

Roving Ryan rips Pompey

By REG BETTS

PORTSMOUTH 0, LUTON TOWN 3

Pompey flopped dismally at Fratton Park today. They handed Luton Town three easy goals and left themselves still searching for two points from the remaining three matches to make sure of Second Division survival.

PORTSMOUTH	LUTON TOWN
Milkins	1
Smith	2
Collins	3
Blant	4
Youlden	5
Munks	6
Piper	7
Reynolds	8
Hiron	9
Wilson	10
Ley	11
Pointer	12

Referee: Mr. N. P. Paget (Coventry).

Wilson, leading Pompey in the absence of Hand, was judged to have fouled Ryan, although it looked a perfectly good tackle. When Slough's free-kick floated into the goal-mouth Milkins failed to gain possession, Wainwright seemed certain to score, but Youlden scrambled the ball clear.

A Givens free-kick was chased into the penalty area by Halom, who was injured in a collision with Milkins.

Overlapping at speed, Ley won a corner when Shanks was forced to slide the ball away to stop him from crossing.

Another injury stoppage followed, in the sixth minute, when Givens was hurt in a tackle by Youlden.

Peril

Using a fluid 4-4-2 system Pompey looked the more progressive side, but goalkeeper Barber was not troubled in the first ten minutes.

Then Collins hoisted over a cross from the left, and Hiron dived full length to bullet a

Goalscorers

15min Givens (pen.)
32min. Ryan
67min. Ryan

header just over the top.

A dreadfully late tackle by Youlden put Pompey in peril. Slough's free-kick was nodded across the face of the goal by Halom and Ryan incredibly lashed the ball over the top of the empty net from inside the six yard box.

In the 15th minute Blant was judged by referee Paget to have handled a cross from Shanks, although Pompey defenders protested that it was accidental. GIVENS put Luton ahead from the spot.



Pompey raced upfield on a series of determined attacks. Another Hiron header flashed wide, and Reynolds was only inches away with a fine header when Munks moved on to a free-kick and centred from the right.

Shielded

In the 23rd minute Ley crossed hard and low from the left, beating two defneders, and Reynolds shot wide with the goal at his mercy.

Although Givens faced a wall of three blue-shirted defenders he shielded the ball cleverly, went around on the outside, and hooked in a surprise shot which Milkins grabbed under the bar.

A blockbuster from Hiron roared over the top, and in Pompey's next attack Reynolds received a lecture from Mr. Paget for complaining that Pompey should have had a free-kick.

Tension was beginning to build up in the Pompey outfit and Luton were beginning to break out dangerously, a shot from Halom dipping just over the crossbar.

The situation grew graver for Portsmouth in the 32nd minute. Keen sent Givens down the left flank with a finely judged pass. Givens squeezed the ball across, and RYAN raced in to hammer home a close range header.

Half-time:
PORTSMOUTH 0
LUTON TOWN 2

Ley curled the ball across from the right wing and Luton were glad to concede a corner.

A determined attempt by Reynolds to bulldoze through the defence on his own failed and Luton moved away smartly to score what looked a perfectly valid goal.

Halom and Ryan sent Givens through to smash home a fierce shot, but the linesman signalled that Givens was offside and Pompey escaped.

When a Piper free-kick dropped in the goalmouth Youlden got in a header, but Barber rose above a thicket of players to save.

Long run

Mr. Paget, already in trouble with the crowd, lost more marks for stopping play when Ley shrugged off a tackle on a long run into the penalty area. The free-kick bounced awkwardly and Hiron handled the ball.

In the 67th minute Luton scored a farcical third goal. Halom slipped a pass inside to Givens whose shot was going wide when it was cleared by Collins straight out to RYAN who promptly banged the ball under Milkins' diving body from ten yards out.

Fifteen minutes from the end the crowd began to stream away and soon it developed into a mass exodus. By now Pompey were well beaten, facing a tense final two weeks of an unhappy season.

In the last minute Hiron at last got on target for Portsmouth, but there was no power behind his shot.

Final:
PORTSMOUTH 0
LUTON TOWN 3

Attendance: 8,552.

POMPEY VERDICT

Pompey's sixth match without a win left them still deeply involved in the Second Division battle to avoid going down with doomed Watford.

Two defensive blunders in the first half cost them deeply, and skill seeped away as their anxiety increased.

In the 15th minute Blant conceded his second penalty in successive matches, and in the 32nd minute Milkins stayed rooted on his line when Ryan rammed in Givens' cross.

To add to the sorry story Reynolds missed a sitter when Luton were only one ahead.

After the break Pompey continued their vain quest for security, without even looking capable of breaking Luton's grip on a messy match.

And it was the last straw for the fans when Collins cleared the ball straight to Ryan, who showed his gratitude by stroking home Luton's third goal.



A Luton defender gives himself helping hand to rise above Pompey's Ray Hiron.

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