

# Victory well earned in close game

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS 0

IT needed loyalty of a high order to get fans to rain-drenched Kenilworth Road this afternoon, especially after the tawdry performance the Town put up when they were last at home.

Six hours of continuous rain spoilt any hope there might have been of a reasonable attendance, and although the rain eased off shortly before kick-off time, it was too late to be of benefit.

Queen's Park Rangers, the visitors, brought quite a following. They congregated under the Bobbers' stand almost on the centre line and showed vividly their blue and white favours.

In view of the amount of rain, the pitch did not look at all bad, but obviously it was very soft and would cut up badly.

The Rangers, who had named six forwards, in the end left out Stuart Leary, of whom their trainer said before the match, "He is not feeling too well."

On his past record against the Town it was probably just as well, because he has a habit of putting a jinx on them.

So the forward line remained the same as that beaten 8-1 at Mansfield on Monday, but there were three defensive changes.

Conversely, the Town's alterations were in attack. Riddick and Harber being included in place of McKechnie and Rioch, neither of whom was fit.

**LUTON TOWN:** Tinsley; Barton, Jardine; Gibson, Fincham, Reid; Pleat, Riddick, O'Rourke, Phillips, Harber.

**Q.P.R.:** Springett; Brady (P.), Taylor; Hazell, Brady (R.), Keen; Morgan (I.), Bedford, McAdams, Collins, Morgan (R.).

**Referee:** Mr. H. P. Hackney, of Barnsley.

The Town defended the heavier Oak Road end, which was probably just as well in view of the prevailing conditions, because this looked like becoming a complete mud heap in a very short time.

In the first minute, a mistake by Fincham — possibly attributable to the state of the going — presented McAdams with a chance, but he shot over.

## SNAP CHANCE FOR O'ROURKE

When the Town had a turn following a free kick for a foul on Phillips, O'Rourke received a snap opportunity following good work by Riddick and Pleat. He needed to jab at the ball first time, and it went perhaps a yard wide.

That shooting from a reasonable range would pay off was proved by Roger Morgan, who took the ball right up to Barton before letting drive. Had he been fractionally nearer the target, Tinsley, vainly trying to get across in the mud, would have been beaten.

A foul by R. Bradie on Pleat gave the Town a free kick which the winger placed just too high for Riddick, who jumped optimistically.

## A GOAL FOR THE TOWN

Then, after ten minutes, the Town took the lead with a surprise goal by PLEAT after being sent away with a perfectly judged pass by Riddick. Without wasting time, Pleat hit the ball into the goal-mouth, possibly with the idea of making a centre, but the ball seemed to swerve or dip, baffled Springett completely, and went into the net off the inside of the far post.

Rangers hit back, and after Collins had had attention for a slight injury, they forced two corners on the right, the second of which was well pulled down by Tinsley.

For a time, there were few goalworthy efforts, but Gibson laid on a shooting opportunity for O'Rourke, who shot from quite reasonable range without troubling Springett unduly.

Then, there was a tense



Pleat put the Town ahead with a speculative shot after ten minutes.

moment at the Town end when Roger Morgan crossed the ball low and Fincham slithered in the mud to get a boot to it. To the relief of everyone, it went for a corner, which was followed by another.

This was cleared by Phillips, who so far had been more prominent in defence than in attack.

## RIDDICK TESTS SPRINGETT

Town's best effort for some time came from Riddick—a first-time drive from the edge of the penalty area. Springett went full length at the foot of the post and only just managed to clear the ball for a corner kick, from which Riddick put the ball into the goalkeeper's hands.

Generally speaking, the Town were looking the more impressive but, even so, Rangers were having their chances, and Tinsley, some way out of his goal, pulled down comfortably a drive by Bedford.

Showing more determination than has been the case, the Town continued to worry the Rangers' defence, and after O'Rourke had shot inches wide, there seemed a reasonable case for a penalty when Taylor handled inside the area.

It was from their right wing that the Town were most threatening, and the persistence of Riddick harassed R. Brady into a mistake, but when the ball broke loose, Gibson was well off target.

## NARROW ESCAPE FOR TOWN

There was a narrow escape for the town when the lively Roger Morgan again shot from longish range and the ball swung inches wide of the far post as Tinsley dived desperately.

There was not much in it now, with both defences coping reasonably well.

Rangers, however, were beginning to take more of a grip in midfield, and were containing the Town forwards, who were not being helped by some indifferent distribution from behind.

In the middle of the field the ball was tending to stick in the mud, which did not help the quality of the football, and understandably there was a lot of scrappy play.

Towards half-time, the Town pressed and Springett did well to pull down a centre from Pleat. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN ..... 1  
QPR ..... 0

Town resumed with a strong raid but Pleat finished by scooping the ball wide.

