

Supremacy for Town after an early struggle

LUTON TOWN 3, BRISTOL ROVERS 0.

By CHILTERN

68/69

IN WORKMANLIKE rather than spectacular fashion the Town kept themselves in the promotion hunt by picking up two points last night.

A crowd of 14,506 saw them make the sort of flying start by taking the lead through Sheffield in the second minute.

The Town, despite some clever prompting by French, did not gain their second goal until early in the second half. At the finish it was a comfortable enough, fully deserved victory, with Rioch making a quietly competent return.

LUTON TOWN: Davie; Dougan, Bannister; Slough, Branston, Moore; French, Allen, Sheffield, Lewis, Rioch. Substitute: Jardine.

BRISTOL ROVERS: Taylor (L); Jones (R), Parsons; Taylor (S), Lloyd, Williams; Ronaldson, Barney, Jones (W), Brown, Jarman. Substitute: Stanton.

Referee: G. W. Hill, of Leicester.

For once the Town, on losing the toss, were set to defend the Oak Road end.

In two minutes the Town were a goal up when, following a free kick for a foul on Sheffield the ball went across to French. The winger collected it and made a perfect centre which SHEFFIELD, waiting near the far post, headed downwards into the corner of the net.

Shortly afterwards the Town might have had a penalty when Lewis had his feet hooked from under him by Lloyd, but the referee gave a free-kick on the 18-yard line.

It had been a great start by the Town, who had gone into all-out attack and were moving the ball about sweetly.

SETTLING

It took the Rovers some time to settle down after their bad beginning, but they made one or two speculative sorties.

With the Town continuing in an attacking frame of mind there could well have been another goal when Bannister aimed for the far corner of the goal, missed it, and Sheffield, sliding in the mud to try to make certain, failed to connect.

A quarter-of-an-hour had gone before Davie was brought into action and then he had the comparatively simple task of dealing with a 25-yarder from Ronaldson.

There was much more difficulty for the goalkeeper when Ronaldson worked the ball cleverly before passing to Brown, and Davie needed two attempts to collect the ball.

Some of the Town's early sparkle had evaporated but they were not allowing the Rovers to get into the game to any marked extent despite a moment of near panic when Bannister only half cleared a ball.

Next Slough came boring through into the penalty area and his drive, made as he was charged, missed the far post

shot that narrowly missed the angle of the woodwork.

Such raids as the Rovers were managing to mount were being broken up before danger threatened and Branston made some timely interventions. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 1
BRISTOL ROVERS ... 0

In the first movement of the second-half there was very nearly a shock when Ronaldson failed with a good chance at close range following some slack marking.

When the Town hit back Lewis twice looked dangerous and the Town were now in the position of needing another goal to consolidate their position.

The Town were still looking the more promising in attack without showing positive signs that their finishing had improved.

Rioch was pulled down heavily by Lloyd a few yards outside the penalty area, but his shooting was again well off target when Lewis pushed the free-kick to him.

One of the Town's better movements, sparked off by Allen, ended when Lewis was pulled up by a hotly disputed offside decision.

LOBBED

Then in the 57th minute came the goal that was so badly needed. LEWIS was left with an easy chance after Sheffield cleverly lobbed the ball to him and he scored from close range.

Some of the tension had gone out the game now and with the Town pressure continuing Sheffield had his legs whipped from under him, but Lloyd kicked away Lewis's free-kick.

Brown suddenly let fly from an angle, and the ball

beat Davie, struck the inside of the post to rebound off the goalkeeper to safety.

Rovers escaped when a shot from Slough was scrambled off the line and then French ended it by driving too high.

With six minutes left victory was made absolutely certain when ALLEN jumped high to head home a corner from French.

LEADING POSITIONS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Watford	34	20	9	5	56	20	49
Swindon	34	20	7	7	53	27	47
Luton Tn.	34	19	6	9	53	30	44

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