

Town Win 2-0 — And Make It Look Easy

DESPERATE ROVERS FAIL TO PIERCE DEFENCE

(By Chiltern)

LUTON TOWN 2, BRISTOL ROVERS 0

NOT many Luton people seemed interested in the final fate of Bristol Rovers who needed two points from their match at Kenilworth-road this afternoon to stand a real chance of avoiding the drop to Division III.

Nor apparently were the Town's recent displays good enough to induce more than the faithful few away from their homes on a chilly afternoon, and the crowd five minutes before the start was very thin indeed.

It looked like being a desperate encounter, in view of the parlous position of the Rovers. They made one change from the team beaten at Charlton on Monday—the return of the veteran Geoff Bradford to centre-forward.

On the other hand, manager Sam Bartram decided not to continue with his daring experiment of playing goalkeeper Ron Baynham as leader of the attack, and turned to orthodoxy by restoring Gordon Turner to centre-forward.

With Tommy McKechnie out of action through injury, Dave Pacey was moved forward to inside left, and John Groves recalled to left-half.

It was a cheerless sort of day, and good football looked like being at a premium on a hard pitch.

The Town defended the Oak-road end and Bristol were away in the opening minutes, earning a corner on the right. Their small contingent of fans cheered wildly and, after the ball had come across, Standen had to dive bravely at the feet of Bradford to save a certain goal.

For a couple of minutes it was all Bristol, then the Town suddenly broke away to take the lead through TURNER in the third minute.

TRAGEDY FOR GOALKEEPER

It was a tragedy for Radford, who, taking a goal kick, possibly half-stabbed the hard ground, and the ball rolled to Turner.

Turner snapped on to it immediately and brushed off a challenge by Davies, and although Radford made a desperate effort Turner went round him and calmly side-footed the ball into the back of the net.

For a while the Town attack looked livelier than it had for some time, and it was "Action Stations" for the Rovers defence, who must have been badly hit by their early reverse.

The Town continued to be in command, with their forwards showing more ideas than were those of Rovers, who had shown little sign of constructive ability so far.

The general jitteriness of the Rovers defence was never better illustrated than when Davis came within inches of putting through his own goal when his attempted pass back to Radford beat the goalkeeper and rolled just wide.

Bristol came back a little more confidently, and Hooper headed a from a well-placed corner kick

by Jarman, but Standen pushed the ball over the bar.

Straight from this, Ashworth went away in masterful style, racing through the gap in the middle of the Rovers defence, but his shot from 20 yards was sliced well wide.

As if Bristol did not trust Radford to take any more goal kicks, Hillard had the next and made just about as big a hash of it as had the goalkeeper, because again



GORDON TURNER
Back to centre-forward and a goal in three minutes.

the ball went in the general direction of Turner, who this time was just shut out.

Continuing to look more forceful, the Town were a bit out of luck when a left-footed drive from Pacey cannoned off the referee and went for a goal kick. Next, Radford was in action, catching a header by Fleming from a centre from the right.

The Rovers' defence, big and

strong though it was, was in no shape to withstand the Town forward line, for in the 18th minute ASHWORTH put them two up with a first-time shot from a centre by Clarke. Radford was probably unsighted because he dived too late and the ball went into the corner of the net.

There was little sign of a Rovers revival and indeed they had to fight hard to prevent more goals by the Town.

It was typical of the way things go when a team is struggling that a great drive from 20 yards by Jones looked a goal all the way yet the ball cannoned off the inside of the far post and came back into play.

That was a slice of bad luck for the Rovers who were badly in need of something to build up their confidence again.

CHANCES MISSED

Under pressure the Bristol defence was completely undependable, and there could have been another goal when Turner sent away Clarke, who had switched temporarily with Fleming.

Had Clarke been able to get a little more pace behind his centre it might have been a goal, and even so a miskick put the Rovers in jeopardy until the ball was scrambled away.

Fleming wasted a chance by carelessness in finishing. He put the ball behind after Pacey, who was distributing the ball well, had sent him away with a clear course.

Although the Rovers were fighting hard, they were not making much impression on the Town defence and they might have been in further trouble if Fleming had got through his centre as he should have done, because a couple of Town forwards were hovering around waiting for the pass.

Morton gave away a corner to stop Jones, who went out to take it, and McNally headed clear without much trouble.

