

TOWN GET TWO IN FOUR MINUTES TO LAND THE POINTS

Halifax well beaten

2741 by keen attack

20-8-66

By ONLOOKER

LUTON TOWN 2, HALIFAX TOWN 0

LUTON TOWN raced into a commanding lead with two goals in four minutes at the start of the second half of their opening match of the season, against Halifax Town, at Kenilworth Road, this afternoon.

It was a welcome transformation, for Town's attack had been sadly out of joint in a goalless first half, with Pleat pursuing a lone role as striker.

The change in Town's fortunes came when Riddick and Rioch moved up to add weight to the attack. Once ahead, Town rarely looked in danger, Halifax showing little sign of finishing power.

Despite the early sunshine, which faded a bit just before the kick-off, the terraces filled slowly. Many spectators were in shirt sleeves and summer dresses.

Neither side showed any change from that selected originally.

The Town kicked off and went straight on to the attack, but a thorough ball to Riddick was smartly cleared by a wall of Halifax defenders.

Halifax replied briefly, and then Riddick, who was lying deep, as predicted, sent the ball through the middle, presumably for Rioch, but it was easily taken by goalkeeper White.

Good work by Thomson set the Town on the attack again.

shot from just outside the area.

At this stage, Halifax were doing more of the attacking but without looking dangerous. Town's build up was just not operating satisfactorily.

Halifax won another corner on the left. Taylor took the kick well enough, but the ball was cleared safely. Still Luton could not get away, and Whittaker had now come back to help Riddick in the midfield build-up.

Pleat, who had now gone into the centre-forward position, was about the only Luton forward upfield, and it was difficult to see why the Town should be adopting such extreme defensive measures against a side which was showing such little power in finishing.

TOWN FORWARDS IN STICKY PATCH

The Town forwards were going through a very sticky patch indeed. Just nothing was coming from them on the Halifax side of the halfway line.

Read pulled off a comfortable save from a speculative Halifax shot, and then, at the other end, White had to come out to take a cross shot, the first that had troubled him for some time.

Another corner on the left to Halifax went over to Cliff, but Riddick came clear with the ball, and then moved upfield fast for another pass, which came to grief against the strong Halifax rearguard.

Thomson, trying to drive his team on, took the ball upfield and put over a high centre which Riddick failed to reach. The ball went to Pleat, but he was beaten by Russell.

Whittaker, back in defence, brought the ball through cleverly and cracked it up to Pleat — the only player upfield — but he was just offside.

Halifax were still looking slightly the more dangerous, and Lee sent Taylor through on the left, but Read was again there to save his shot competently.

MORE URGENCY NOW FROM TOWN

King flashed into the game for the first time with an astute pass to Pleat in the inside-right position, and White could only push the ball away with his leg.

Luton were showing a bit more urgency, and Slough came up to win a corner on the right. Pleat took it well, but no Luton forward was in a position to connect.

Pleat appeared to be ploughing a lone furrow down the middle, and he was again beaten by numbers when Whittaker tried to find him.

However, Pleat was there to win a corner on the left shortly afterwards, which Whittaker took, and Jardine came up to make the Town's best shot of the match, the ball crashing narrowly wide along the ground.

Gaining in confidence, the Town kept up the pressure, but then Halifax broke clear, and centre-half Clarke moved up dangerously to make a centre across goal to Cliff, who shot just wide of a post.

Whittaker shot high and wide in the next Town attack, and there was still the feeling that the urgency of the start of the new season had not

Taylor rounded him on the outside, but the Town full-back recovered quickly to give away a corner kick which was cleared. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 0
HALIFAX 0

The Town, obviously making up for their first-half slouch, struck immediately at the start of the second half.

Gerry KING gave them the lead straight from the kick-off after good work by Whittaker. White had no chance with King's rising shot into the roof of the net.

Now we saw Rioch and Riddick keeping Pleat company in the front line, and this extra power was certainly bringing dividends, for in the 49th minute Town were two up. The goal followed a free-kick on the halfway line when RIOCH turned in a centre by Pleat.

This was a complete turn of events as far as the Town were concerned, and they were now looking a much better proposition.

MORE URGENCY IN TOWN'S PLAY NOW

Certainly there was more urgency about Town's play. They won a free kick when Pleat was fouled, and from it Slough came up to have a good long-range effort which tested White.

Halifax came away through Taylor, but he was caught off-side.

In the next Town raid, Pleat sent Rioch away in promising style, and his pass to Thomson, who had moved up, went just wide of the post.

Halifax were striving hard to get back into the game, and Atkins moved through dangerously and passed to Smith, the winger's shot well-taken by Read.

Then came Thomson, prompting another Luton attack, but it broke down when King failed to gather a pass in the face of a challenge.

PLEAT HARASSES HALIFAX

Pleat caused some consternation in the Halifax defence with a header into the middle which Holt put behind for a corner.

From this, there was another corner for the Town, but eventually Atkins came away, only to make a bad pass out to Lee. However, Halifax kept possession, and Lee put the ball to the Town penalty area, where it was cleared by Jardine.

