

QUICK-FIRE RIOCH GIVES BRILLIANT START

Aldershot fight back in vain

By CHILTERN

SEEKING to strengthen their promotion lead, Luton Town turned on the heat from the very first minute against Aldershot at Kenilworth Road this afternoon and gave the impression of being set for a runaway victory.

Grand work by Bruce Rioch produced two quick goals. Aldershot, however, refused to be rattled, and hit back to cut the Town's lead. They resumed full of fight after the interval.

A sudden weather change ruined any test of the effect which the televising of the Grand National might have had on the attendance. Heavy rain which began some three hours before kick-off time, and which persisted, must have had an adverse effect, and there was only a sprinkling of spectators on the open terracing at the Kenilworth Road end.

At the same time, the covered parts of the ground were quite comfortably full.

The weather also had an effect on the pitch, which earlier had been dry and hard. Water was now standing slightly on the surface in some parts.

Manager Allan Brown decided to leave Peter Denton out of the six forwards he had nominated, and that meant that Mickey Brown, who had a good match at Darlington last Saturday, took over the outside right position.

In the continuing absence of Whittaker because of injury Graham French, who passed a fitness test yesterday, came back into the team at outside-left.

Another to return was Freddie Jardine, but Alan Slough was still absent.

As usual on winning the toss, the Town defended the Kenilworth Road end.

SENSATIONAL START

There was a sensational start, the Town taking the lead after exactly one minute through good work by Rioch. This came suddenly following a throw-in on the left, which was followed by indecisive work in the Aldershot defence so that Rioch was able to race in quickly. From a narrow angle he turned the ball in off WALKER'S leg. It counted as an own goal, though Rioch earned the credit and from me he gets it.

The Town immediately swept to the attack again, and Brown, with a low drive, was only inches wide of the near post, with Godfrey struggling.

The Aldershot defence was getting itself in all sorts of trouble, and a mistake by Dawes almost let in French.

TOWN STILL ON TOP

With the Town still on top, Godfrey had to throw himself at the feet of Buxton after Allen had made a determined bid to break through.

The first hint of trouble at

ball, and it went harmlessly for a goal-kick.

There was a stoppage for Branston to have some attention, after which French caused another flutter in the Aldershot defence with a low cross. Walker scrambled away with some difficulty.

Read was in action, going high in the face of a challenge by Howarth, to catch a long lob from Renwick.

BREAKAWAY AND A GOAL

Then came a surprise when Aldershot broke away, to reduce their arrears after 28 minutes, and a sloppy sort of goal it was. There seemed to be no sort of urgency to clear when the ball bobbed about in front of goal, and finally GOWANS was left with the easiest of chances from bang in front of goal. Certainly, it was a goal that should have been prevented.

The next minute there was nearly another disaster because Edwards was allowed to go through when the Town players thought he was offside. Bearing in on goal from a



In a sensational start, a cross by Rioch hit a defender and went for a first-minute goal.

RIOCH put the Town in a commanding position with another goal in the 19th minute.

sharp angle, he aimed for the far corner, missing it by a narrow margin, and Howarth, who followed up, was not quick enough to catch it.

TOO MUCH RELIANCE ON OFFSIDE TRAP

In my opinion the Town were placing too much reliance on the offside trap, which can all too easily break down.

When the Town got moving again, Godfrey went down to cut off a centre from French, after which Brown and Moore combined to make ground without finally creating an opening.

Aldershot were looking a different proposition now when they were on the attack, and a cross from Edwards made from the left flashed dangerously across the face of the goal. Then, Howarth tried his luck from 20 yards, and although well on the target, he caused Read no trouble.

TOWN LOSE

into a header by Buxton, made from point-blank range from a centre by French. The balance now swung the Town's way again.

Godfrey was in action again, pushing behind a long free kick by Brown, and this was followed by another free-kick on the other flank, which Branston, right up in the Aldershot goalmouth, just failed to reach with his head.

The referee next spoke to Godfrey, for what he obviously considered to be time-wasting. Half-time:

LUTON 2
ALDERSHOT ... 1

Discussion was still going on during the interval about whether the Town's first goal should be credited to Rioch or debited to Walker. I asked the referee his opinion, and he said that he thought the shot would not have gone in if it had not hit Walker, and so it seems that it must be Walker "own goal."

There was a strong resumption by Aldershot. They forced the Town back on to the defensive, and they might have drawn level when the ball was pushed through to Priscott, but he failed to make contact at point-blank range.

ALLEN SHOOTS WILDLY

Straight from this, French broke away along the deadline before pulling the ball back, and Brown might have got in a shot in better surface conditions. The ball finally went out to Allen, whose response was to send it wildly wide.

Renwick was next to be spoken to by the referee after a foul on Allen, and the free-kick specialist, Rioch, got the ball through the defensive ruck, but Godfrey had only to move a little way to his left to save.

Rioch had another shot shortly afterwards, which was a couple of feet wide from 20 yards after Brown had pushed the ball inside to him.

There was a narrow escape for the Town when Branston committed himself in midfield and was beaten, which left the middle open. Edwards rammed the ball past Read, at the same time as the whistle went for offside.

The Town's position was none too comfortable now, and Read pushed over one-handed a header by Gowans as the Aldershot pressure continued.

This was followed by an indirect free kick inside the penalty area, presumably against Read for taking too many paces, but an offside decision extricated the Town from this particular situation.

Offside was still a distinct bogey to the visitors' forwards,



A second-half drive by Mickey Brown gave Town a third goal just when it was needed.

and they were being caught frequently.

Occasionally the Town were again showing some of their sparkle of the first 20 minutes, though French shot tamely after he seemed to have sized up a situation.

LIKE A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Then like a bolt from the blue came a goal to the Town—and how they needed it!

BROWN was the scorer after 64 minutes, and he owed something to Godfrey's failure to hold the greasy ball, from a shot from the edge of the penalty area. It slipped out of his hands and rolled over the line before he could recover.

Aldershot introduced their substitute, O'Brien, for Walton.

There was rather an air of quietness about the play now.

Another Rioch run ended abruptly on the fringe of the penalty area as he was chopped down, but the referee saw nothing wrong with the tackle.

MAGNIFICENT SOLO EFFORT

Then came a magnificent solo effort by Brown. The Aldershot defence converged

How the goals came

WALKER (own goal) for
Luton after 1 minute
RIOCH for Luton after
19 minutes
GOWANS for Aldershot
after 28 minutes
BROWN for Luton after
64 minutes.

on him from all directions. He aimed for the far corner, and missed only narrowly.

Aldershot seemed to have shot their bolt.

The Town in fact were threatening to add to their lead, Buxton was clean through, but somehow Godfrey got a hand to the ball.

Result:

LUTON 3
ALDERSHOT ... 1

finished and Dunc Livesey reduced the arrears with a scorching half-volley that bulged the net. Finally, Robbie Burt put Ray Sinfeld away on the left, and he dribbled round the goalkeeper to equalise and keep Rootes in the promotion race. home.