by the first team coaching staff and none more so than now with Nathan, who has trusted my young players and pushed them on so much in a short space of time.

Paul Hart (who actually gave me my first youth team job at Rushden back in 2006), Mighty Mick Harford, Joaquin, Jared and Deardo are also exceptional in their knowledge and support.

I have always been allowed to organise my squads in my own way, so Wayne Turner and Andy Awford have my thanks for this and must take massive credit (along with the Academy Coaches who, we must remember, have

prepared me great players to work with) for our combined successes.

As a youth system, the backing we have had from Bobbers Travel Club and (in particular) SoLYD helped us take things to a different level in our preparation in recent seasons, so thanks for that – and to those supporters who followed us on the cup run three times to Lancashire last season.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank Doug and Maddie Wright for their support at games and for my sponsorship.

And two big ones to finish with...not many youth team managers up and down the country will have the accessibility to and level of positive support from their chief executive as I have had from Gary Sweet, and I would like to thank him for that.

Last, but not least, a heartfelt appreciation to my best mate and travel partner, Simon Parsell, who I have worked with (and been the butt of jokes of) for over ten years. He has always been there to advise me when I needed help, to calm me down when I get overheated, and to make me smile when I was down. Cheers mate!

Hopefully I'll see you all at Wembley – COYH!

Best wishes

Drives



END OF SEASON & KIT SPONSORS" DINNER

The Luton Town End of Season & Kit Sponsors' dinner took place at the Auction House last Monday night with almost 350 people in attendance.

Along with manager Nathan Jones, his staff, first team and youth team squads – who posed for pictures with the people who have generously sponsored their kits during the 2016-17 campaign – club photographer Gareth Owen was there to capture the evening in pictures.

Compere John Ryan hosted the event, which included a tribute to youth team manager Paul Driver – who will be leaving Kenilworth Road at the end of the season - by one of the academy graduates from his six years at the club who is currently starring in the first-team, James Justin.

An auction was held in which 26-goal top scorer Danny Hylton's mask – which the player of the year wore for much of the first half of the most prolific campaign of his career – helped raise another four-figure sum for club charity of

the year, Level Trust. It eventually went for £1,500 and took the total raised during the club's partnership with the Luton-based children's charity to over £15,000!

There was also a question and answer session with Jones, his assistant Paul Hart, first-team coach Joaquin Gomez, goalkeeper coach Kevin Dearden, head of sports science Jared Roberts-Smith and Hatters legend Mick Harford, who is now, of course, an important part of the backroom staff in his role as chief recruitment officer.

After walking onto the stage to Heather Small's 'Proud', the manager ending the evening with a rousing speech outlining why he is so proud to be in charge of the club as we head into what we hope will be a successful Sky Bet League Two play-off bid!



[TOWN V BLACKPOOL | THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017] **79**

LUTON TOWN IN THE COMMUNITY

BY KEVIN THOBURN HEAD OF THE HATTERS COMMUNITY TRUST



LOVE LUTON LEISURE & CULTURE WINNER 2016



BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE
Protecting People and Fighting Crime

BEDS POLICE COMMUNITY
SPORT CHAMPION 2017

With the season coming to an exciting end it marks the start of a busy summer for the Trust staff, particularly with our community weekend of events at the stadium starting tomorrow.

Our Schools Disability Cup and Integration Cup along with the Hatters Cup will see almost 2,000 participants play on the pitch over this weekend and the following weekend we're off to Holland with 150 development boys to take part in the 2017 Juliana Cup.

During the summer, we have lots of new courses taking place – some of which we list in the next four pages including our second Man V Fat project.

MAN V FAT FOOTBALL – NEW FREE LEAGUE STARTING IN JUNE



Our first Man V Fat league 1 has just finished and been declared a huge success by our partners LiveWell Luton as they announced the total weight loss by over 60 participants was a massive 227 kg – that's like losing a couple of full-backs!

On the pitch, it was a closely fought battle between two teams for the league title, however Exeter Gently came out on top, winning the league by four points after 14 games. With additional goals for the teams weight loss, Exeter Gently FC won through a combination of their motivation to lose weight as well as their skill on the pitch. Everyone weighs in before games and then the goals from the game

are added to bonus goals teams can earn through their performance on the scales. The process 'gamifies' weight loss and makes this the only league where (weight) losers actually win!

Our first season has been such a success that we are starting Season 2 of our Man v Fat League straight away at Lea Manor Recreation Centre every Monday at 7.30 pm starting from 5th June. Remember, MAN v FAT football is a 14-week league for any man who wants to lose weight. Games are decided on weight loss as well as results and you get 24/7 support to help you. You can join on your own or with a mate or as a team and see how 95% of MAN v FAT footballers lose weight and get fitter.

There are goals bonuses available for weight loss and with an average weight loss over the 14 weeks of 22lbs, it is a proven and effective way to lose weight while playing with your mates – just ask the guys who have just finished season one.

The leagues will again be run by the Hatters Community Trust coaching staff and best of all, the whole programme is free. To date we have over 50 players signed and registered to start in next month, so it promises to be a really popular event again. To sign up simply visit www.MANVFAT.COM/FOOTBALL or call 0845 1630042 or drop the guys an email at football@manvat.com



SKILLS PERFORMANCE CENTRES

TALENT IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMME TERM 4 MAY TO JULY 2017

This week sees the start of Term 4 of our 2017 Skills Performance Centre talent identification programme which feeds into our youth development structure.

We have 12 regional football development centres, with three in Luton, open to all youngsters aged from school year two up to year 11. The Skills coaching centres offer a nine-week programme ending with a trial match for everyone. Successful boys then progress onto our centre of excellence and pre-academy development centres with eventual pathways into our youth academy.

Our successful 'Skills' Development Programme is now in its ninth year of operation and provides high quality coaching for up and coming

young footballers. Whether you're an ambitious player wanting to progress towards becoming a professional, or a newcomer wanting to develop the basics, the Skills Programme has something to offer you. This season 25 players have been signed into our development programme through the Skills programme, which continues to be a successful recruitment route for local players. The cost is £45 per term, which includes nine practical sessions and one assessment trial match, and all players will receive a report on their personal development during the nine-week programme.

Our weekly centres run in Arlesey, Bedford, Dunstable, Flitwick/Amphill, Harpenden, Kempston, Leighton Buzzard, Luton (3), Milton Keynes, and St Albans, and if you would like

**LUTON TOWN
FOOTBALL CLUB**

**SKILLS
PERFORMANCE
CENTRES
2016-2017**

PATHWAY TO ACADEMY FOOTBALL

Football Development for 6 to 16 years School Years 2 to 11

COACHING PROGRAMME 9 WEEKS PLUS TRIAL MATCH
Anney/Slade | Bedford | Dunstable | Flitwick/Amphill | Harpenden | Kempston | Leighton Buzzard | Luton | St Albans

TERM 1:
MONDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 2016 TO FRIDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2016
Term 1 Trial date - Friday 11th November 2016

TERM 2:
MONDAY 21st NOVEMBER 2016 TO FRIDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2017
Term 2 Trial date - Friday 10th February 2017

TERM 3:
MONDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2017 TO FRIDAY 12th MAY 2017
Term 3 Trial date - Friday 9th May 2017

TERM 4:
MONDAY 15th MAY 2017 TO FRIDAY 21st JULY 2017
Term 4 Trial date - Friday 14th July 2017

TALENT IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMME

further information on the programme simply ring the Community Trust office on 01582 737568 or email us at tips@lutontown.co.uk for an information leaflet.