Rangers retaliated, and Ivor

Morgan forced Tinsley to his knees.

For a time the up and down play continued. Phillips forced a corner that was not well placed by Harber. In fact, Rangers' packed defence coped fairly easily, though Taylor invited disaster with a suicidal short pass inside his own penalty area.

Generally speaking, the Town were moving more crisply in midfield, and Reid was unlucky with a long-range shot from a pass from Gibson that went inches wide of the post with Springett sprawling in the mud.

## TOWN GET ON TOP

Harber next raced past two opponents, enabling O'Rourke to shoot from an acute angle. The ball rebounded and the centre-forward saw his shot kicked off the goal-line by Taylor. The pressure ended with Pleat shooting narrowly wide.

At this stage, the Town were on top and playing with a good deal more confidence than we have seen for some time. A chance went astray when O'Rourke suddenly flicked the ball to Pleat, who was in the inside-left position and Pleat, however, slipped on the greasy surface just he was shaping for a break through. Harber forced Springett to pull down a high lob with O'Rourke in close attendance, and then the goalkeeper recovered quickly to deal with a header by Riddick.

## PLEAT NEARLY DOES IT AGAIN

Pleat, following a good clearance out of defence by Reid, nearly repeated his first half effort with a deceptive lob that looked like creeping under the bar, but Springett cleared it at the last moment, and from the corner Riddick headed narrowly wide.

Rangers could never be counted out of this game, because their sharp breaks out of defence were dangerous, and one centre went just too high with Tinsley struggling.

A sudden spurt by Phillips, who had been having a quiet time, brought a full scale raid on the Rangers' goal, at the end of which Pleat brought Springett full-length.

Then, in a quick raid, Rangers came very close to equalising, and should have done

so, after Fincham had made a casual tackle which misfired. Bedford crossed the ball to McAdams, who, from point blank range and off balance, could do no more than head the ball too high.

## FINE MOVE BY PHILLIPS

After a period in which the Rangers had more of the play without looking dangerous, the Town suddenly made ground through Harber, and Phillips produced a fine cross-field pass to Pleat. He centred perfectly, but O'Rourke headed just over, and was injured in the process. He collided with R. Brady, but was soon all right again.

This was followed by an attack by the Rangers in which McAdams caused Tinsley to push the ball for

## 'MATCH OFF' RUMOUR

BY CHILTERN

Secretary Bob Read-head told me that he had received a report that someone at Midland Road station was telling people coming off trains that the Town's match was off and that he had put the matter in the hands of the Police.

A station spokesman denied that any member of the staff was responsible.

a corner, although I thought that anyway it was going for a goal kick. Tinsley, however, made a cat-like leap and pulled down the ball in spectacular fashion.

## CLOSE CALL FOR THE RANGERS

From the clearance, Pleat made a long dribble down the muddy middle, and in the end was forced to pass to Harber. The winger was partly covered, but earned a corner kick. Fincham came up and reached the ball with his head, but it skidded behind him without enough force to put it over the goal-line.

Harber was pulled down about five yards outside the penalty area. Before the free kick could be taken Harber had to have the mud sponged out of his eyes, and Hazell also needed similar treatment.

The Town's lead was too slender for comfort, even though there was not a lethal quality about most of the Rangers' raids. It was as well that Fincham was in position to head away when Bedford made a strong centre.

## PHILLIPS SHOOTS FROM 30 YARDS

Then, for once in a while, we saw Phillips shoot from about 30 yards, but unfortunately, he was a yard or so wide.

Conditions were difficult, to say the least, and almost every player on the field was carrying a thick coating of mud.

A long-range shot by Roger Morgan caused Tinsley to dive to make a dramatic save, showing that the Town's

## How The Goals Came

PLEAT for Luton after 10 minutes.  
PHILLIPS for Luton after 88 minutes.

position at this stage was not any too tenable.

In attack, the Town were the more constructive, and Harber, lively this half, laid on a chance for Phillips, but the inside man was too slow to accept it.

A badly placed free kick by Gibson put the Rangers back on the attack, but the right-half atoned by making a clearance.

Then, he came into the picture with a long cross pass to Harber, from whose centre Riddick was tackled just as he was shaping to shoot.

A cross by Harber looked promising, but Phillips was just offside.

## PHILLIPS CLINCHES THE ISSUE

A well-placed free kick by Fincham that went to Pleat kept the Town on the attack, and had the necessary effect at this stage of keeping the ball at the Rangers' end.

In the event, it brought a goal to the Town, because Pleat forced a corner and PHILLIPS went high above anyone else to head the ball past Springett and make things safe for the Town with only two minutes to go.

With seconds remaining, Phillips raced through a gap in the Rangers' defence and was frustrated only by Springett's dive, and sent the ball over.

Result:  
LUTON TOWN ..... 2  
Q.P.R. .... 0