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NO 668

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DIVISION THREE

ROVERS

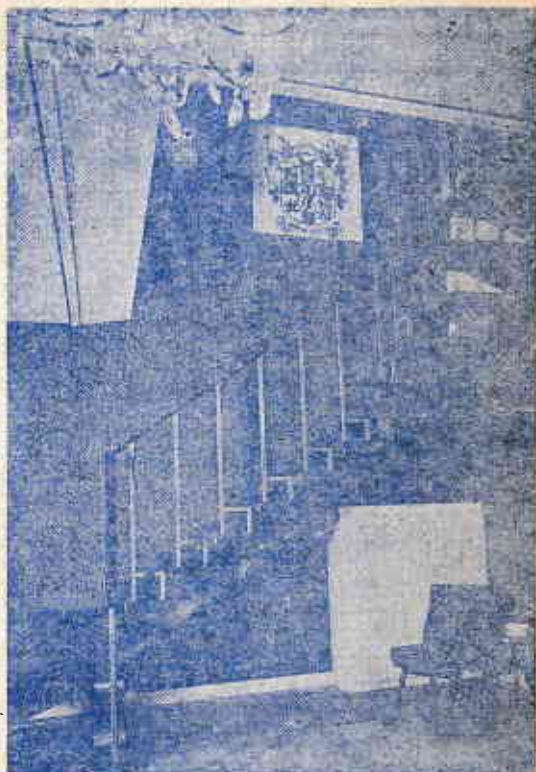
V

LUTON TOWN

Prenton Park

FRIDAY, 18th APRIL, 1969

9 Official Programme
incorporating
The Football League
Review



ENTRANCE HALL



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CLUB CALL



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Although Tranmere's one remaining objective this season is to finish in the top six in the Division, we can play an important part (or so it seems at the moment) in deciding who goes up to Division Two with Watford and who goes down to Division Four. Luton Town come to Prenton Park tonight knowing that defeat would almost certainly rub out their chances of beating Swindon Town for the remaining promotion berth while next Thursday evening, Hartlepool will be our visitors and for them the result could mean relegation or maintenance of their Third Division status. In both cases there are incentives to go out and make thrillers of what would otherwise be meaningless end-of-season matches. Between these two matches, of course, there is the postponed visit to Stockport County on Monday and while there is nothing at stake at Edgeley Park, county rivalry ought to be enough to give an edge to the event.

It has been suggested that the desperately low gates at Prenton Park since the turn of the year have been in the form of boycott by fans who were disappointed by Rovers' failure to establish a strong promotion challenge. Perhaps there is some truth in the suggestion. But it isn't the whole story. Other factors contributing to the fall in attendances have been the bitterly cold weather since January and, of course, the absence

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CLUB CALL (continued)

of soccer special buses. But there is increasing evidence that the soccer public of Birkenhead and Wirral is realising that Rovers have been building for the future and building on a solid foundation. Perhaps promotion could have been won this season if money had been splashed on this player or that player. But one of our rivals in the chase spent a very considerable packet of money on just such a dream to find that the only result has been a vastly inflated bank overdraft and a surprisingly poor return in points and crowd interest.

Nothing could have better emphasised the sanity of a policy based on young players than the 6-2 win over Oldham Athletic and the astounding 5-2 win at Torquay less than 48 hours later. Suddenly, it seemed, a lot of people realised that what they had been watching, this season, admittedly with a sense of frustration at times, was the building of a side that could bring Second Division football to Birkenhead in the not-too-distant future and keep it here for more than a fleeting season. Those who have seen our Reserves have also come to the realisation that Manager Russell has quietly developed a team of teenagers who will be strong challengers for first team status. And again, the few who have found their way to the Oval, Port Sunlight on occasion to catch a glimpse of the 'A' and 'B' teams know that Rovers have recruited some of the most talented youngsters on Merseyside.

And still the hunt goes on. Another batch of trialists turned up at the Oval last Sunday and by the end of an exhausting morning eight of them had joined the ranks. For a team with limited resources a 'make-your-own-stars' is the only way to win success and stay solvent.

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CLUB CALL (continued)

And talking about home-made stars, this seems an appropriate place to congratulate two of Rovers' old boys who have been in the limelight this week. Roy McFarland, now established as Young England centre half, helped Derby County into the First Division, while Roy Sinclair scored the goal which gave Watford promotion to the Second Division.

Since we started these notes, news has come through of Rovers' 2-2 draw at Brighton. This maintains one of the best away records in the League. It also ends the hoodoo of Goldstone, for Rovers have never done well at Brighton in the past.