COULD YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY BECOMING A TRUSTEE OF THE LUTON TOWN FC COMMUNITY TRUST?

The Luton Town FC Community Trust is a registered charity and delivers sports activities, coaching and educational services to around 3,000 school children, students, adults and children and adults with disabilities in Luton and Bedfordshire provided by a staff of over 40 full and part-time qualified sports coaches and teaching staff.

The Board is looking to appoint up to two additional Trustees, who will complement the skills and experiences of the existing Board and provide strategic direction for the Trust and its growing portfolio of social projects. New Trustees will have a passion about increasing opportunities

and will want to make a real difference for the local community. As we have a desire to recruit Trustees that reflect the make-up of the local community, we would particularly welcome applications from under-represented groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

If you are interested email kevin.thoburn@lutontown.co.uk for a copy of the information and application pack. If you would like an informal conversation about the role or the application and selection process, please contact Kevin Thoburn, Head of Community Trust, at the Community offices on 01582 737568.



Thurlow Nunn >



easyJet





WHITSUN HALF TERM SOCCER CAMPS

Half term is only two weeks away! If you are one of the hundreds of youngsters who regularly attend our soccer camps during the half-term holiday, then you will already know the format and how to book – and you will also probably have received the details of our soccer camps which next week are spread over all five days and all over Bedfordshire.

However, if you've not tried a soccer camp before then why not come along next week? They are great fun, open to all abilities and run from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm each day. They are very competitively priced at £12.00 per day and represent great value. There are lots of skills training drills and mini world cup games every afternoon and of course, everyone receives the legendary

free Luton Town FC medal with the chance to meet first team players on presentation days and a great match ticket deal!

Our courses run throughout the County from Bedford down to Luton, and Woburn down to Dunstable. You can download our leaflet from either the main club website or by giving us a call at the Community



Whitsun half term football camps

to book call: 01582 737568 or 07725 172345

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Office on 01582 737568, text 07725 172345 or by emailing soccerschool@lutontown.co.uk for further information, or to book a place.

FEMALE ONLY COMMUNITY COACHING PROGRAMME ARE YOU A POTENTIAL COMMUNITY CHAMPION? FREE FA LEVEL 1 COURSE

The Community Trust are searching for Luton's 'female community champions in 2017' and have again teamed up with Luton Adult Learning and the Skills Funding Agency to provide another 18 free spaces on an FA Level 1 coaching courses for local women and girls aged over 19 to learn coaching skills through successful completion of our coach mentoring programme.

Our female champions will then be able to deliver sports activities to members of our local community and try make a real contribution at a local level to the sports provision in Luton.

The course will include the new FA Level 1 coaching certificate as well as First Aid and Safeguarding qualifications, and aims to provide

training to new coaches to enable them to deliver football and multi-sport activities which will improve their health and activity levels, as well as offering them genuine future work opportunities with the Trust through formal sport qualifications gained on the project. To achieve this aim, the overall project is looking to increase awareness of the benefits of sporting activity together with the benefits of increased physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices and also deliver this message over a period of time through local coaches for local communities becoming role models for their local communities.

So, if you are reading this and reckon you could become a 'community champion', want to know more about our community coaching



Get into Football Coaching with Luton Town F.C.

FREE - FEMALE ONLY COURSES

We are looking for women and girls who are aged 19 years and over and live in Luton and would like to get into Football Coaching – if that's you – then here is your opportunity!

Luton Town FC Community Trust are looking for female adults who would like to train as community football coaches and put their new skills to work in Luton. The course starts in June and we will be holding open evenings in during May. The course will include:

- Training from qualified professionals
- gaining the FA Level 1 Award in Community Football
- skills training in First Aid, Safeguarding in Football & Emergency First Aid Award
- the chance to develop existing and new skills, confidence, and motivation
- ongoing support from Luton Town FC during the programme
- help to become a Luton 'Community champion'
- opportunities to work with local community projects with the Hatters Community Trust.
- We particularly encourage applications from the BAME community as they are under-represented in this area

Applicants need to be over 19 and not in full time education. To register your interest or for more information call or text 'female football coach' to Daniel on 01582 737568 or email learning@lutontown.co.uk



opportunities and would like to get involved, then why not give the community office a ring on 01582 737568 for a chat or email us at learning@lutontown.co.uk.

The course will run through June and July and we particularly welcome applicants from BAME females as they are under-represented in this area.

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Open to all current year 11 students thinking of studying nationally accredited sports courses who have a passion for sport and are seeking a career in sports coaching, sports teaching or a professional player pathway.

Why join us?

We offer professional exit pathways for students

To register a place or for more information contact Luke at LTYD@lutontown.co.uk



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CAMERON MCGEEHAN'S

TOWN TEAM-MATES

JUNIOR HATTERS SUPPORTER **JOEL PHILLIPS** WAS MASCOT FOR THE 3-1 WIN OVER MORECAMBE RECENTLY AND BEFORE THE GAME HE GOT TO INTERVIEW CAMERON MCGEEHAN FOR HIS RADIO SHOW AT WINSTON CHURCHILL SCHOOL IN WOKING. HERE IS WHAT THE 11-YEAR-OLD HATTER HAD TO ASK THE TOWN MIDFIELDER...

Who has got the best taste in music?

Probably Pelly. Because he always has the iPod, he is in charge of tunes before the game and at the gym so we let him look after it. He likes a lot of hip hop and R&B so we just let him take control. Nobody really argues with him either!

Who wears the worst clothes?

My house mate – Stephen O'Donnell. I'm not sure if it's a Scottish thing, but he never wears anything that goes.

Who is the nutmeg king?

Danny Hylton. He is always trying to do flicks and tricks and stuff. He gets a lot of nutmegs in matches and in training.

Who is the most intelligent player?

Dan Potts – because he is really good at maths. So if we need anybody to add anything up, if we get fines or anything, we get him to add up the sums because he is pretty sharp.

Who is the hardest worker in training?

Danny Hylton or Olly Lee I'd say. Both work really hard. You see Hylts on a match day, he's everywhere – he is kind of like that in training. Olly Lee is always working hard at the other side of his game.

Who has the hardest shot?

Jack Marriott – he has got a powerful strike. He's in and around the box and you can always tell he's going to hit them hard, so I try and follow them up because I know the keeper isn't going to be able to hold it.

Who is Nathan Jones' pet?

Definitely Danny Hylton. He always says Danny is the best player in the league. I think Danny and everyone in the team would agree with that.

Who is the hardman?

Scott Cuthbert. Big, Scottish captain. Nobody messes with him. If you're out of turn, he will come straight down on you.

Who has got the best tricks?

I would say Danny Green. Obviously, he is injured at the moment, but he's got a good right foot, good curl and whip.

What's been the hardest part of being injured and what have you learned from it?

The hardest part of an injury is a Saturday or a match day, when I see everyone getting ready and prepared for it and watching it on Sky sometimes if they're away. It can be quite hard – partly boring, partly you want to be out there helping team.

You've got to be tough, you've got come back stronger. I am trying to eat better, work harder.

The other side of it is that I like swimming, I like cycling. Hopefully it'll add another dimension when I get back. You've got have patience as well.



COME ON YOU HATTERS! COME ON YOU HATTERS!



