

# Gordon Turner Gets Only Goal In Town Win

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## DEFENCES DOMINATE OPENING MATCH

By CHILTERN  
LUTON TOWN 1, WALSALL 0

THERE was no evidence of any resurgence of enthusiasm at Kenilworth-road this afternoon, when the Town staged their first match of the season against Walsall, their companions in relegation. Ten minutes before kick-off time I doubt whether there were 5,000 on the ground on a gusty threatening sort of afternoon. The heavy rain we have had recently had obviously been good for the pitch, which was a brilliant green, well-grassed all over and looking almost good enough to stage a Test Match on.

The Town were as selected, with Gordon Fincham, formerly of Plymouth and Leicester, making his debut and also taking over the captaincy. The other newcomer was Gareth Salisbury, who was signed from Norwich City during the summer and who is a former Welsh Youth International. Bill Moore, the Walsall Manager, had hopes of making a dramatic last-minute signing and it turned out that his target was Graham Matthers, the Stoke City inside-forward, who played against the Town on one occasion. However, negotiations became stuck somewhere along the line and the deal has now been held over until Monday.

So, like the Town, Walsall basically had the same team as last season, with two exceptions. In goal was Malcolm White, and their outside-left was Jimmy Fell, formerly of Grimsby Town, Everton and Newcastle, who turned down a move to Luton during the summer.

By the time kick-off time arrived, the crowd had grown to between 7,000 and 8,000 and there



One of the "old brigade," Gordon Turner, had the distinction of scoring the Town's first goal of the season, in the 26th minute.

was a round of applause for Fincham as he came to the middle to take up with the Walsall skipper, McPherson.

### FINCHAM QUICKLY IN ACTION

Fincham won the toss and decided to defend the Oak-road end.

He was in action early, using his height to head away a couple of high crosses into the penalty area.

Walsall looked the more lively in the early stages, and the Town's first clear-cut rival, inspired by Turner, and carried on by Salisbury, found Davies marginally offside. Fine work by Turner sent away Walden, whose centre struck McPherson, but the Town kept up the pressure, which ended when Daniel tried a long shot with which White had no trouble at all.

A long cross into the penalty area by Daniel led to Davies beating McPherson in the jump for the ball, which landed in the hands of White, but the referee decided that the centre-forward had been guilty of obstruction.

A free kick for a foul by Hodgkisson on Pacey was beautifully landed at the feet of Walden by Fincham, but he dallied and was robbed. Walsall were relying to a marked extent on the offside trap, and again Davies found the decision going against him as he reached the ball in the air.

### WALSALL GOAL THREATENED

Biggest threat to the Walsall goal came when Walden at last did the right thing, going on the outside of Sharples, and making a centre that White just managed to push wide of the oncoming Jardine.

Offside tactics were bothering the Town a lot and, in fact, causing a disruption of their front line, and Walsall were persistent in using them.

Just about the first direct shot to reach either goalkeeper came from the foot of Fell after 12 minutes, but was from such long range that it did not bother Baynham.

Then came a brilliant piece of work by Davies that brought down the house. Receiving a short pass by Morton, he beat two opponents in the narrowest of spaces before swinging away at

## TEAMS

**LUTON TOWN:** Baynham; Daniel, Brantwell; Morton, Fincham, Pacey; Walden, Turner, Davies; Salisbury, Jardine.  
**WALSALL:** White; Palin, Sharples; Dudley, McPherson, Wilks; Meek, Hodgkisson, Foster, Newton, Fell.  
Referee—S. Yates, Bristol.

area. It took a flying dive by White to prevent a spectacular goal.

### THE GAME LIVES UP

Play was beginning to liven up, and Baynham made a well-judged save from a header by Newton, following a centre by Fell.

Determined Davies, who was being closely marked, charged his way through a wall of defenders to challenge a surprised White, who just managed to scramble the ball away and then looked for a free kick which was not forthcoming.

Offside continued to be the bane of the Town and it spoilt a fine movement which was sparked off by Morton.

Using his speed to good effect, Walden gained a corner off Sharples, and from this Jardine sent the ball in completely the wrong direction. The end of it was Pacey coming through strongly and hitting a shot through a crowd of players that went wide.

After a spell without much in the way of scoring attempts, Salisbury got his head to a corner by Walden, but White saved comfortably and in the first 25 minutes neither goalkeeper had been in real trouble.

In fact, both defences were pretty well on top of things, though a hole developed in the Town's rearguard when Foster bored a way through and Fincham missed his tackle, but Pacey cleared coolly.

### TURNER GIVES TOWN THE LEAD

With 26 minutes gone the Town took the lead through TURNER, after Davies had sent away Walden. Again the winger beat Sharples on the outside, and from his centre Turner, from near the edge of the penalty area, swung at the ball first-time and it went just inside the post, well wide of White, who was probably unsighted anyway.

Walsall had been most unimpressive in front of goal, but they came back with a more than usual threat, during which Baynham, one handed, misconnected with his punch and the ball bounced dangerously in front of goal until it was scrambled

away. As the ball came upfield Salisbury was flattened by a charge in the back by Sharples, and there was a hold-up while he was attended to. Another charge in the back, and a blatant one, when McPherson challenged Davies, was allowed to pass by the referee, who received some hard words from the crowd.

