

LIONS SNATCH

3077 26/2/73

LEAGUE POINTS

FIVE goals, one player carried off on a stretcher, one booked, and the debut of a highly promising young goalkeeper. It all happened at Millwall on Monday night—except the right result after the Town came back from the dead.

In the end, without really breaking into a sweat, the Town had done enough to jolt lively Millwall out of their complacency, but not quite enough to win.

And while the loss of a couple of league points is not too serious, the damage sustained by Barry Butlin to his left knee might be. It would be a tragedy if it knocks him out of the next cup match.

For Butlin, pictured right, has been playing a vital role in the Town attack, taking most of the front line weight, and skillfully using the ball and holding it when necessary.

He was carried off in the 18th minute. The damage is to the left knee on which he already had one cartilage operation.

It put a damper on Town jubilation which had broken out seconds before as John Aston accepted a gift goal to put the Town level.

Until that gift, the Town, with Gordon Hindson, Jim Ryan and Willie Carrick all rested, had looked lethargic and not particularly interested in winning the game after their exertions on Saturday.

The brightest spot was the form of goalkeeper Graham French, making his first appearance for the Town



Barry Butlin

after his £25,000 transfer from Arsenal last week.

He had a good game, made several good saves, and looked safe on high crosses into his goalmouth. He also packs a mighty clearance kick—one was so long it caught Town forwards offside in the other half of the field.

Certainly, the goalkeeper

ASTON STRIKES...

JOHN Aston hits the Town's first goal at Millwall: his first attempt had been headed straight back to him, and he made no mistake with the second chance, placing it accurately over the goalkeeper's head.

could do nothing about the two goals that put Millwall comfortably ahead: a brilliant header by Bolland in the 33rd minute from Steve Brown's corner, and a gift to Smethurst 47 seconds into the second half when Alan Garner failed with an attempt to head the ball behind for a corner.

Millwall should have been in the clear with those two goals, and they were running harder and shooting at will while several of the Town players were barely in the game.

Viv Busby showed up in patches, Graham French did not have a happy time of it and for the first hour a header by Slough, brilliantly saved by King, was the nearest the Town came to scoring.

But two goals in four minutes from John Aston rocked Millwall. The first was after a hopeful cross-cut shot was headed back out to him by Kitchener.



John Ryan, who was booked for a foul on Dunphy

With the goalkeeper off his line Aston chipped a perfect goal over his head from the 18-yard line.

It was brilliant — and so was the second when Dunphy rolled a back pass straight to him. Aston must be one of the deadliest men in the game in this situation: he carefully dribbled round

the goalkeeper and rolled the ball into the net.

Unfortunately, Dunphy atoned for his error by lighting a free kick beautifully into the penalty area for Bolland to score with a diving header — a carbon copy of the one by Ted MacDougall they keep showing on the box.

Having dragged themselves back into the game once, the Town could not find the energy to do it all over again, and their cause was not helped by Butlin's injury.

Goodeve came on as substitute and Don Shanks was pushed upfield, where he proved that he is a brilliant full-back.

...AND STRIKES AGAIN

THIS is the goal that brought John Aston's tally so far this season to 12, putting him well clear as the Town's leading scorer.

The picture, by Andy Wright, shows how the Millwall defence was caught cold by one of their own players.

Eamonn Dunphy, outside his own penalty area, tried to pass back to his goalkeeper, but did not hit the ball hard enough.

Aston did—he intercepted and left Millwall goalkeeper Keith Barber in a fix again. He is doing what exercises he can, but his broken right leg is still in plaster, and will be for at least two more weeks.



MATCH DETAILS

MILLWALL 3, LUTON TOWN 2

Half-time: 1-0

TOWN: Horn, Shanks, Thomson, Slough, Garner, Moore, French, John Ryan, Butlin (Goodeve, 69 minutes), Busby, Aston.

MILLWALL: King, Brian Brown, Cripps, Dorney, Kitchener, Burnett, Steve Brown, Smethurst, Wood, Bolland, Dunphy. Sub: Hill, not used.

GOALS: Bolland, Millwall, 33 minutes; Smethurst, Millwall, 46 minutes; Aston, twice for Luton, 64 and 68 minutes; Bolland, Millwall's winner, 75 minutes.

REFEREE: Ron Perkin, Stafford; competent.

ATTENDANCE: 10,504.

ENTERTAINMENT: Good, except for the result. At least the fans got what they want—goals.

Goalkeeper Horn looks good

By BRIAN SWAIN

THREE players in the Town team on Monday night were fighting for their places: Viv Busby, Graham French and new goalkeeper Graham Horn.

And of the three, the goalkeeper looked the one who had done most to earn another chance.

Which shows what a crazy game football can be—he let in three goals, while Willie Carrick kept a clean sheet at Bolton.

My guess would be that Horn has ousted Carrick from the Town team—except that he is cup-tied with Portsmouth, so Willie has at least one more chance to make the place his own in the next cup match.

The next problem will be when Keith Barber is fit again. He is doing what exercises he can, but his broken right leg is still in plaster, and will be for at least two more weeks.

A fully fit Barber would give the Town the luxury of two good keepers for the first team, plus a more than useful reserve. And that's a lot of goalkeepers for a club which has to count the pennies.

For Viv Busby and Graham French, Monday's game did not prove very much.

They both showed signs that they can produce the goods, yet neither really imposed himself on the game, and their lost weeks in the Reserves have done nothing for the sort of sharpness needed in league matches.

