3-1 win puts Luton on top of Div Three

68/69

Luton Town 3
Rotherham 1

BOB HARRIS REPORTS:

LUTON scored a grand 3-1 victory in the Kenilworth Road sunshine this afternoon against Rotherham, who were a Second Division side last season.

This win puts Luton at the top of the Third Division — a magnificent start for a team that was promoted only the previous season.

A large colourful crowd, with men in shirt sleeves and the women in summer frocks, greeted the two teams, both without defeats in their two Division Three matches this season.

Luton showed two changes from the side that took a point from Barrow last week, with wingers Mike Harrison and Graham French returning after injury. John Moore, who has also been injured, was substitute.

Rotherham kept the team that defeated Tranmere 4-1 last week, with former Blackburn and Huddersfield centre-forward Allan Gilliver still on the injured list.

Before the start a personal appeal through loud hailers was made behind the Oak Road goal by Town manager Allan Brown for the spectators, who have been under fire recently for their obscene chantings, to behave themselves.

Luton were soon on the move, and a long ball from Keith Allen meant for Brian Lewis was booted high into touch by Rotherham skipper Tiler.

Dangerous

The match lived up to its promise with a bright start.

French, weaving his way down the right, was stopped by two Rotherham defenders, and straight from the clearance Graham Leggat was only a yard offside as Jim Storrie pushed a good ball through.

Luton were soon back and looking dangerous when first Brian Lewis and then Bruce Rioch hammered across head-high centres that were hastily cleared.

Read was called into action for the first time when Storrie again found the open space, this time down the right flank, where overlapping full-back Trevor Swift ran on to put across a dangerous ball that Read did well to hold.

Luton were doing all the early pressing, but Rotherham were showing fine breaks from defence to attack, and it was from one of these that they should have taken the lead.

Fruitless

Once again it was former Leeds United star Jim Storrie who created the danger when he put Johnny Quinn through.

Quinn raced through the Luton defence, but Read was quick out of goal and narrowed the angle enough to push the ball out of play for a fruitless corner.

Luton were striaght back on the offensive. A free kick taken by Slough found its way through to Lewis, whose shot on the turn brought out a good save from Hill.

French wasted a grand opportunity when Rioch intercepted a bad pass deep in his own half to send the winger racing away, but with three forwards up in support French crossed too closely to the goal and Hill took the ball comfortably.

This was a bright start by Luton despite the odd slip in defence, and they created yet another chance when Mike Harrison pin-pointed Brian Lewis, who again brought out the best in goalkeeper Hill.

Target

Two minutes later Harrison tried to go solo after good work by Sheffield. The winger picked up the pass and hammered in a low drive that beat everyone.

TEAMS

LUTON: Read; Dougan, Jardine; Allen, Branston, Slough; French, Lewis, Sheffield, Rioch, Harrison. Sub: Moore.

ROTHERHAM: Hill; Swift, Hague; Quinn, Watson, Tiler; Leggat, Storrie, Downes, Bentley, Todd. Sub: Harrity.

Referee: Mr G. W. Hill (Kirby Muxloe).

BRUCE RIOCH . . .
on target with a vengeance

GOALS

RIOCH (Luton) 9 min
RIOCH (Luton) 15 min
STORRIE (Rotherham) 24 min
LEWIS (Luton) 42 min

This was a great tonic for Luton and their supporters in such a tough match.

Graham French earned himself a lecture from referee Hill for arguing after a corner had been awarded against him.

From Todd's corner Branston was happy to concede a second flag kick, this time cleared easily.

Alan Slough tried to get his forwards moving again with a run down the middle, but he was easily checked by a mass of red shirts, and once again Branston was forced to concede his third corner in as many minutes.

The return of wingers Harrison and French was having a dynamic effect on the Luton side, and after 15 minutes French teed up the ball for Rioch's second goal that even surpassed the brilliance of his first six minutes earlier.

French was barely 10 yards inside the Rotherham half when he squared the ball to RIOCH, who ran forward a few paces before, unleashing a left-foot shot that left Hill groping as the ball rocketed into the corner of the net.

Rattled

Rotherham were clearly struggling to contain this Luton side, and Graham French again mesmerised their defence with a jinking run that carried him past three defenders before his shot was blocked by Watson.

French left the field briefly to change his boots, as had Alan Slough a few moments previously, and on his return he was soon in action again, beating full back Hague, but this time chipping the ball harmlessly into the side netting.

A foul by Branston on Graham Leggat put Rotherham briefly back in again but twice Slough was on the spot to head clear menacing crosses.

With everyone except Rotherham goalkeeper in the Luton half, Quinn took the free kick himself, Watson moved sharply into the box and pushed it on for STORRIE to add the final touch.