### WALSALL PLAYER RECEIVES WARNING

Some of the Walsall tackling was unwhimsical, and Palin was spoken to by the referee for pulling down Jardine from behind.

Davies took just too long to control the bouncing ball after Jardine had swept it into the goal-mouth and Walsall, who were under some sustained pressure at this stage, survived at the expense of a corner. Salisbury turned the ball into the hands of White after Walden had sent him away. And, again, McPherson got away with a blatant push in the back on Davies, who the referee standing quite close.

Towards half-time, there was some consequential sort of play, with neither team holding much threat and defences continuing to be on top. Then the Town did exert some pressure down their left flank, but Jardine finished poorly. Next Walsall had a dose of their own medicine when Newton was caught well offside.

Almost on half-time, Salisbury nearly tripped in to increase the lead from a short Turner pass and White just managed to smother the ball. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN ..... 1  
WALSALL ..... 0

First incident of the second half was a reasonably narrow escape for the Town, when a centre from the right was headed over the top by Foster, with Baynham not very well placed. Before play could start, there was a stoppage while Hodgkisson had attention to a leg injury received in the play leading up to the header, and he resumed with a heavy limp.

### HODGKISSON RECEIVES TREATMENT

Then Hodgkisson came off for further repairs on the training bench, yet Walsall's ten men managed to throw the Town back on the defensive. Hodgkisson was soon back, though with his mobility impaired. A well-judged catch by Baynham kept out a long, swinging centre from Fell, and then Walden, who had not been brought much into the game this half, was sent away by Turner, and White prevented a certain goal by just getting a hand to the ball to prevent it going to the head of the oncoming Davies.

It was still a pretty dour battle with defences continuing to hold the upper hand.

Turner got the ball into the net again after Walden had cut into the middle, but seconds before, the linesman had signalled offside and there was no possible doubt about the correctness of the decision.

Hodgkisson, who was now much of a passenger, changed places with Meek and then there was a sparkling move on the Town right wing, with Turner sending away Walden, racing in for the return pass and going within a fraction of collecting it before he was bowled over.

### FELL HITS THE POST

Baynham had to race out to the edge of the penalty area to kick away after Foster had had the better of a tussle with Fincham, but in the main, defensive

## How The Goals Came

TURNER for Luton after 26 minutes.

faults were few and far between. The Town were desperately lucky when Fell produced a snap shot that was going away from Baynham all the time, and the ball hit the foot of the post to rebound into play, and it was quick thinking from Morton pushing the ball for a corner that deprived Foster of making the most of the chance. Straight from this, the Town swept to the other end, and Salisbury looked a possible scorer from a pass by Davies, but the ball was scrambled away before he could get a kick.

Stretching, and left-footed, Turner shot over the bar from a pass by Walden as the Town began a more sustained bout of pressure, but offside was still a big handicap to them, and Walsall were beginning to be caught in a similar trap, too.

The Town's lead still hung by a slender thread, but Jardine should have gone closer to increasing it than he did when Davies sent him through and, from a severe angle, he made a shot that seemed to me to be going wide. White made sure by pushing the ball for a corner, which Davies, jumping high, met with his head, and the tall White reached the ball as it looked like going under the bar.

Fell's shooting held the most threat to the Town and a phin driver was finger-tipped by Baynham for a corner, which the

goalkeeper pulled down brilliantly.

A long solo run by Turner, which took him inside the penalty area in the face of continued challenges, deserved a rather better fate than for the ball to have been cleared for a corner, which was cleared comfortably. Hodgkisson, now recovered, made an opening for Foster, whose shot flew straight at Baynham.

If anything, the hard-working Walsall team were looking the more dangerous at this juncture, and Baynham had to pull down a long shot by Sharples and evade a challenge from Foster in the same movement.

There was a terrific scrummage in the Walsall goalmouth when Pacey pushed the ball through and the upshot was a corner. White, however, was dealing splendidly with high crosses and he pulled down Jardine's flighted kick without any trouble at all.

There had been few signs of panic in the Walsall defence, but one developed when Jardine sliced the ball into the goalmouth and McPherson needlessly kicked behind almost out of the hands of White, who had come out to intercept. Then Davies, sent away down the left wing by Salisbury, hit the side netting just wide of the near post with a rising centre, and again offside cropped up against both Turner and Davies after Morton lobbed the ball into the goalmouth.

### McPHERSON IS CARRIED OFF

McPherson received a facial injury in a heading duel with Davies and there was a hold-up while he recovered. Apparently it was serious, because a stretcher was sent for and the centre-half was carried off. There were four minutes to go when that happened. Palin

moved to centre-half and Meek came back to right-back.

Walsall made one or two brave bids for an equaliser, but were driven back by the determined Town defence, and then, as the Town swung into the attack again, the referee over-ruled a decision by a linesman that Salisbury had committed a foul. Instead, he waved on play and this nearly brought a second goal, because Walden nearly got right through. Upshot of it was a free-kick to Walsall on almost the dead-ball line and some talking too by the referee to a couple of Walsall defenders, and afterwards he had a word with Davies.

With only second left, Pacey hurt his right knee and there was yet another hold-up while Frank King gave him some massage. He was able to continue. Result:

LUTON TOWN ..... 1  
WALSALL ..... 0