

GIFT GOAL PUT THE TOWN OUT

Had all the play in first half

By ONLOOKER

Luton Town 1, Aldershot 2

LUTON TOWN made their exit from the League Cup in the first round replay at Kenilworth Road on Monday night, after a gift equaliser in the second half had revitalised Aldershot, and upset the confidence of the home defence.

However, the Town, who led by a 40th-minute goal from Gerry King, had enough chances in the first half, when they were well on top, to have won the game comfortably.

The turning point of the match came in the 56th minute, just after King had left the field to have an ankle injury attended to.

Aldershot, who had been doing more attacking in the second half, made a raid up-field. Riddick intercepted the ball and elected to make a back-pass. This was a tragic blunder as it turned out, because the ball did not carry, and with no Luton players near him, Howfield picked up the loose ball, made ground and shot against a post.

The ball came out to RAFFERTY who hammered it home for a goal from which the Town never recovered.

Although King returned hobbling, Luton at this time had lost the initiative, and Aldershot snatched a 75th-minute winner through a header by HOWARTH from a lobbed-through ball by Renwick.

This was an unfortunate set of circumstances for the Town after the way in which they had dictated play earlier on. In torrential rain, which was so heavy that it obscured the lines on one side of the field, so that the second half had to be held up for seven minutes while they were re-sanded, Luton had adopted the right tactics—shooting first time from any range, but sheer bad luck and some confident goal-keeping by Godfrey robbed them of a commanding lead.

RIOCH A POWER IN ATTACK

Rioch had been a power in the Luton attack in the early stages with some defence-splitting through-passes and some strong, first-time shooting.

Early on Godfrey was drawn right out of his goal in kicking away a through-ball by Rioch as Pleat raced in. Thomson was also doing a great deal to bolster up the attack, and there was panic in the Aldershot defence on one occasion when he came up the field to make a cross which Pleat just failed to reach with his head. The ball was returned across the goal where Walker scrambled away.

Thomson and Pleat were combining well, and from a through-pass by the former, Godfrey just managed to take the ball off the feet of Pleat before he could get in his shot

as Luton's relentless pressure continued.

King had two shots narrowly wide of the mark before he eventually put the Town in front in the 40th minute with a good header down into the net from a corner by Whittaker.

Almost on the interval the Town came close to increasing their lead when following a free-kick, Rioch moved up to hit a screaming drive which Godfrey just managed to save full-length at the expense of a corner.

None of the 4,832 crowd that braved the cloudburst, could have doubted that the Town would not consolidate their position in the second half.

However there came a transformation by Aldershot, with Maloy in the main-spring of their attack. Maloy brought Read into action early on with a good shot, and then Rafferty had the ball in the net from a pass by Howfield but was given off-side.

Luton were reduced to 10 men when King went down awkwardly, twisting an ankle in face of a challenge by Renwick, and was carried off the field to have attention behind the goal.

It was while he was off that the Town's fateful lapse in defence let in Howfield for Rafferty to grab the equaliser.

Read drew applause for turning a great drive by McAnearney over the top of the bar, but the Luton defence was generally none too certain and the ball was in the net again, this time from Howarth who was pulled up for off-side.

Pleat was fouled on the edge of the area as he was breaking through from a Whittaker pass, and a chance to right matters fell to the Town with a free kick. However Whittaker's luck was out on this occasion and although he beat the goalkeeper, his shot went just over the top.

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

ALDERSHOT Godfrey; Davies, Renwick; McAnearney, Walker, Dawes; Dodson, Howarth, Rafferty, Howfield, Maloy. Substitute: Cambell.

Referee: R. V. Spittle, Caister.

Attendance: 4,832.