JUNIOR HATTERS



THANK YOU! AND SEE YOU NEXT SEASON

WHATEVER THE RESULT OF TONIGHT'S MATCH, OUR PLAY-OFF SECOND LEG FIXTURE AGAINST BLACKPOOL WILL BE THE LAST HOME GAME OF THE SEASON. WE'D LIKE TO SAY A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL JUNIOR HATTERS FOR THEIR FANTASTIC SUPPORT THIS SEASON, AND WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU BACK TO KENILWORTH ROAD FOR A FUN-PACKED 2017-18 SEASON.



INDIA LACEY

The Hatters are pleased to welcome one of our youngest supporters, six-month-old India Lacey to the Town family! The Lacey family filled up one of the Executive Boxes with 18 different members of the extended family coming down to watch the Hatters triumph 3-1 over Morecambe. India thoroughly enjoyed herself and apparently was very impressed by one of the giraffes we had here for the pre-match entertainment. We look forward to seeing you at Kenilworth Road in the future, India!



WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED OUR FAMILY FUN DAY AT OUR MATCH AGAINST MORECAMBE AS MUCH AS WE DID. WE'RE PLANNING LOTS OF OTHER COOL ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEW SEASON, SO KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED!



BLACKPOOL FC

THE FIRST LEG OF THE PLAY-OFF SEMI FINAL ENDED IN DISAPPOINTMENT FOR THE TOWN. AS EX-HATTER MARK CULLEN SCORED A HAT-TRICK TO HELP THE POOL TO A 3-2 WIN. THIS MEANS THAT BLACKPOOL START THIS EVENING'S GAME WITH A ONE GOAL LEAD OVER LUTON. BUT FOOTBALL IS A FUNNY OLD GAME, AND THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF TIME FOR THE LADS TO TURN THINGS AROUND. THEY'LL NEED YOUR HELP THOUGH, SO MAKE SURE YOU GIVE THEM AN EXTRA SPECIAL CHEER FROM THE STANDS. COME ON YOU JUNIOR HATTERS!!!



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HATTERS LADIES

FOUR WINS ON THE SPIN FOR LADIES

BY ROSIE BONASS

The Town Ladies made it four wins on the spin as they followed on from their 4-2 victory over Cambridge United with a resounding 3-0 win at Lowestoft.

Defender Asia Brown scored her first goal for the Hatters as they beat local rivals Cambridge United at The Brache.

Joanne Rutherford opened the scoring for her 11th goal of the season for the Hatters, with United's Emma Jenkins equalising on the stroke of half-time.

Jodie Bellinger came off the bench to fire Town ahead once more before Erica Byron and then Brown extended the lead, before Evie Gallop pulled a goal back for Cambridge with full-time looming.

Town looked the stronger team from the kick-off and were unfortunate not to score as Rutherford's mistimed effort from six yards flew wide, before Lucy Webster hit the side netting after going on a tricky run.

At the other end of the pitch, United had two opportunities to take the lead but Jess Devoti superbly stopped a Becky Taylor header, before pushing behind a testing strike from Gallop.

Rutherford eventually gave Town a deserved lead in the 37th minute as she slotted the ball past keeper Verity Cook after pouncing on a weak back pass from United skipper Laura Bright.

Four minutes later, United equalised after Jenkins fired the ball in the roof of the net from distance.

Town regained the lead in the 52nd minute after Rutherford delivered a terrific ball into the box that substitute Bellinger headed in at the far post.

Three minutes later it was 3-1 to Town after Carrie Bennett failed to clear the ball and Byron took advantage of her defensive error and fired it into the goal.

Brown extended the advantage in the 88th minute after some good build up play on the wing by Rachel Kosky led to Brown scoring her first goal in a Hatters shirt, as she curled the ball into the top left corner from 16 yards.



United scored their second of the game just before the full-time whistle as Laura Mills played in a good ball to Gallop, who chested it in from close range.

A week later, another excellent performance saw the Hatters confirm bottom side Lowestoft's relegation from South East Division One.

Manager Nikki Baker made three changes to the team that beat Cambridge, with Angelika Kopec stepping in goal for the absent Devoti, whilst Bellinger and Dionne Manning replaced Byron and Lucy Tape.

The Hatters opened the scoring in the 31st minute when Carroll floated a free-kick in that Henman flicked on to Asia Brown, who struck it superbly first time into the top corner.

They doubled their lead within 15 minutes of the restart as Henman won the ball back in midfield and played a superb ball in behind to Jess McKay, who finished well into the bottom corner.

Soon after, McKay added her second of the game to make it 3-0 after Rutherford played a clever free-kick in and McKay hit it first time under the keeper, to confirm the result for the Town Ladies.

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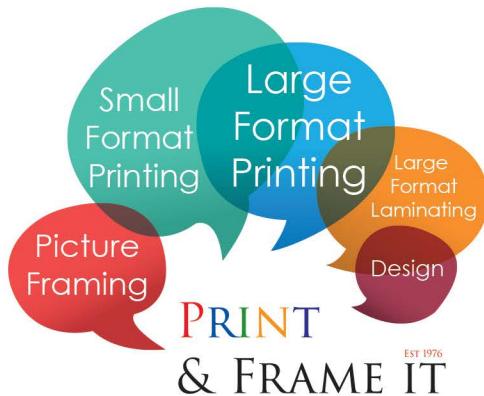
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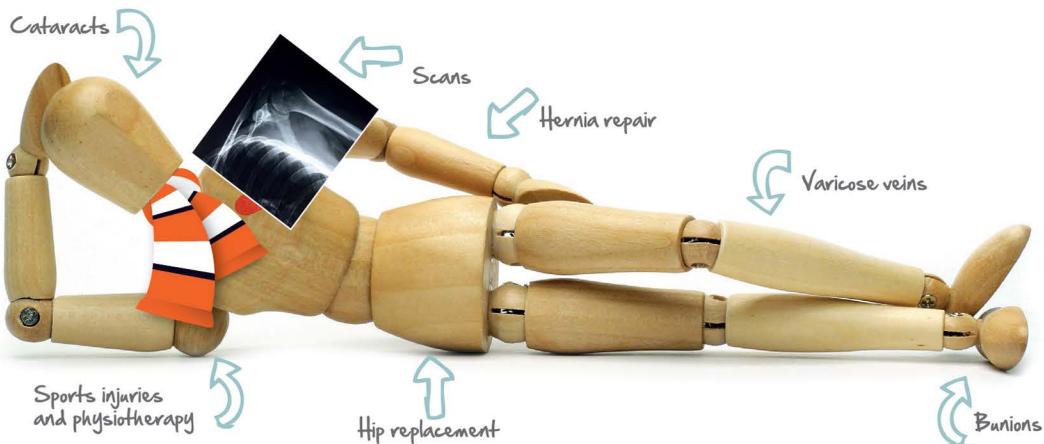
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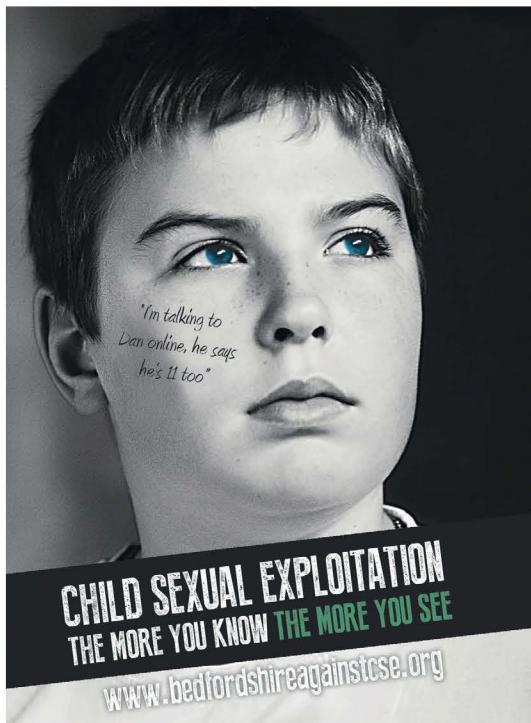
SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

Did you know that Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse where children and young people are coerced or manipulated into sexual activity?

This abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age or background and there are many ways in which young people can be exploited.

Abusers may groom the young person, providing them with gifts and affection or leading them to believe they are in a consensual relationship or friendship. They may take them to parties or provide them with drugs and alcohol so the young person feels like they are being treated as an adult. In many cases the child or young person does not even realise they are at risk.

Some offenders work in groups, while others act alone. They may go on to manipulate the young person through direct violence and threats or over time encourage the child to distance themselves from friends and family making them easier to exploit. This leaves them vulnerable to sexual assault or rape which they feel threatened, pressured or forced into at the hands of the abuser or others.



SPOT THE SIGNS

While every case of CSE is different there are several signs you can look out for to help prevent such abuse.

- Sudden changes – in appearance, friendship groups or behaviour. Remember, CSE can also occur in groups or gangs as a means of initiation, status or control
- Phone – CSE can happen online. Watch out for secretive mobile or online activity, excessive messages from unknown people or spending a lot of time online
- Alcohol or drugs – regularly being under the influence of substances such as drugs and alcohol
- Gifts – unexplained gifts or items your child could not usually afford like mobile phones or jewellery can indicate grooming
- Mood changes – unusual or sudden changes in mood or attitude. Has your child recently become withdrawn or secretive?
- Injuries – suspicious marks, scars or injuries they may try to conceal
- Adult friends – being secretive or defensive about who they have been spending time with and where
- Missing from home – coming home late, staying out all night or missing school

The more you know about child exploitation and the signs, the more you will see. Say something if you see something! You could save a child's life.

If you suspect your child is being abused or are concerned about CSE, call the Police on 101. You can also learn more from the following organisations:

www.bedfordshireagainstcse.org

NSPCC (0808 800 5000)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

<http://paceuk.info>

[www.nwgnetwork.org](http://nwgnetwork.org)

TICKET NEWS:

IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL TONIGHT, THIS IS THE WEMBLEY PLAY-OFF FINAL TICKET INFORMATION

LUTON TOWN SALES PLAN

We are pleased to confirm a Sales Plan for the Sky Bet League Two Play-Off Final at Wembley Stadium later this month, should the team be successful tonight.

If we reach Wembley, Luton Town will be allocated just over 35,000 tickets for the East End of the stadium.

Pricing categories at Wembley Stadium are split into six sections and there is also a concession rate for Senior Citizens (65 and over) and children aged 16 and under.

ADULT PRICES

Category 1 - £60 Adults, £30 Ages - 65 and over, 16 and under

Category 2 - £48 Adults, £24 Ages - 65 and over, 16 and under

Category 3 - £44 Adults, £22 Ages - 65 and over, 16 and under

Category 4 - £38 Adults, £19 Ages - 65 and over, 16 and under

Category 5 - £32 Adults, £16 Ages - 65 and over, 16 and under

Category 6 - £26 Adults, £13 Ages - 65 and over, 16 and under

The price categories will be sold on a first come first served basis and are subject to availability.

Due to the numbers involved and limited Sales period Luton Town Ticket Office will not be able to sell the vast majority of tickets for Wembley Stadium, the Club are using Ticketmaster to sell Play-Off Final tickets.

HOW TO BUY

Tickets are **ONLY** available online at <https://www.eticketing.co.uk/lutontown> **OR** over the phone on 0844 453 9050 (calls cost 7p per

min plus standard network charges, mobile rates may vary).

The only tickets available from Luton Town will be tickets for Disabled supporters, Executive Commercial customers or any large bulk bookings (minimum order 60 tickets.) These are designed for Schools/ Clubs and supporters groups. Please contact ticketoffice@lutontown.co.uk for more details in first instance. Pro forma details of all ticket holders will be required. Due to the anticipated demand the Club and Ticketmaster recommend booking online as the easiest and most convenient method of booking. Supporters will also be able to view a Wembley seating plan online and choose which block they would like to sit in.

Online bookings are available 24 hours a day and the phone lines will operate from 10am until 6pm Saturday and Sundays. Weekdays until 8pm.

WHEN TO BUY

Ticket sales will be split into **TWO** separate periods of sale.

Period 1: (Starts 8am online on Saturday 20th May 2017 and by phone from 10am)

- Diamond Season Ticket holders 16/17
- Season Ticket holders 16/17

Supporters qualifying for this period of sale are guaranteed a seat as long as they purchase before the General Sale period starts.

This period will be limited to five tickets per person, if purchasing tickets on behalf of other supporters all supporters must have valid, qualifying client reference numbers.

General Sale: (Starts online at 8am on Monday 22nd May 2017 and by phone from 10am)

Supporters purchasing tickets during this period of sale can also purchase five tickets each. To qualify to purchase tickets supporters must have a valid Client Reference number, if purchasing tickets on behalf of other supporters all supporters must have valid, qualifying client reference numbers.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Should you have any problems accessing your account with Ticketmaster please phone 03333213126 or email ticketoffice@lutontown.co.uk for assistance.

Family Area – Wembley Stadium have designated 1,700 seats in Blocks 105 to 108 in the East side of the Stadium as a Family Area for Luton Town. Tickets in this area are only available to fans that are purchasing 16 and under tickets together with Adult tickets.

Booking Fees – There is a £2.40 per ticket booking fee for every ticket sold online or over the phone.

Postage - £2.40 for First Class Post.

16 Years And Under – All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Ticketmaster Opening Times –

Ticketmaster are open 24 hours a day online and from 10am until 6 pm at the weekend and 10am and 8pm Monday to Friday.

Ground Regulations & Conditions

of Issue Apply – www.football-league.co.uk/ticketconditions

Crowd Flags And Musical

Instruments – Any supporters wishing to take flags or musical instruments to Wembley Stadium must obtain permission. Please contact ticketoffice@lutontown.co.uk to request permission. Anyone wishing to gain entry to Wembley Stadium carrying flags or musical instruments without prior permission

will not be permitted to enter with them.

Bobbers Travel – Tickets for Coach Travel will be available from Luton Town Ticket Office in person or by phone. Details of pick up points will be advised as soon as possible. Travel tickets are subject to availability and will be sold on a first come first served basis.

Travel – We will shortly be issuing a full travel pack for Luton Town supporters travelling to Wembley.

No Resale Of Tickets – It is an offence under Section 166 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, for any unauthorised person to sell tickets.

Client Reference Number – This

is number that is printed next to the name in Season Ticket holders booklets and also would show on any non - season ticket holders past purchases. For additional help with on line booking please see <http://bit.ly/2qJNGKb>. If in doubt of their number, supporters can also contact the Ticket Office on 01582 416976 or email ticketoffice@lutontown.co.uk and the Club will let them know what their correct number is.

