

Crowd trouble

as Luton draw 2-2

VERDICT

A BOTTLE thrown by a spectator at a linesman in the second half did not detract from the merit of a match which was full of Christmas cheer.

Both teams launched prolonged attacks. The highlight of the 90 minutes was Rioch's great goal just before the interval.

Luton's forwards were given good service from both wings and the defence was well marshalled by the strong Branston.

For the first 15 minutes Luton looked as if they were going to give Barnsley a real hammering.

Luton's attack showed speed and guile as it weaved clever patterns across the turf, and they went close to scoring several times.

But after Barnsley's 19th minute goal Luton were on the worst end of things until Rioch scored a wonderful goal a minute before the interval.

A minute after the re-start Luton turned the tables when Ryan scored his first goal for the club with a smart header.

In the first half Moore and Branston were outstanding in Luton's defence and Ryan put in a lot of good running in the attack.

Despite some early rain the pitch was in perfect condition. Barnsley made one change, bringing in Peter Graham at Centre-forward instead of former Newcastle leader Barrie Thomas.

From the kick-off Luton caused a stir in the Barnsley goalmouth when Rioch broke down the left and centred across the face of the goal. It was only a hurried clearance by Winstanley that averted the danger.

A minute later Dougan got in another centre after good work by Ryan, but there were no Luton forwards within yards of Ironside, who had no trouble in catching the ball and booting it clear.

Barnsley's first real attack came when Graham just failed to get in his shot after being put clear by Taylor, who made a good run through the middle.

Well wide

Taylor again showed he could be a real danger while in possession when he sent the Luton defence the wrong way but lost the ball after kicking it too far ahead.

Allen got in another low centre from the left but Rioch's weak shot was well wide.

In the sixth minute John Moore was Luton's favourite when he coolly dribbled the ball out of the penalty area after Graham had set up Taylor.

Buxton almost surprised Ironside with a long shot which was only just wide.

Earnshaw won a corner for Barnsley and Read made a good catch as the big Winstanley ran in to fend his weight to the net.

Barnsley 2 Luton 2

IN a stirring match at Barnsley this afternoon Luton earned a vital point with a 2-2 draw.

The match was marred by a bottle-throwing incident in the second half after a linesman's decisions had angered the crowd.

Luton were at full strength, and fielded the same team that beat Wrexham last week.

POST
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Best effort

The best individual effort so far came in the 12th minute when Ryan dribbled half the length of the field before slipping in a good pass to Allen, who won a corner. From this Buxton hit the bar with a header after Allen had nodded the corner kick on to him.

Luton had an escape in the 16th minute when a long shot from Taylor went inches wide after a good piece of football involving Hamstead and Earnshaw. The move was started by a shrewd pass by Bettany.

Taylor was again in prominence — this time in defence, — when he hared back to push the ball to his goalkeeper just as Slough was shaping up to shoot.

Allen and Buxton worked an opening for Luton, and Howard had to rush across his goalmouth to put the ball behind for a corner.

As play continued to swing from end to end, providing plenty of excitement, Barnsley took the lead in the 19th minute. Earnshaw took the ball out to the right and made a good centre back for HAMSTEAD to run in and head past Read.

But Luton were not disheartened and after a foul on Ryan, Dougan's free-kick into the goalmouth was gathered by Ironside under heavy pressure from Buxton and Allen.

Chance

But there were still gaps in Luton's defence when it came to dealing with high crosses. And the next one, from a corner, was allowed to pass right across the front of the goal without anybody getting near it.

Luton's next chance came from Ryan, who dribbled into the penalty area before getting in a weak shot. And after a crude trip on Slough by Winstanley, a Rioch free-kick went inches over the bar.

Read raced out of his goal to punch clear a tricky, curling centre from Brookes, and Branston relieved the situation for Luton when he gave away a corner.

Murphy calmly got Barnsley out of trouble when he nipped in front of Whittaker and pushed Allen's pass back to his goalkeeper.

The referee stopped play when he noticed Taylor rolling on the ground, obviously in pain, but Barnsley's liveliest forward was able to continue after treatment.

Jardine was the next defender to Luton's rescue when he breasted down a hard shot from Howard in front of goal and booted it clear.

Outstretched

Only an outstretched boot by Winstanley saved Barnsley in the 35th minute when he altered the direction of a Whittaker cross which would have landed at Ryan's feet right in front of goal.

Bettany received treatment after a rough tackle by Rioch, and from the ensuing free-kick Dougan showed good anticipation in heading clear.

Winstanley's large boot saved Barnsley again in the 40th minute as he reached a Whittaker cross a fraction of a second before Buxton, hovering in front of goal.

Four minutes before the interval Allen was unlucky as he chased a through ball from Ryan but pushed it wide.

A minute before the interval Bruce RIOCH provided the crowd with a great goal. About 40 yards from goal he raced onto a loose ball and crashed it low past Ironside, who could only stand in amazement as the ball bounced back off the netting.

HT: Barnsley 1, Luton 1.

The second half got off to a rousing start with a quick goal from either side.

Within a minute John RYAN nipped smartly between two defenders to head Whittaker's cross past Ironside from close in, giving Luton a shock lead.

Two minutes later Barnsley laid a terrific siege on the Luton goal, and as half the Luton side scrambled the ball away BETTANY slammed the ball past Read from about four yards.

This match was full of entertainment, and in the 60th minute Luton could have regained their lead when Buxton shook off Winstanley and had a good shot well saved by Ironside.

Luton were back in the match and Brookes acted smartly to head away a Whittaker centre. A minute later Buxton could have had a goal after a long speedy run by Rioch, who baffled everybody when he flicked the ball back from near the goalpost.

After two decisions by linesman Shorrock had angered the Barnsley fans an empty beer bottle whistled passed the linesman's ear onto the pitch. Police were called across to the trouble spot.

The police did not move into the crowd, but stood in the tunnel keeping an eye on the trouble spot. In the 72nd minute Luton manager Allan Brown substituted Alan Slough with Billy McDerment. Slough did not appear to be hurt.

With a finer run and three body swerves Whittaker provided another opening for Luton, but once again the ball was scrambled behind for a corner just as Buxton was about to pounce.

Attendance: 8,530