Most reports of the match paid tribute to Rovers' insistence on attack. Given the right encouragement they can reproduce that form tonight and make the closing days of the 1968-69 season a foretaste of what's to come next season.

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LEAGUE TABLES, 1968-69

	Home					Away					Pts	
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F		A
Watford	42	15	5	2	34	7	11	5	4	36	18	62
Swindon	42	16	4	1	35	7	8	5	8	30	27	51
Luton	43	18	3	0	51	12	4	8	10	15	24	55
Plymouth	44	10	8	5	34	25	7	6	8	18	22	48
Tranmere	43	11	3	7	35	29	7	7	8	34	36	46
Brn'mth	42	15	2	4	40	16	4	6	11	18	28	46
Torquay	42	12	4	5	34	17	5	7	9	17	25	45
Brighton	45	12	7	3	49	17	4	6	13	23	44	45
Walsall	44	10	9	3	34	16	4	7	11	15	29	44
Stockprt	42	13	5	3	48	24	2	9	10	17	37	44
Reading	44	13	3	6	41	24	2	10	10	26	40	43
Bristol R	43	12	5	5	40	26	4	5	12	22	38	43
Roth'ham	43	11	5	5	36	20	4	7	11	16	28	42
Southprt	41	12	7	1	44	17	3	4	14	15	36	41
Barnsley	42	10	6	4	30	18	3	7	12	20	41	39
Nth'ton	43	9	8	5	37	29	5	3	13	15	28	39
Barrow	41	10	6	6	27	23	5	2	12	23	45	38
Gill'ham	42	10	9	3	34	20	2	4	11	14	38	31
Hartpool	42	6	10	5	25	29	4	6	11	14	39	36
Orient	42	9	7	5	26	18	3	5	13	19	39	36
Shrsbry	40	9	6	4	20	14	4	3	14	21	45	35
Oldham	44	9	5	8	32	26	4	3	15	16	53	34
Mansfield	39	10	5	3	26	13	1	6	14	20	43	33
Crewe	41	10	3	8	33	26	1	4	12	11	42	29

ROLL CALL, 1968-69

FIRST TEAM

	Appearances		Goals	
	L	Cup	L	Cup
CUMBES	40	7		
ROBERTS	2			
ROBERTSON	31	5		
MATHIAS	26	6		
KING A	38	6	4	
STORTON, S	26	3		
POINTON	8	4		
SMITH	32	7	10	
CASEY	27	5	4	1
BEAMISH	33	7	12	1
ROWLAND	20	4	4	1
SINCLAIR	22	6	6	1
YARDLEY	19	7	12	4
HUDSON	22	3	6	
GILL	8	3		
PRITCHARD	15	2	1	
McNAMEE	31	4	4	
STORTON, T	32	2		
SCOTT	14			1
MOORCRAFT	14	1		
KENNEDY	1			
DEMPSEY	6			
BYRNE	1			

Subs: STORTON G, SINCLAIR 4 ROWLAND
1 GILL 1 POINTON 2, ROBERTSON 2

SECOND TEAM

	Appearances		Goals
	L	Cup	
ROBERTS	34		
DONNELLY	39		
DEMPSEY	21		
JOHNSON	39		
STORTON T	20		
FLEMING	28		
KENNEDY	28		
ELLIS	34		3
BEAMISH	4		5
EVANS W.	19		2
McNAMEE	8		2
ROBERTSON	3		1
THOMAS	7		
POINTON	24		1
STORTON, S.	10		
HUDSON	4		
ROWLAND	14		5
GILL	26		5
LANE	8		
HUXLEY	3		
SINCLAIR	7		2
PRITCHARD	8		2
KING	2		
MATHIAS	9		
SCOTT	6		
MANNING	22		
SMITH	15		
BYRNE	11		
EVANS, T	6		
GRIFFITHS	1		

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~~SLOUGH~~
5. ~~FRANK BRANSTON~~
6. John MOORE
7. Graham FRENCH
8. Jim LEWIS
9. Ian BUXTON
10. ~~MIKE KEEN ALLEN~~
11. Brian RIOCH

Sub: ~~KEN ALLEN~~
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OUR VISITORS

TONY READ (goalkeeper)

Last season missed only three matches, as the first choice goalkeeper. Yet there was a time when it looked possible as if he would make a name for himself on the forward line. Probably holds the distinction of being the only goalkeeper to have scored a hat-trick in League football. Was born at Haydock and began his career with Sheffield Wednesday before moving to Peterborough United. Joined Luton 3½ years ago.

MAX DOUGAN (right back)

A fee of about £7,000 changed hands when this ex-Scottish amateur international left Leicester City, his caps having been earned with Queens Park. With arrival of Terry Branston the idea was to convert Dougan into a right half but he finally settled in at right-back where he was a regular for the greater part of last season.