Disabled – There are a number of Wheelchair and Ambulant and Personal Assistant tickets available. These are sold directly from the Luton Town Ticket Office NOT from Ticketmaster.

TOWN'S PRE-SEASON FRIENDLIES

Last season's Premier League champions Leicester City will visit Kenilworth Road in July as part of Nathan Jones' squad's pre-season preparations ahead of the 2017-18 campaign.

The Foxes, who this season reached the Champions League quarter-finals, will come to Bedfordshire on Wednesday 26th July for a 7.45pm kick-off.

The Hatters will also host a second home friendly on the following Saturday – 29th July – although the opposition will be confirmed only when we know which division the Town will be competing in next term.

We kick off our pre-season programme with a trip to Hitchin Town on Wednesday 5th July.

That is followed by a visit to Bedford Town on Saturday 8th July – which has been rearranged from the original date of 1st July.

Our next friendly will be at Vanarama National League South side St Albans

City on Tuesday 18th July, before a trip to Boreham Wood on Saturday 22nd July leads into the two home games.

Ticket prices for each game will be confirmed by the host club.

- Wednesday 5th July – Hitchin Town (A) 7.45pm
- Saturday 8th July – Bedford Town (A) – 3pm
- Tuesday 18th July – St Albans City (A) – 7.45pm
- Saturday 22nd July – Boreham Wood (A) – 3pm
- Wednesday 26th July – Leicester City (H) – 7.45pm
- Saturday 29th July – Opponents TBC (H) – 3pm

MARK OVENDALE MEMORIAL TROPHY

A Luton Town Legends XI will take on Ovendale FC (Wisbech) for the Mark Ovendale Memorial Trophy at Creasey Park, Dunstable on Sunday 23rd July, in support of fans' charity of the season, Autism Bedfordshire.



Tony Thorpe, Keith Keane and Tom Craddock are among the ex players due to take part in the game in memory of our former goalkeeper, who lost his life to cancer in 2011, aged 37. Mick Harford will manage the side.

The event – also featuring a bouncy castle, face painting, Luton Lightning, hot and cold food and a cash bar – starts at midday with entrance £2.50 and U10s free.

FIXTURES PILE-UP

DATE	TIME	H/A	OPPOSITION	SCORE	ATT	AWAY	POS	STARTING XI						
AUGUST														
Sat 6	3.00pm	A	Plymouth Argyle	W 3-0	9,761	1,019	1	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Cuthbert	Potts	Rea	Mpanzu ▲
Wed 10	7.45pm	H	Aston Villa (EFL Cup 1)	W 3-1	7,412	1,487	-	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Rea	Justin	Lee ▪	Mpanzu
Sat 13	3.00pm	H	Yeovil Town	D 1-1	7,800	303	1	Walton	O'DONNELL 1	Mullins	Cuthbert	Potts	Rea	Cook
Tue 16	7.45pm	H	Newport County	W 2-1	7,058	115	1	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Cuthbert	Potts	Lee	Mpanzu
Sat 20	3.00pm	A	Stevenage	L 1-2	3,517	1,674	3	Walton	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Rea	Potts	Lee	Gray ▪
Tue 23	7.45pm	H	Leeds United (EFL Cup 2)	L 0-1	7,498	1,510	-	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Rea	Potts	Lee ▲	Smith
Sat 27	3.00pm	A	Cambridge United	W 3-0	5,606	1,690	2	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Rea	Potts	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Tue 30	7.45pm	A	Gillingham (EFL Trophy)	W 2-1	2,128	137	-	King	Cotter	MUSONDA 1	Famewo	Justin	Bakinson	SMITH 1
SEPTEMBER														
Sat 3	3.00pm	H	Wycombe Wanderers	W 4-1	8,097	530	1	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Cuthbert	Potts	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Sat 10	3.00pm	H	Grimsby Town	L 1-2	8,005	539	3	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Sheehan	Potts	Lee ▪	Mpanzu ▲
Sat 17	3.00pm	A	Crawley Town	L 0-2	2,904	1,052	7	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Sheehan	Potts	Lee	Smith
Sat 24	3.00pm	H	Doncaster Rovers	W 3-1	7,917	554	3	Walton	Justin	Mullins	Cuthbert ▪	Potts	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Tue 27	7.45pm	A	Hartlepool United	D 1-1	3,533	311	2	Walton	Justin	SHEEHAN 1	Famewo	Potts	Lee	Gray ▪
OCTOBER														
Sat 1	3.00pm	A	Cheltenham Town	D 1-1	3,660	923	4	Walton	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Potts	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Tues 4	7.30pm	H	West Brom (EFL Trophy)	W 2-0	1,441	89	-	King	O'Donnell	Musonda	Senior	Bakinson	GRAY 1	
Sat 8	3.00pm	H	Crewe Alexandra	D 1-1	7,716	254	5	Walton	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Potts	Lee ▪	Gray
Sat 15	3.00pm	A	Leyton Orient	W 2-1	5,471	1,341	4	Walton	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Potts	Rea	Cook ▪
Sat 22	3.00pm	H	Mansfield Town	D 1-1	7,787	295	4	Walton	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Potts ▪	Rea	Gray ▪
Sat 29	3.00pm	A	Notts County	D 0-0	6,313	2,033	4	Walton	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Mullins	Rea	Cook
NOVEMBER														