A possible chance of improving their situation fell to Bradford following a free kick for a foul on Jones, but his shot hit a defender and fell into Standen's hands.

CAUGHT BY SURPRISE

Towards half-time Rovers were having more of the play without showing much idea of creating the scoring openings they needed so badly.

A couple of minutes from half-time Bramwell came racing up to take a short corner from Fleming and caught the Rovers' defence by surprise, but unfortunately the left-back's shot was inaccurate and the ball whistled past the far post. Half-time:

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First real effort of the second-half came from Bristol when Jones made a lot of ground down the inside right position after having beaten Bramwell, and with three Town defenders closing in on him made a fast centre which Standen caught as he fell.

A too-short pass by Groves that Sykes intercepted put the Rovers on the attack again but the finishing was weak and Standen easily emerged and caught the ball.

From a free-kick, McNally was so close with his shot that it struck the angle bar on the outside of the netting.

Fleming ran in the wrong direction when a pass by Bramwell, if he had taken possession of it as he should, would have left him with a clear run to goal.

NOTHING BUT RUGGEDNESS

There never seemed much danger to the Town's lead, because Rovers had little beyond ruggedness to commend them. Play deteriorated into a mere

How The Goals Came

TURNER for Luton after 3 minutes.
ASHWORTH for Luton after 18 minutes.

scramble until Jones, who at least was taking a good position, again found an open space only to make his centre straight to the feet of Kelly.

Turner put the ball firmly in the back of the Rovers' net from a through pass by Pacey, but before the ball left his foot the referee's whistle was going for offside.

A similar fate befell the Rovers almost immediately when Jones raced on to the ball and smacked it on the volley into the back of



ALEC ASHWORTH
His first-time shot put the Town two up in 18 minutes.

the net only to find the linesman's flag firmly against him for offside.

It looked a closer decision than the one against Turner, but the Rovers appealed in vain.

Just about the best scoring effort so far this half came from Fleming who came through boldly and shot a foot wide from the penalty area with Radford diving desperately.

Radford had atoned in some measure for his early mistake



with a fine save from Turner, who eluded two defenders to give himself a shot at goal, and the ball went just round the post.

From the corner Pacey headed in deliberately and Ashworth standing almost on the goal line tried to hook it in, but only succeeded in sending it the wrong side of the post.

DETERMINED ATTACK

In a determined raid, mistakes by Bramwell and Morton helped on Rovers who finally had a free kick 10 yards outside the penalty

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LUTON TOWN				
Right				Left
	McNally		Bramwell	
	Morton	Kelly	Groves	
Clarke	Ashworth	Turner	Pacey	Fleming
Referee: O K. J. Seddon (Southport)				
Hooper	Jones	Bradford	Sykes	Jarman
	Mabbutt	Davis	Bumpstead	
	Frowen		Hillard	
		Radford		
Left	BRISTOL ROVERS			Right

area. Hooper came in to take it but was well off the beam with a shot that rose a couple of yards too high.

So desperate were the Rovers now that Hilliard came right through from right-back and in fact should have scored from an angle but Standen got his body in the way and smothered the ball.

The Town came back in a full-scale attack in which Turner had two shots beaten down. One from Fleming suffered a similar



fate and then Turner again found the bunched defenders in his way when he blazed away at goal.

An awkward bounce by the light ball spoiled a chance for Turner, who hooked the ball just over after it had come across accurately from Ashworth.

Rovers had not given up completely, and Standen saved at the outside angle of bar and post from Sykes. In the main, though, the Town defence were not much troubled, and they were going on holding their lead quite comfortably.

Then Bumpstead tried a long one that Standen pulled down quite easily.

After receiving a lucky cannon off a defender, Ashworth was then unfortunate with a low shot that must have scraped the outside of the post with Radford down on hands and knees.

EVERYTHING THROWN IN

Although the Rovers were now trying to throw everything into attack for a desperate effort, it was the Town who were more dangerous in their breakaway, and Pacey with a peculiar sort of shot dropped the ball just over the bar.

For all their efforts, the Rovers did not look like improving their desperate situation and again Radford was in action pulling down a shot by Fleming.

With about three minutes to go Rovers had a free kick on the angle outside the penalty area and Jones placed it well but McNally was on hand to clear promptly.

With a just a minute remaining, Bumpstead missed the chance of a lifetime from rather less than six yards when he put the ball well over the bar with Standen well out of position. Result:

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