BILLY McDERMENT (full back)

Was signed from Leicester City as a right back but most of his team appearances were at left back. At one time last season he was almost the permanent substitute and in all managed 20 first team appearances which qualified him for a championship medal.

FREDDIE JARDINE (left back)

He is now in his eighth season, having come to Kenilworth Road as an outside left when Sam Bartram was in charge. He was given a free transfer by Dundee and it was after showing his paces in practice matches that he was finally converted into a highly useful defender.

BRIAN LEWIS (right half)

Town's most expensive signing for years. At inside right he had considerable experience at Portsmouth and Coventry. However, most of his 20 First Division games last season were in the half back line.

JOHN MOORE (left half)

In the opinion of many people was the most improved player on the books and he fell naturally into the task of being a member of the back four. In his fourth season with the Town who stepped in immediately when they heard that Motherwell had given him a free transfer.

GEORGE POTTER (wing half)

Spent three months on trial during the latter part of last season and did so well that he was called upon for the first team during a particularly trying period of injuries. Negotiations with Forfar Athletic during the summer proved successful a moderate fee changed hands and Potter was given a contract for the whole season.

TERRY BRANSTON (centre half)

For him last season was a personal triumph because, not only was he a member of a promotion team for the fourth

time during his career, but he fulfilled his ambition of making the full quota of League appearances. Born at Rugby, where he still lives, Branston spent nine seasons with Northampton Town, accompanying them in their rise from Division 4 to Division 1.

ALAN SLOUGH (right half)

Is a true local product because he was amateur and apprentice with the Town before signing as a full time player. In his early days he was a full back and could conceivably still be required for this position but plays extremely well in either wing-half berth.

GRAHAM FRENCH (outside right)

Born at Wolverhampton. Has previously played for Shrewsbury, Swindon, Watford and Wellington before joining Luton in October 1965. Has several Youth International caps for England.

MIKE KEEN (inside forward)

One of the first things Manager Alec Stock did when he took over at Kenilworth Road was to return to his old club, Queens Park Rangers with a cheque for this experienced campaigner. Under Mike's captaincy, Luton shot right back into the promotion race and there they have stayed.

IAN BUXTON (inside right)

When Rodney Green went down with cartilage trouble early last season, there had to be an immediate search for another striker, and Buxton was signed from Derby County for about £11,000. As a cricketer with Derbyshire he is a very useful all-rounder.

BRUCE RIOCH (inside left)

Without doubt the Town's biggest asset as a player and he will not be 22 until September. Is a natural footballer whose skill developed quickly last season when he was easily the Club's leading scorer even though he was used as the midfield link. Was born in Aldershot, but spent most of his schooldays in Luton and has been with the Town since he was 15.

MIKE HARRISON (outside left)

During the latter part of last season, several favourable reports were submitted on this player, who was then with Plymouth Argyle. These induced the Town manager to make a £7,000 offer to his former Luton right wing partner Billy Bingham who is now in charge at Home Park. Born at Ilford, Harrison began his first class career with Chelsea from which club he moved on to Blackburn Rovers where he established a first team place.

RAY WHITTAKER (outside left)

A Londoner, from Bow, he played for the Arsenal with whom he gained England Youth International Caps before coming to Luton in March 1964.

