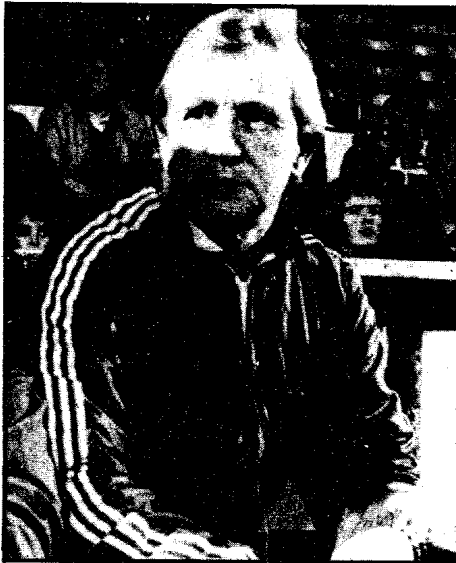


SPORT

Edited by
BOB WALLING

We're in for a hard time, says Cyril



● Cyril Lea — 'I can't see an easy way out of it.'

CENTRAL defender Keith Day looks set to make a surprise return to Colchester United's line-up for the trip to Preston North End tomorrow (kick-off 2pm) as U's boss Cyril Lea attempts to halt the team's slide.

Day has been sidelined for the past month after twice dislocating his left shoulder in the 4-2 victory over Southend, and it was thought he would need surgery to pin the shoulder.

But a specialist ruled earlier this week that an operation was not required, and the 22-year-old promptly made his comeback in the U's Reserves side against Clacton on Tuesday.

Said manager Cyril Lea: "Keith came through very well. He really needs another game, but I can't afford to wait. I may bring him straight back at Preston."

Nothing has gone right for the U's in Day's absence. They have lost all five matches played without scoring a goal and conceding 11.

And manager Lea has warned that the Fourth Division club face a long, hard battle to put a stop to their rapid decline.

"I can't see an easy way out of it," said the U's boss. "People seem to think we'll just snap out of it, but I think we're in for a hard time of it."

In the past four weeks the U's have lost every match they've played without scoring a goal, culminating in the humiliating defeat by non-league Wycombe Wanderers in the FA Cup first round on Saturday.

The side's performance there was described as "gutless" by the club's major shareholder and director Jonathan Crisp.

And Lea admitted: "The game left me feeling the lowest I have been for a long time."

The root of the U's current problems is their total lack of goal power, with Tony Adcock clearly out of form and Lea still struggling to find a replacement for the injured Keith Bowen.

"Trevor Whymark and Tom English are not yet up to fitness and Robin Turner has not filled the bill as a striker," said Cyril.

"I tried to sign a striker on loan from a First Division club and scoured the country to find one who would come here."

"Now I'm looking at non-

league level in an effort to come up with the goods."

Hopes of signing a central defender from a First Division club have also been dashed.

But the U's manager was impressed with the reserve team debut last night of former West Ham junior Terry Baker, who has been with Billericay.

"He's a stocky centre-half and formed a good partnership with Keith Day," Lea said.

NEIL THOMAS



● Keith Day — sorely missed

ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE (Up to and including Saturday, November 16)

SENIOR SECTION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wivenhoe	14	10	1	3	38	18	31
Brentwood	12	8	0	4	32	18	25
Witham	12	7	3	2	23	9	24
Chelmsford	13	7	3	3	21	14	24
Malden	11	7	2	2	21	12	23
Brightingsee	12	6	1	5	19	19	19
Eton Manor	13	6	1	6	25	29	19
Ford United	12	6	0	6	26	20	18
Stansted	15	6	0	9	21	26	18
East Thurrock	10	4	2	4	22	16	16
Bowers Utd	10	4	3	3	16	17	15
East Ham Utd	16	4	3	9	20	34	15
Canvey	11	4	2	5	20	17	14
Burnham	13	4	2	7	18	23	14
Halstead	11	3	2	6	14	15	11
Sawbidge	11	3	2	6	18	29	11
Coggeshall	14	1	1	12	12	50	4

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Purfleet	15	12	3	0	52	11	39
Woodford	13	12	1	0	46	6	37
Southend M	11	10	1	0	41	8	31
Bowers Utd	12	10	0	2	57	10	30
Stambridge	12	8	1	3	31	16	25
Witham	17	8	1	8	28	35	25
Wivenhoe	15	7	1	7	28	21	22
Malden	13	7	0	6	27	27	21
Brentwood	11	6	2	3	24	16	20
Canvey	9	6	0	3	14	9	18
Burnham	9	5	1	3	16	16	16
Stansted	12	4	1	7	21	22	12
Halstead	11	4	0	7	17	31	12
East Thurrock	11	2	2	7	17	22	8
East Ham	11	2	0	9	11	49	6
Eton Manor	11	1	1	9	6	29	4
Brightingsee	11	1	1	9	9	33	4
Sawbidge	13	1	1	11	6	44	4
Coggeshall	13	0	1	12	8	57	1

EASTERN LEAGUE

(as at November 16, 1985)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sudbury	18	13	4	1	39	15	30
Widchesh	18	13	3	2	39	19	29
Braintree	16	11	4	1	43	18	26
Bury	18	11	4	3	34	18	26
Colchester	17	10	2	5	42	22	22
St Yarmouth	15	11	0	4	44	20	22
Tiptree	17	8	3	6	28	30	19
March	12	7	2	3	20	11	16
Haverhill	14	7	2	5	19	13	16
Histon	16	6	4	6	23	18	16
Stowmarket	15	6	3	6	30	29	15
Gorleston	18	4	6	8	29	22	14
Felstowe	15	6	2	7	20	23	14
Soham	18	5	4	9	24	40	14
Lowestoft	14	5	3	6	31	28	13
Chatteris	15	6	0	9	14	22	12
Harwich	17	4	4	9	21	29	12
Thetford	17	3	4	10	17	33	10
Brantham	18	4	1	11	17	46	9
Newmarket	15	2	1	10	25	50	8
Ely	15	1	3	11	14	29	5
Clacton	16	0	4	12	12	40	4