Rioch plugged the ball up the middle intending it for Riddick, but the centre-forward was beaten by numbers, and White cleared.

Halifax then spelled danger down the right when a pass by Wooler to Taylor, who had switched wings, finished with a good centre from the winger which Read blocked with difficulty.

Halifax were now striving hard to make up for those lapses just after the interval, and Lee was the next to test the Luton goalkeeper in a spell of heavy pressure.

In a determined attack, Luton won a free-kick for hands, and Rivers raced upfield to take it. White moved

to push the ball for a



Bruce Rioch got Town's second goal in the 49th minute after good work by Pleat.

corner, and eventually it was cleared by Leed.

However, the respite for the Halifax goal was short-lived only for Thomson to waste a throw-in near a corner by sending the ball into the side-netting.

Whittaker then did well to dispossess Smith, but failed with his final shot. Town were gaining more of the upper hand as the second half progressed.

However, there was a shock for them when Atkins found Russell in an open space, and Read had to pull off a good save to prevent his shot entering the net.

There was an equally sharp break at the other end. Whittaker broke clear to centre to Pleat, but his shot went just wide of the mark.

The Town were well in command, and Pickering just managed to push back to the

goalkeeper a ball from King, which Pleat was running on to in a good scoring position.

Then Rioch made a lot of ground before shooting against the legs of Smith.

Rioch kept Town's attack moving with a pass to Riddick, and White had to move out smartly to stop the return ball from going to the Luton centre-forward.

Rioch was next just wide of the mark as he tried to add to Town's lead.

LET OFF FOR HALIFAX

Read, in almost disdainful fashion, gathered a shot from Taylor from a short pass from Atkins as Halifax tried desperately to cut their arrears.

Then the Yorkshiremen received a great let-off after Pleat had cleverly beaten two men inside the area from a pass by Whittaker. White finally gave away a corner in saving Pleat's shot.

Riddick won a corner for the Town on the right which Slough came up to take. Rioch met it but his shot rebounded off Cliff for another corner. This was taken by Whittaker, and there were appeals from the crowd for hands by Lee just inside the area, but the referee ignored them.

Town gained a free-kick for a foul on Pleat, and once again the Halifax defence found itself in trouble, but in the end Atkins emerged with the ball.

Rioch had to receive attention after colliding with White in the next Luton raid. The game restarted with a bounce up on the halfway line, and from it Halifax came away through Cliff, but Wooler was beaten by Read to his pass.

The Town move into attack again, and Whittaker slipped into the middle to head a

How the goals came

KING for Luton after 46 minutes.

RIOCH for Luton after 49 minutes

center from Slough, but the goalkeeper saved.

With time running out, Halifax had now lost a lot of their urgency, and Town were dictating the way things went.

A long ball by Thomson was headed away by Holt, and in a last Halifax fling Smith brought Read into action with a half-hearted deflection.

King was brought down by Lee as he attempted to make ground from a pass by Whittaker, and then the Town were within an ace of a third goal when Whittaker pushed the ball into the centre for Pleat, but his shot was cleared off the line for a corner.

The Town again went close, Whittaker's centre being almost rushed in by Riddick.

As play went into injury time, Town kept on attacking, with Rioch and Whittaker combining well on left.

Result: LUTON 2
HALIFAX 0

THE TEAMS

LUTON TOWN: Read; Slough, Jardine; Thomson, Rivers, Moore; Pleat, King, Riddick, Rioch, Whittaker. Substitute: Thear.

HALIFAX T: White; Russell, Holt, Pickering, Clarke, Smith, Lee (R); Cliff, Wooler, Atkins, Taylor. Substitute: Fidler.

Referee: E. T. Jennings, of Stourbridge.

and a back header by Rioch to Slough gave the Town a sharp opportunity which the full-back was too slow to take.

Play was a little scrappy in these opening stages, but the weather was unduly warm for soccer, and the players looked like having a gruelling start to the new season.

HALIFAX TEST TOWN'S DEFENCE

Halifax came back when Russell sent a speculative ball over to Wooler, who had drifted out towards the left wing, and it led to a corner. Read failed to gather the kick cleanly, but the ball was cleared in face of a challenge by Wooler.

The game in the opening stages seemed to lack urgency from both teams, though Rivers had to move smartly to cut off Taylor as Halifax broke away in determined fashion, and the centre-half conceded an indirect free kick just inside the area.

Then followed a period of midfield play, in which neither team gained an ascendancy. Rioch won a free-kick, but it was badly placed by Thomson.

Luton next won a corner on the right. Riddick got his head to Pleat's kick, but the ball was cleared, Jardine burst through, however, to put Town back on the attack, but the full-back ended by sending the ball wide.

Taylor tended to over-do the cleverness in working his way across the centre of the field in the next Halifax attack, and quickly ran into trouble.

The game at this stage was still a very scrappy affair, with neither side being able to gain a grip.

TOWN BUILD-UP NOT WORKING

Smith was presenting some danger to the Town with his wanderings upfield, and if his shooting had been better he must have profited by a long