Sat 5	3.00pm	A	Exeter City (FAC1)	W 3-1	2,972	310	-	Walton	Justin ▲	Cuthbert	Sheehan	REA 1	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Tue 8	7.30pm	H	Millwall (EFL Trophy)	L 1-3	2,251	370	-	King	O'Donnell	Musonda	Senior	Bakinson	GRAY ▲	
Sat 12	3.00pm	H	Accrington Stanley	W 1-0	8,008	101	5	Walton	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Lee ▪	Cook
Sat 19	3.00pm	A	Morecambe	W 2-0	1,507	520	4	Walton	Justin	Mullins	Sheehan	Rea	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Tue 22	7.45pm	H	Portsmouth	L 1-3	8,808	975	5	Walton	Justin ▲	Mullins	Sheehan	Rea	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Sat 26	3.00pm	A	Exeter City	D 0-0	3,823	634	5	Walton	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Lee ▪	Cook ▪
DECEMBER														
Sat 3	3.00pm	H	Solihull Moors (FAC2)	W 6-2	3,512	635	-	Walton	Justin ▪	Cuthbert	Sheehan	REA 1	Lee	Mpanzu ▲
Tues 6	7.45pm	A	Swindon Town (EFL Trophy)	W 3-2	1,692	134	-	King	Justin	Musonda	Senior	Potts	Lee	Mpanzu
Sat 10	3.00pm	H	Carlisle United	D 1-1	7,953	380	5	Walton	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Potts	Mullins	Rea
Sat 17	3.00pm	A	Blackpool	W 2-0	3,992	1,095	5	Walton	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Justin	Lee
Mon 26	3.00pm	H	Colchester United	L 0-1	9,164	490	5	Walton	O'Donnell	Mullins	Sheehan	Potts	Justin	Lee ▪
Sat 31	3.00pm	H	Barnet	W 3-1	8,262	494	5	Walton	O'Donnell	SHEEHAN 1 ▪	Potts ▪	Mullins	Rea	Rea
JANUARY														
Mon 2	3.00pm	A	Portsmouth	L 0-1	17,402	1,547	6	Walton	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Mullins	Rea	Justin	Smith
Sat 7	3.00pm	A	Accrington Stanley (FAC3)	L 1-2	1,717	482	-	Walton	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mullins	Lee ▪
Tue 10	7.45pm	H	Chesterfield (EFL Trophy)	W 4-0	1,655	152	-	Walton	O'Donnell	Musonda	Senior	Rea	Mpanzu	Smith
Sat 14	3.00pm	A	Crewe Alexandra	W 2-1	4,368	995	6	Walton	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Cook ▪
Sat 21	3.00pm	A	Wycombe Wanderers	D 1-1	5,387	1,800	6	Walton	Justin	CUTBERT 1	Senior	Mullins	Rea	Smith
Sat 28	3.00pm	H	Cambridge United	W 2-0	8,917	997	4	Walton	Justin	Cuthbert	Senior	Rea	Mpanzu	Smith
Tue 31	7.45pm	H	Cheltenham Town	L 2-3	6,708	83	5	Moore	Justin	Cuthbert	Senior	Rea	Mpanzu	Smith ▪
FEBRUARY														
Sat 4	3.00pm	A	Grimsbay Town	D 1-1	5,114	468	5	Moore	Justin	Cuthbert	Senior	Rea	Mpanzu	Gray ▪
Tue 8	7.45pm	H	Yeovil Town (EFL Trophy)	W 5-2	2,480	88	5	Macey	O'Donnell	Mullins	Senior	Rea	Mpanzu	SHEEHAN 1
Sat 11	3.00pm	H	Crawley Town	W 2-1	7,316	225	4	Macey	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Senior	Rea	Sheehan	
Tue 14	7.45pm	H	Hartlepool United	W 3-0	6,965	90	4	Macey	O'Donnell	Mullins	Senior	Rea	Sheehan	
Sat 18	3.00pm	A	Doncaster Rovers	D 1-1	7,506	1,619	4	Macey	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Senior	Rea	Sheehan	
Sat 25	3.00pm	H	Plymouth Argyle	D 1-1	9,124	1,027	5	Macey	Justin	Cuthbert	Senior ▲	Rea	Mpanzu	Sheehan
MARCH														
Wed 1	7.45pm	H	Oxford United (EFL Trophy)	L 2-3	6,901	742	-	Macey	Justin ▲	Mullins	Senior ▪	Rea	Mpanzu	Sheehan
Sat 4	3.00pm	A	Yeovil Town	W 4-0	4,194	698	4	Macey	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	REA 1	Smith	
Sat 11	3.00pm	H	Stevenage	L 0-2	9,045	699	6	Macey	O'Donnell	Cuthbert ▪	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Potts ▪
Tue 14	7.45pm	A	Carlisle United	D 0-0	4,052	377	5	Macey	O'Donnell	Lee	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Potts ▪
Sat 18	3.00pm	H	Exeter City	D 1-1	7,657	415	5	Macey	O'Donnell	Senior	Sheehan	Rea	Smith	
Tue 21	7.45pm	A	Newport County	D 1-1	2,304	311	5	Macey	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Mullins ▪
Sat 25	3.00pm	A	Colchester United	L 1-2	5,445	1,775	6	Macey	O'Donnell	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Gray ▪	
APRIL														
Sat 1	3.00pm	H	Blackpool	W 1-0	7,968	418	5	Macey	O'Donnell ▲	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Lee
Sat 8	3.00pm	A	Barnet	W 1-0	3,313	1,687	4	Moore	O'Donnell ▪	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	LEE 1
Fri 14	3.00pm	H	Leyton Orient	D 2-2	8,601	380	4	Moore	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Lee
Mon 17	3.00pm	A	Mansfield Town	D 1-1	4,632	892	4	Moore	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Lee
Sat 22	3.00pm	H	Notts County	W 2-1	7,719	382	4	Moore	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	LEE 1
Sat 29	3.00pm	A	Accrington Stanley	W 4-1	2,150	590	4	Moore	JUSTIN 1	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Lee
MAY														
Sat 6	5.30pm	H	Morecambe	W 3-1	8,399	187	4	Moore	Justin ▪	Cuthbert	Palmer	Rea	Mpanzu	Lee
Sun 14	6.30pm	A	Blackpool (P0 SF 1st leg)	L 3-2	3,882	1,648	4	Moore	Justin	Cuthbert	Sheehan	Rea	Mpanzu	Lee
Thu 18	7.45pm	H	Blackpool (P0 SF 2nd leg)											