It appeared to be a harsh decision on Allen in the first place, but there was no excuse for Luton's defence to have been caught napping.

There was another scare a few moments later for Luton when Rotherham forwards vainly appealed that Max Dougan had handled in the box in giving away a corner. But a corner was all they received.

After a brief raid by Luton which ended in Sheffield trying a spectacular overhead kick, Rotherham should have snatched an equaliser.

Quinn put through former Scottish international Leggat, but once again Read was off his line like a flash and somehow got his body in the way of the winger's fine effort to deflect it for a corner.

In a matter of minutes Rotherham had changed from a dejected looking side to a dangerous one, and were giving Luton as much trouble as they had in the early minutes.

Downes was allowed to get away with what looked like hand ball, but Rotherham's progress was halted when Rioch unfairly brought down Quinn. Quinn retaliated and appeared to strike out at Rioch, but matters were soon calmed by referee Hill.

Stretcher

After 33 minutes referee Hill called for a stretcher for Rotherham centre-half Watson, injured in a heading duel with Luton skipper Terry Branston. Branston, however, could not be faulted, with the free kick going the other way.

With a stretcher on and every one looking very concerned Watson was soon back on his feet, apparently only winded, and back in action.

Branston brought a touch of humour to this tense and exciting duel when he tried to "steal" 20 yards on a free kick for offside, but although he was called back by referee Hill he still managed to gain at least 10 yards.

Keith Allen showed why he used to be a centre-forward when he joined the attack and fired a right-foot drive only a yard wide after Sheffield had done well to lay the ball on.

Three minutes before the interval Luton regained their two-goal lead through LEWIS. French found Allen, who drew goalkeeper Hill before slipping the ball square to LEWIS, who scored a great goal on the turn.

HT: Luton 3, Rotherham 1

After only five minutes of the second half Rotherham manager Tommy Docherty called off centre half Watson, who was obviously still having trouble after his clash with Branston. Substitute Mick Harrity took over.

A terrible back pass by Storrie caught his defence wrong-footed. Harrison, left on his own, wasted a good opportunity by shooting high and wide under pressure.

Slipping

Referee Hill's constant whistling irritated a section of the crowd into a brief bout of slow handclapping, but generally the crowd heeded Allan Brown's appeal, and little was heard of the obscene chantings.

Tony Read, Luton goalkeeper, deals competently with this dangerous Rotherham raid.

defensive deadlock came from a bad back pass by Jardine — a mistake that was quickly recovered.

Luton were now fully in command, and the visitors' defence was again helpless when a long cross ball from Lewis, which should never have got through, found Rioch. The inside left was not far off the target with another of his "specials."

An unusual incident occurred when Harrison ran into Gilliver, who was sitting on the Rotherham bench. Words seemed to be exchanged between the two men and Allan Brown joined in the argument before referee Hill restored the peace.

Sheffield's perseverance was causing a lot of hesitancy in the Rotherham back four, and twice he bravely got in the way of clearances and each, with luck, could have produced goals.

The match badly needed another goal to restore some of its earlier depth, and Luton appeared to be robbed of a good chance when an infringement was given against Lewis when he was in a good position.

Limping

This again aroused the crowd's wrath and slow handclapping, booing — and an obscene chant — greeted the referee's decision.

With 17 minutes left Luton centre forward Laurie Sheffield, who once again had got through a tremendous amount of work, came off the field limping heavily, and was replaced by John Moore.

Sheffield left the field to great applause from the home crowd and a storm of booing from the Rotherham fans.

A clever interchange between Rioch, Allen and Lewis ended with the ball going out to the unmarked French. French, out of the match for some time.

Keith Allen, with Luton so much in command, was always willing to join his forwards, and twice he had hard shots from 30 yards well taken by Hill.

With Rotherham, hot tips for promotion the match must have been particularly satisfying to Allan Brown and the Town supporters, and must surely have reduced their own odds as promotion candidates for the second successive season.

With only seconds remaining Bruce Rioch, in a goalmouth scramble, had a strong appeal for a penalty for hand ball against Hague turned down.

Attendance: 14,163

WINE, DINE & DANCE 8.30pm — 2am
OPEN LUNCHTIMES 12 NOON TO 3pm — Casino open 9.30pm

savers on patrol.

Mrs Mary Green, who owns the pool and adjoining ball-room, was not available for comment today.

And the boy? They were all so busy rescuing him, they forgot to ask him his name.

The boy was taken by ambulance to Luton and Dunstable Hospital, where he was found to be "perfectly fit and well."

But it was sheer luck that the one-eyed boy in the black