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CHESTER (Football League Cup)	11,478	MANSFIELD TOWN	8,300
SOUTHPORT	8,018	CHESTER (Football League Cup)	13,200
CHESTER (Football League Cup)	13,627	EVERTON (Football League Cup)	34,700
BARNLEY	7,756	ORIENT	8,800
TORQUAY UNITED	7,448	LUTON TOWN	13,200
BARROW	5,018	OLDHAM ATHLETIC	4,200
ORIENT	6,420	CREWE ALEXANDRA	5,600
READING	7,136	NORTHAMPTON	7,500
BRIGHTON	6,482	BRISTOL ROVERS	6,250
WALSALL	6,879	READING	3,673
SHREWSBURY TOWN	7,570	HARTLEPOOLS UNITED	4,355
SOUTHPORT (F.A. Cup)	8,515	READING	4,600
STOCKPORT COUNTY	8,900	BOURNEMOUTH	8,500
CREWE (Cheshire Premier Cup)	1,452	SHREWSBURY TOWN	9,600
NORTHAMPTON	4,502	SWINDON TOWN	19,760
CREWE ALEXANDRA	6,600	PLYMOUTH ARGYLE	12,650
BRISTOL ROVERS	5,400	GILLINGHAM	3,700
SWINDON TOWN	8,340	WATFORD	13,397
WATFORD	6,640	SOUTHPORT	5,200
BOURNEMOUTH	3,200	WALSALL	4,800
ROTHERHAM	4,800	BARNLEY	6,750
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		F	A
Aug. 10	GILLINGHAM	Home	2-0
14	Chester (League Cup)	Away	0-0
17	Rotherham	Away	1-4
21	CHESTER (L.C. replay)	Home	2-2
23	SOUTHPORT	Home	1-0
26	CHESTER (L. Cup)	Home	1-1
28	Chester (L. Cup) ...	Away	2-1
31	Mansfield Town	Away	1-1
Sept. 3	Everton (League Cup)	Away	0-4
6	BARNLEY	Home	3-1
9	Orient	Away	0-0
14	Luton Town	Away	1-3
16	TORQUAY UNITED	Home	0-1
20	BARROW	Home	0-3
28	Oldham Athletic	Away	2-1
Oct. 5	Crewe Alexandra	Away	3-2
7	ORIENT	Home	3-0
11	READING	Home	2-1
14	BRIGHTON	Home	0-2
19	Northampton	Away	1-2
25	WALSALL	Home	2-1
Nov. 2	Bristol Rovers	Away	2-0
8	SHREWSBURY	Home	3-1
16	SOUTHPORT (FA Cup)	Home	0-1
22	STOCKPORT COUNTY	Home	1-1
25	Crewe (Ches. P. Cup)	Home	3-0
29	Hartlepoons United	Away	4-2
Dec. 14	Reading	Away	0-2
20	NORTHAMPTON	Home	2-1
26	CREWE ALEX.	Home	0-1
Jan. 4	Bournemouth	Away	4-3
10	BRISTOL ROVERS	Home	1-2
18	Shrewsbury Town	Away	1-0
24	SWINDON TOWN	Home	3-5
31	WATFORD	Home	0-3
Mar. 22	Plymouth Argyle	Away	0-1
1	Gillingham	Away	1-1
3	BOURNEMOUTH	Home	2-1
7	ROTHERHAM	Home	0-0
11	Watford	Away	1-3
14	Southport	Away	2-2
17	PLYMOUTH ARGYLE	Home	2-2
21	MANSFIELD TOWN	Home	2-1
29	Barnsley	Away	2-2
Apr. 5	OLDHAM ATHLETIC	Home	6-2
7	Torquay United	Away	5-2
12	Barrow	Away	0-1
16	Brighton	Away	
18	LUTON TOWN	Home	
24	Hartlepool	Home	

CHESHIRE LEAGUE

		F	A
Aug. 10	Orwestry Town	Away	5-0
14	Rhyl	Away	0-0
17	MOSSLEY	Home	4-0
24	Frickley Colliery	Away	3-1
31	Buxton (Chall. Cup)	Away	1-2
Sept. 4	Skelmersdale United	Away	2-0
7	Nantwich	Away	2-1
9	RHYL	Home	1-1
14	DROYLSDEN	Home	4-0
16	NANTWICH	Home	0-2
28	WINSFORD	Home	2-1
Oct. 4	CHESTER	Home	0-2
12	Witton Albion	Away	0-4
26	Sandbach	Away	3-1
Nov. 9	Chester	Away	3-0
16	Buxton	Away	1-1
23	Mossley	Away	1-3
30	OSWESTRY TOWN	Home	4-2
Dec 7	Stalybridge	Away	0-1
14	HORWICH	Home	1-1
21	Ashton United	Away	0-0
1969			
Jan 4	BUXTON	Home	4-0
11	RUNCORN (Senior Cup)	Home	2-2
15	Runcorn (re-play)	Away	0-0
25	Droylsden	Away	4-0
27	Runcorn (re-play)	Away	2-1
29	ELLESMERE PORT	Home	3-1
Feb 1	Stafford Rangers	Away	4-1
5	GUINNESS EXPORT	Home	0-2
24	STALYBRIDGE CEL.	Home	3-2
Mar. 7	WITTON ALBION	Home	2-1
8	Stalybridge C.	Away	3-3
8	Winsford United	Away	1-0
12	Stalybridge (cup replay)	Away	0-3
15	STAFFORD RANGERS	Home	0-0
22	Horwich	Away	0-2
29	SANDBACH R.	Home	4-1
31	FRICKLEY COLLIERY	Home	1-1
Apr. 4	New Brighton	Away	2-1
7	NEW BRIGHTON	Home	0-1
12	ASHTON UNITED	Home	3-1
14	NANTWICH	Home	1-1
19	Elesmere Port	Away	
May 3			
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