WHO, WHEN AND WHERE THE HATTERS ARE PLAYING THIS SEASON

KEY: • First Substitute | ♦ Second Substitute | ▲ Third Substitute | ■ Sent off | GOALSCORER

SUBS												
McGeehan McGEEHAN 1 McGeehan McGEEHAN 2 McGEEHAN 1 ▲ McGeehan McGeehan Gray	Cook • GRAY 1 ♦ Cook • Cook • Cook • Cook • Cook • Banton ♦	HYLTON 1 Hylton Hylton Hylton Hylton Hylton HYLTON 1 Vassell	MARRIOTT 1 ▲ Marriott Marriott Marriott Marriott Marriott MARRIOTT 1 ▲ McQuoid	SMITH 1 • Smith ♦ Gray ♦ Famewo ♦ Cook ♦ MARRIOTT 1 ▲ Atkinson	Lee ♦ Cuthbert ♦ Smith ♦ Vassell ♦ Smith ♦ McQuoid ♦ Atkinson ♦	Gray ▲ Cook Smith Vassell ▲ Smith McQuoid ▲ Vassell ▲ Tomlinson ♦	Justin Vassell ▲ Lee Gray Smith Cuthbert Gray Read	Vassell McQuoid McQuoid McQuoid McQuoid McQuoid Hinds	McQuoid King King King King King King	King Famewo Justin King King King King King	King Famewo Justin King King King King King	
McGeehan McGEEHAN 2 McGeehan McGEEHAN 2 ▲ McGeehan	Cook Cook Cook Cook Gilllead ♦	COOK 1 Hylton ♦ Vassell HYLTON 1 ▲ Mpanzu	HYLTON 3 ▲ Marriott Marriott McQuoid MARRIOTT 1 Marriott	REIA 1 • Hylton Sheehan ♦ Vassell ♦	Vassell ♦ Vassell ♦ Marriott Gray ♦ Cook ♦	Famewo ▲ Gilllead ▲ Gilllead ▲ Gilllead ▲ O'Donnell	Gray Smith Cuthbert O'Donnell Smith	Gilllead Cuthber Gray Smith McQuoid	King Gray Mpanzu Vassell Musonda	King King King King King	King King King King King	
McGeehan Smith McGeehan MCGEEHAN 1 ▲ MCGEEHAN 1 McGeehan	Cook GILLIEAD 1 ▲ McQuoid ♦ Gilllead ♦ Gilllead ♦ Gilllead ♦	HYLTON 1 McQuoid ♦ HYLTON 1 Hylton Hylton	Marriott • Banton ♦ Marriott Marriott Marriott Marriott	Smith • Vassell ♦ Gilllead ♦ Smith • Vassell ♦ Lee ♦	Gilllead ♦ Hinds ♦ Rea ♦ Mullins ♦ Vassell ♦ Mpanzu ♦	O'Donnell ♦ Snelus ▲ McQuoid ▲ Gray ▲ Lee ▲ Vassell ▲	Gray Cotter O'Donnell Mpanzu Smith Potts	McQuoid Read Smith Banton Mullins Smith	Famewo Atkinson Vassell Vassell Mackail-Smith Gray	King Goodh King King King King	King Goodh King King King King	
McGeehan Smith MCGEEHAN 1 McGeehan McGeehan McGeehan	Cook ♦ McQuoid Gilllead ♦ Gilllead ♦ Gilllead ♦ Mullins	HYLTON 2 Mackail-Smith ♦ Hylton HYLTON 1 HYLTON 1 Hylton	Gilllead • Vassell • Marriott • Vassell • Cook • Vassell ▲	Smith • Banton • Vassell • Marriott • Marriott • Mpanzu •	Mackail-Smith ♦ Hinds ♦ Smith ♦ Smith ♦ Marriott ♦ Gilllead ♦	O'Donnell ▲ Read ▲ Mullins ▲ Gray ▲ Mackail-Smith ▲ Marriott ▲	Gray Snelus O'Donnell O'Donnell O'Donnell O'Donnell	Potts Cotter Gray McQuoid Smith Smith	Vassell Bean Mackail-Smith Mackail-Smith Cuthbert Mackail-Smith	King Goodh King King King King	King Goodh King King King King	
McGeehan Smith McGeehan MCGEEHAN 1 ▲ McGeehan MCGEEHAN 1 ▲ McGeehan	Gilllead ♦ Gilllead ♦ Gilllead ♦ Smith	HYLTON 1 ▲ VASELL 1 • HYLTON 1 Hylton Hylton	MARRIOTT 2 • MCQUOID 2 • Marriott ♦ MARRIOTT 1 ▲ Marriott ♦ Cook	O'DONNELL 2 • Mackail-Smith ♦ Gilllead ♦ Mpanzu ♦ Vassell ♦ Justin ♦	Potts ♦ Bakinson ♦ Vassell ♦ Mpanzu ♦ Vassell ♦ Justin ♦	Vassell ▲ Tomlinson Cook ▲ Smith ▲ Cook ▲ Lee ▲	Smith Banton Smith Cook Smith Gray	Mpanzu Lee Senior Senior Marriott	McQuoid Lee Snelus McQuoid McQuoid	King Goodh King King King	King Goodh King King King	
McGeehan • Smith ▲ MACKAIL-SMITH 1 ▲ D'Ath • Gambin Gambin • Gambin ▲	Gilllead ♦ Gray ♦ Vassell ▲ Gilllead ♦ Gilllead ♦ Cook	Hylton McQuoid Cook Hylton ♦ Hylton ♦ COOK 1 VASELL 1	McQuoid ♦ Cook MARRIOTT 2 ♦ MARRIOTT 1 ▲ Marriott ♦ Marriott ♦ Marriott ♦	Mpanzu • O'Donnell ♦ Marriott ♦ Lee ♦ Smith ♦ Rea ♦ D'Ath ♦ Lee ♦	Lee ♦ Marriott ♦ Vassell ▲ Senior ▲ Vassell ♦ Sheehan ♦ D'Ath ♦ D'Ath ♦	Vassell ▲ Mpanzu ▲ Banton ▲ Vassell ▲ O'Donnell ▲ Mackail-Smith ▲ Gray ▲	Marriott Senior Bakinson Lee Cook Gray O'Donnell	Senior Senior Cotter Mullins D'Ath O'Donnell Banton	McQuoid D'Ath Cotter Mackail-Smith Mackail-Smith Lee Sheehan	King King King King King King King	King King King King King King King	
Gambin • Smith Smith D'Ath • Smith Smith	Cook COOK 1 • Cook GAMBIN 1 COOK 1 ♦ Cook	Hyton HYLTON 1 ▲ HYLTON 2 ▲ HYLTON 1 ▲ Hyton HYLTON 1 VASELL 1	VASELL 1 ▲ VASELL 2 ♦ Vassell ♦ Vassell ▲ Vassell ♦ Vassell ♦ Vassell ♦	Palmer • Cuthbert • Palmer • Smith • Palmer • Palmer • Gambin •	Sheehan ♦ Marriott ♦ Gambin • Marriott ♦ Marriott ♦ Marriott ♦ Marriott ♦	Marriott ▲ Justin ▲ Gambin • Marriott ▲ Marriott ▲ Marriott ▲ Marriott ▲	O'Donnell Gambin Gray Cuthbert Gray D'Ath Mullins	Lee Gambin D'Ath Gray Cuthbert D'Ath D'Ath	D'Ath Lee Justi Justin Justi Justin Gray	Macy King Moore Moore Moore Moore Moore	Macy King Moore Moore Moore Moore Moore	
Gray ♦ Gray ♦ Smith Gambin ▲ Gambin ▲ Palmer D'Ath	Cook Cook Cook ▲ Cook Cook ▲ Cook	HYLTON 1 HYLTON 2 ▲ Hylton Hylton HYLTON 1 ▲ HYLTON 1 ▲ VASELL 1	VASELL 1 Vassell ♦ Vassell ♦ Vassell • Vassell • Vassell • Marriott ♦	Gambin • Potts ♦ Gambin • Vassell • Marriott • Palmer ♦ Justin •	Marriott ♦ Palmer ♦ Gambin • Justin ♦ Palmer ♦ Lee ♦ Palmer ♦	Cuthbert ▲ Marriott ▲ Palmer ▲ Palmer ▲ Lee ▲ Smith Lee ▲	Potts Mullins Gray Smith D'Ath Palmer D'Ath	Smith D'Ath Marriott D'Ath Palmer D'Ath Bakinson	Lee Justi D'Ath Famewo Justi Famewo Famewo	King Moore Moore Moore Moore Moore Moore	King Moore Moore Moore Moore Moore Moore	
D'Ath D'Ath ▲ D'Ath D'Ath D'Ath Gray ▲	Justin Justin Cook ♦ Potts ♦ Potts Potts	Hyton ♦ Hylton HYLTON 1 HYLTON 1 Hylton Palmer	Vassell ♦ Vassell ♦ Marriott ♦ Vassell ♦ PALMER 1 ♦ VASELL 1 ▲	PALMER 1 • Palmer ♦ Gambin ♦ Palmer ♦ Gray ♦ MARRIOTT 1 ▲	Marriott ♦ Gambin ♦ Vassell ♦ O'Donnell ♦ Vassell ♦ Smith ♦	Gambin ▲ Smith ▲ Gray ▲ Smith O'Donnell Gambin ▲	Smith Cook O'Donnell Potts Gray Smith O'Donnell	Bakinson Marriott Potts Marriott Marriott Mullins	Famewo Musonda Smith Gambin Gambin Banton	Moore King King King King King	Moore King King King King King	
Gray D'Ath ♦	Potts POTTS 1	Gambin ▲ Hyton	VASELL 1 ▲ VASELL 1 ▲	O'Donnell • Marriott •	MARRIOTT 2 ♦ Palmer ♦	D'Ath ▲ O'Donnell	Smith Smith	Banton Gray	Famewo Gambin	King King	King King	

HOLD THE BACK PAGE

WITH STUART HAMMONDS BY PRESS & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



Words are what we both thrive on; myself as a football journalist and you guys reading this as football fans – whether sitting in front of your laptop, swiping your phone screen, listening to the radio, watching the TV or, as the title of this column suggests, reading the back pages.

At Luton we are lucky to have a manager and squad who are never backwards in coming forwards when giving us a nice line, so I thought I'd close 2016-17 with my favourite Talk Of The Town for this season.

