

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>  
April 2023

# PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

All the news from Roundwood ahead of this weekend's match action against Luton Town



Matt Taylor

## On welcoming Luton Town...

"They're having a fantastic season and they're still within touching distance of those automatic spots. It'll be an exciting game.

"We want our home style to show through. We want our noise and our atmosphere to play a part in that as well.

"I have huge respect for what Luton have done, they're another team that we're constantly learning from in terms of how to set up and how, who and when to recruit.

"You can sense from the outside that the club is run by good people, something we feel similar to ourselves. But all that goes out the window come 3 o'clock on Saturday where the points are at stake.

"It's certainly one to look forward to."



Matt Taylor

## On Josh Vickers stepping up against Norwich City...

"Monday was important for the team, for the club, for myself, and for Josh.

"He's not a young lad anymore, he's really got a good temperament about him, which is what you want from a goalkeeper.

"He's been a class act without playing so much this season, which shows how well Viktor's done as well.

"He's a player I can't speak highly enough of in terms of the way he conducts himself, the way he works, the way he trains. He trains as if he's playing every single game at the weekend.

"Sometimes when you're second choice and someone's playing so well in the position in front of you, that's a difficult thing to do.

"His motivation levels have been sky high throughout the course of the season and he deserves the opportunity, he deserves to keep on playing and hopefully we can protect him when he needs protecting.

"He won't be shy of any work, put it that way.

"But in testament to Josh, I've not got any qualms about him playing."



**Last Meeting**  
Luton Town 1 v 1 Rotherham

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

Jamie Lindsay found the breakthrough with an acrobatic finish within one minute, before Luke Berry got the home side back on level terms in the dying embers of the match.

**Last Five Results**  
WBA

**W D W D W**

**Mad Hatters!**

Luton sit narrowly outside the automatic promotion spots. If the Hatters were to achieve such an amazing feat, midfielder Pelly-Ruddock Mpanzu would become the first ever player to journey through all top five English leagues with the same club!

Matt Taylor

## On Hakeem Odoffin’s EFL Community Award...

“It’s fantastic, I’m delighted for Haks because the work he does in the community and the way he conducts himself off the pitch is the same as what we see on a daily basis around the training ground and on match day, he’s all in.

“He’s a fantastic person to work with. He’s so, so committed to the club, the badge, the community, his teammates, the team, and his own career.

“He’s not perfect but no one is and he constantly strives to improve himself on a daily basis.

“I’m delighted for Haks because he needs recognition, he can get recognition in various different ways in and around the football environment, but to be recognised by this award, fantastic for himself and good for the club as well.

“It also highlights the work the club does in and around the community and hopefully that’s appreciated within the local area and something for Haks to keep on building on.

“But he’s been a shining light since I came to this club, and probably beforehand, in terms of the way to be a good person.”

### On the work put in by the rest of the squad in the community...

“We have to play a part.

“I’ve always said about being in a privileged position as footballers, regardless of your wages or your lifestyle or how many hours you work in a day.

“We’ve got to set the example, we’ve got to be good role models, try to be good people.

“We’re far from perfect but we can sometimes influence others and elsewhere in a positive way and we know how difficult life is for a lot of people at the moment.

“Hopefully the football club is a bit of a shining light in the way it acts, the way the players play and what sort of players we have at the club.”



## Taylor provides Viktor Johansson prognosis...

“The scan could have been a lot worse.

“He’s had an injection on the back of the scan results and now it’s not a race against time, it’s just when that shoulder feels up to movement, when it feels up to catching a ball, saving a ball, diving, which is how he got the injury.

“Judging by how he was over the weekend, on Sunday when he got the injury, and Monday when he woke up, he was really sore, so it could have been a lot worse

“He’s had injections in it previously, so we are aware of why it’s happening. He doesn’t want to go through the rest of his career worrying about any sort of dive or any sort of moment of a collision where the shoulder problem reoccurs.”



## Other injury concerns...

“Conor’s had surgery today. It’s been a constant niggle. He’s got to the point where he can’t continue in the capacity he has done.

“A real shame for Conor because I’m sure we’ve seen glimpses of what he’s capable of this season, but that knee has hampered him.

“Bailey Wright on the back of that horrific landing in the West Brom game, the ankle is a mess.

“Luckily no fracture of any bone, which is obviously a real marker, but a lot of ligament damage.

“He’s going to see a specialist in the next few days to see if he needs the surgery.

“Tyler’s obviously got this hamstring issue, but he’s done a little bit of training today.”



Matt Taylor

**On Ben Wiles reintegration into the group...**

“He had his first day with us on Sunday, which was a minimal session

“On Monday and Tuesday he did a couple of individual sessions, but he's trained with the group today.

“It's the first time I've seen him for a long time in an eight-v-eight situation or a match-type situation.

“He looked like he's moving well. He looks like every time he's out there he'll be able to test that ankle to another level.

“He's a tough kid, he's a good player as well, but we can't rush him back into it.

“If he can get through another handful of training sessions within the group, then we want to get him on the pitch because we feel he can have an impact.”

**On maintaining performance levels...**

“Sports is all about performance and the best do it consistently.

“The league is so, so difficult. We have to remember that.

“That's why we've been relegated our last three attempts at Championship level and this group of players are constantly learning.

“So no matter what the outcome at the end of the season, which is hopefully a positive one, we know a lot of players will be in a better position as will myself, and the staff as well, to understand what it takes next time.”



Matt Taylor

**On the performances of Conor Coventry...**

“For a young player, regardless of who was going out of the building, to come and play straight away with the added expectation and pressure is difficult. He's had no respite from that.

“We have to remember that, as with all young players, they have ups and downs. Sometimes they lose a bit of rhythm within their game.

“He's learned a lot about himself and his game in amongst Championship football, which is an incredible thing to do.

“What he's done so far has been exceptional for a young player, someone who's finding his feet in the game and come the end of the season, like I say, he'll go back to his parent club in a much better position than when he came to ourselves.

“When we get our style going in a different way, he'll become more of a creator, more of an influencer on the ball. He's doing a great job for ourselves at the moment.

“He's been a wholly positive introduction.”