Rourke Gets Hat-Trick To Shatter Rovers

TOWN SPARKLE IN BATTLE TO BEAT DROP

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 4, BRISTOL ROVERS 2

AFTER all, despite optimistic hopes yesterday, the Town were without their young centre-half Graham Caleb and inside-right Tommy McKechnie for their vital meeting with Bristol Rovers at Kenilworth-road this afternoon. Neither had recovered from the leg injury he received at Nottingham

on Thursday.

This paved the way for the return of the Town's two longest-serving players, Bob Morton and Gordon Turner.

Morton came in at right-half, Dave Pacey switching to centre-half for the first time this season. This is a position which has always been a sort of secondary choice for him, because of his great ability in the air.

McKechnie's absence brought back Turner, who is still the Town's leading scorer this season, and probably this fact would please a section of the supporters who had been critical recently of McKechnie's play.

Rovers, beafen by the only goal at Bournemouth yesterday and in the words of their manager, Bert Tann, they played badly—re-arranged their half-back line.

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Rovers, beaten by the only goal at Bournemouth yesterday—and in the words of their goals lead disappear after 24 minutes. The forerunner of it was the referee's getting into a tangle near the centre line when manager, Bert Tann, they played badly—re-arranged their half-back line.

Mabbutt, who had to stand down yesterday because of stomach trouble, came back, and Davis, who replaced him, switched to centre-half.

In turn, Stene, who has been occupying that position for the countying that position for the local five weeks, went to right.

When the teams lined up

In turn, Stone, who has been occupying that position for the last five weeks, went to right-half in place of Oldfield, who was omitted.

was omitted.

The pitch had dried up very well after the rain earlier in the week, but it was a grey, cheerless sort of afternoon.

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FOLLOWING.
FROM BRISTOL.

This was an absolutely vital match for the Town in their struggle to retain their status, but even so, the attendance at the start was only between 5,000 and 6,000, and they included quite a following from Bristol.

In the first minute there was a smart raid begun by Reid, carried by Turner, and at the end of the story, Walden, who had clearly be story, Walden, who had clearly story, who had got himself into an opposite the story, who had got himself into an opposite the story, which makes the story of the sto

hard to overcome their disastrous start the same time, the Town with Pacey covering well in the middle, were showing a determind take on defence, the town were showing themselves willing to have a crack at goal whenever the opportunity occurred, encouraged, no doubt, by Hall's failure o stop O'Rourke's second goal.

Turner had a go from similar Turner had a po from similar Turner had a go from similar the way, and then there was stoppage while Biggs received attention for an injury which was not serious.

O'ROURKE for Luton after O'ROURKE for Luton after 4 minutes
BIGGS for Bristol Rovers
after 24 minutes.
TURNER for Luton after

BIGGS (penalty) for Bristol Rovers after 73 minutes. O'ROURKE for Luton after

Gordon Turner notched a third goal for the Town from a free kick after 38 minutes,

McBain had lifted the ball high

How The Goals Came

Came

Characteristics of Days Still fight from the Rovers, and Whittaker did well ocome across to tackle when Stone was setting, himself for a long-range drive.

NEARLY ANOTHER GOAL FOR TOWN

Reid, when the Town next attacked, was pulled down heavily by Hillard, and Whittaker very nearly scored from the free kick, which flew in just near the post. Hall only just managed to push it out, and Hillard booted the ball out of play.

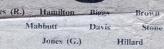
Free kicks had become frequent, and there was another when Lownds milled down Brown but Baynham easily saved Bigs's header.

McBain bad lifted the ball high into the goalmouth.

BRILLIANT RUN
BY WHITTAKER

A brilliant run by Whittaker, who beat three men, raised hopes, but his final pass to O'Rourke was pluck out of the air a cross by





Hall

BRISTOL ROVERS

who had got himselt into an onespace, was able to jump high and
head the bail decisively wide of
Hall's left side.

Rovers him some difficulty and
had drive by Jarman, and the
rebound was eagerly booted away
by Lowndes.

Straight from this the Town
went away and O'ROURKE
scored again in the fount minute.

Obviously, the whole Rovers
defence was expecting him to pass
to, the unnarked Walden, but
instead the centre-forward went
the other way, and from 20 yards
shot for goald to have 'the bail
Covered but it definitely moved
in flight so that all he could do
was to deflect it and it ran into
the net off the inside of a post.

So the Town were cock-a-hoop
with two goals from their young
centre-forward before Rovers had
really settled down to their job.

There could have been a reply
by the Rovers, because Jones
(R) laid on an opening for
Biggs, who, however, found
that bouncing awkwardly, and
Baynham was able 10 pick it
up off the bounce.

Rovers were not out of his
game by any means, and Baynham stopped a low drive from
Brown, but there was swill a
punchy look about the Town at
tack, and Turner taking aim
from just ous de the penalty
area, saw his shot deflected for
a corner.

PLAY SETTLES

DOWN EVENLY

Play setiled down on an eventenor, with Rovers having a datermined face in defence.

At the other end,
At the other

stoppage while Biggs received attention for an injury which was not serious.

The next incident was a shot from Jones (R,) which Baynham saved at full-length.

There was nearly another goal to the Town, because O'Rourke was left with a clear run in from an apile when Walden put him through. He shot for the far forught whose hard cross shot beat Hall completely, but unfortunately harassing Davis and Hillard after



John O'Rourke gave Town a brilliant start in their vital clash with Bristol Rovers by notching with Bristol Rovers by notching the most play with.

There was reby notching a brief with a 20-yards and Baynham pulled and Bay

powerful drive.

Turner got a lucky bounce of the ball on the deadline before pulling it across in the direction of O'Rourke, who would been left with a "stiter" had not Davis managed to intervene.

There was no doubt when brilliant work by Whittaker brought a centre from him from which Reid headed the ball page, after Morton-had begun it, squarely against the bar, Turner, and the centre-forward left Hall squarely against the bar. Turner, and the centre-forward left Hall

he made his tackle Hamilton went down full length.

There were protests which availed nothing, as they seldom do, and BIGGS made no mistake from the spot, gesting Baynham going the wrong way as he smashed the ball into the net. This, of course, made it a completely different story from the Town's point of view. They had the most slender of margins to play with.

There was renewed activity at their end when a corner came, and Baynham pulled down a header by Biggs from under the bar.

Lownds stuck out a speculative foot, in the right spot as it.

waiting for the rebound, could do no more than turn the br? into the hands of Hall, who also saved from the same player a minute later.

PENALTY GOAL FOR ROVERS

We have a proper to contain fairly comfortably and there were one or two close things at the Rovers end.

In the closing minutes, Rovers edoubled their efforts, but the own defence, in a confident rame of mind again, covered up well.

LUTON TOWN

BRISTOL ROVERS 2