The gaffer likes to bring a bit of wildlife into his pressers, hence Isaac Vassell has been a "panther", a "beast" or simply "the animal" over the course of his first campaign at Kenilworth Road.

Before the March trip to play on Newport's notorious Rodney Parade pitch, we couldn't "ask dogs to be cats overnight" and change our renowned passing style of play, Nathan told the gathered media.

My personal favourite came before a ball was kicked, however, when he praised Gary Sweet and 2020 for backing him in assembling his squad last summer, saying: "I haven't gone to the board and said I wanted a kangaroo or anything outrageous. I've said 'This is who we'd like, can we get them?'"

We skipped down to Plymouth two days later and came bouncing back with three points from a three-goal win that set an early benchmark.

He didn't sign a Joey, but we had a Jordan and, by the end of August,

another Jack – "I love a ginger", the manager declared throughout a season in which we were constantly reminded how "proud" he is of all his squad, especially Glen Rea: "If I had a kid, that's what I want," said Nathan, "just not as dull as him!"

He also signed a Johnny, who after a 0-0 draw at Notts County came out with a cracker himself when asked about the 2,033 travelling Town fans: "The only shame was that we couldn't give them a goal and send them home really happy with three points," said Mullins, adding: "But I'm sure a few of them will be going to Hooters now anyway!"

Mulls had arrived from Oxford with a certain Danny Hylton, who understandably over the course of the campaign was the subject of most requests for an interview. The first, back in August, came from the Daily Mail who asked him what his guilty food pleasure was?

"I'm big on biscuits," replied Hylts. "On a Saturday night, especially if we've won or I've played well, I'll be straight to the shops to buy a packet of biscuits. I like the Maryland 'Chunkies.' They're my favourite."

Which begs the question, why – during a 26-goal, EFL, PFA and four-time club award-winning season – has the 28-year-old not piled on the pounds?

There have been many memorable quotes and I thank Nathan, his staff and every single player for their willingness to talk and take part in everything I've asked them to do.

From Olly Lee doing the Chip 'n Bin Challenge on Nick Kicks, to Nathan, Jonathan Smith and Cameron McGeehan being interviewed by junior supporters, Cookie taking part in a boxing podcast, Simon Parsell and Jared writing their programme columns and the legend Mick Harford being prepared to deliver any video message for weddings, retirements, birthdays and anniversaries that come his way.

On community visits they are fine ambassadors for Luton Town and whatever laces, hats or T-shirts we turn up asking them to pose in for a charity picture or two, they are willing to do so with a smile.

Whatever happens tonight, I'm as proud of them as Nathan is and I hope they have national newspaper sports editors holding next Monday's back pages for them. COYH!

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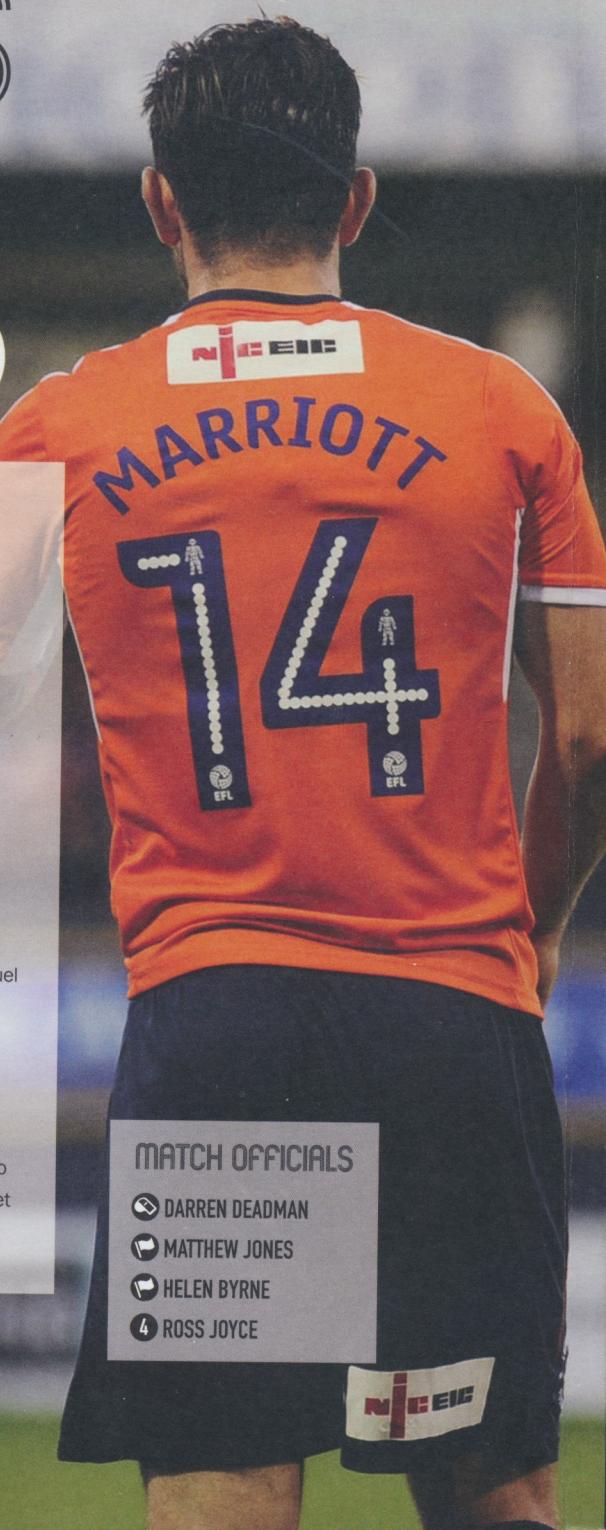
18+

TEAMS



- 1 Stuart Moore
- 2 Stephen O'Donnell
- 3 Dan Potts
- 4 Jonathan Smith
- 5 Johnny Mullins
- 6 Scott Cuthbert
- 7 Jake Gray
- 8 Cameron McGeehan
- 9 Danny Hylton
- 10 Jordan Cook
- 11 Danny Green
- 14 Jack Marriott
- 16 Glen Rea
- 17 Pelly-Ruddock Mpanzu
- 18 Zane Banton
- 19 Olly Lee
- 20 Isaac Vassell
- 21 Jack Senior
- 22 Luke Gambin
- 24 Lawson D'Ath
- 27 Tyreeq Bakinson
- 28 Ollie Palmer
- 31 Craig King
- 36 James Justin
- 37 Frankie Musonda
- 39 Akin Famewo
- 44 Alan Sheehan

- 1 Sam Slocombe
- 2 Kelvin Mellor
- 3 Andy Taylor
- 4 Jim McAlister
- 5 Clark Robertson
- 6 Will Aimson
- 7 Kyle Vassell
- 8 Brad Potts
- 9 Mark Cullen
- 11 Henry Cameron
- 12 Jordan Flores
- 15 Tom Aldred
- 16 Eddie Nolan
- 18 Danny Philliskirk
- 19 Jamille Matt
- 21 Bright Osayi-Samuel
- 23 Colin Daniel
- 25 Myles Boney
- 27 Dean Lyness
- 28 Jack Payne
- 29 Sanmi Odelusi
- 30 Nathan Delfouneso
- 31 Armand Gnanduillet
- 35 Neil Danns
- 37 Ian Black



MATCH OFFICIALS

- DARREN DEADMAN
- MATTHEW JONES
- HELEN BYRNE
- ROSS JOYCE