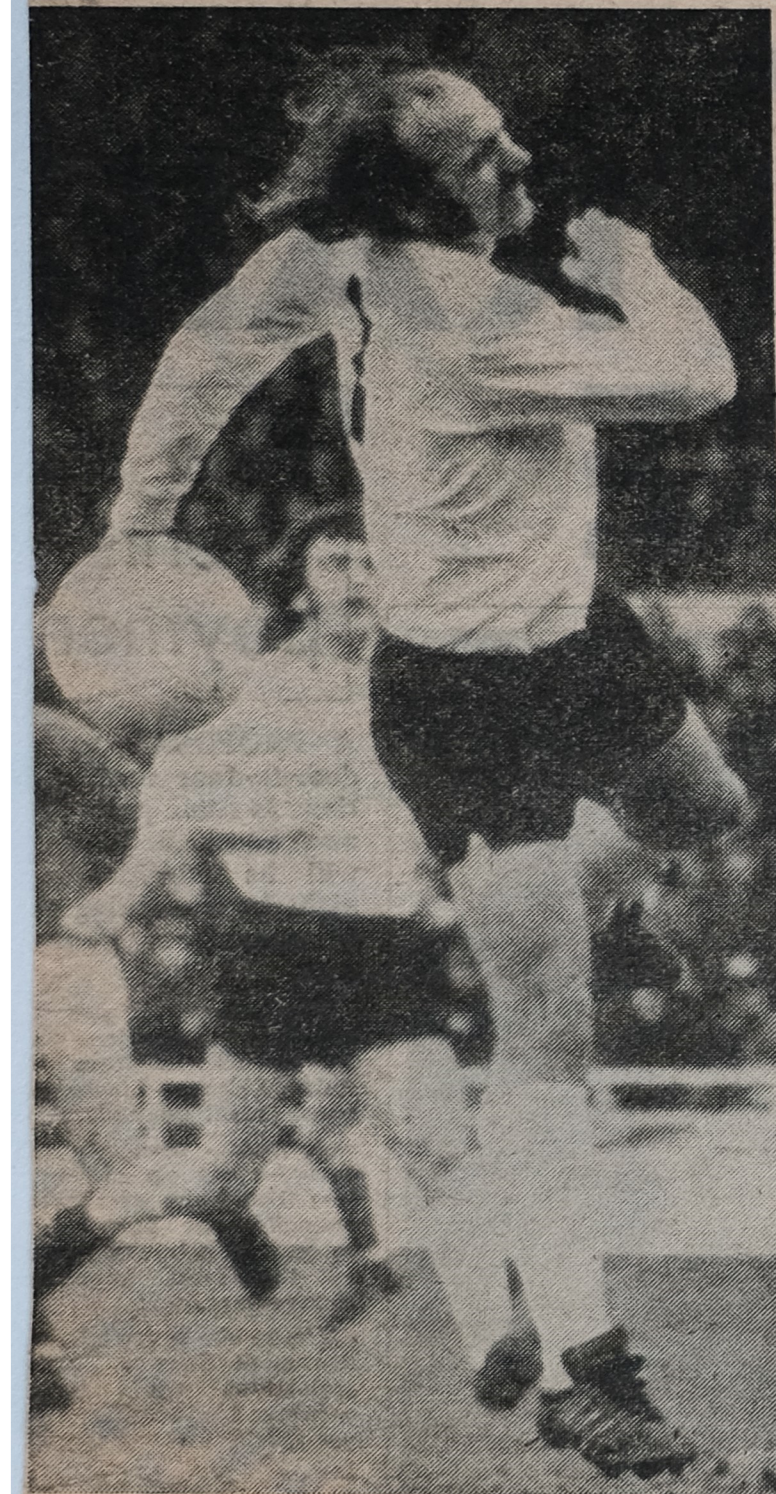


A BRILLIANT DEFENCE BEATS FULHAM



● Rod Fern headed the winner

THE TOWN won far more than two league points when they came away from Fulham on Tuesday night with a one-goal victory. They also won back their self-respect and dignity after Saturday's flop at Kenilworth Road.

The team, showing five changes from Saturday's side, produced a tremendous fighting display, and took everything that Fulham could throw at them—and it was one hell of a battering.

And the re-shaped defence, the department blamed for Saturday's failure, won the game for the Town after Rod Fern had popped up with a brilliant header to score the only goal.

Keith Barber, recalled at Graham Horn's expense, played a blinder—Harry Haslam's description as well as mine—and lanky

By BRIAN SWAIN

John Faulkner, so often accused of being raw, played the best game I have ever seen from him.

He was literally head and shoulders above the Fulham attack, and with Ken Goodeve strong and decisive to stake a claim for a regular place in the defence, it was great to see the Town's

MATCH DETAILS

FULHAM 0, LUTON TOWN 1

Half-time: 0-1

TOWN: Barber; Shanks, Thomson, John Ryan, Faulkner, Goodeve, Jim Ryan, Fern, Hales, Hindson, French. Substitute: Anderson not needed.

FULHAM: Mellor, Cutbush, Callaghan, Mullery, Went, Shrubbs, Strong, Earle, Mitchell, Pinkney, Barrett. Substitute Lloyd, not used.

THE GOAL: Rod Fern for Luton after 16 minutes.

ATTENDANCE: 7,442—and this time, Town fans who stayed at home missed a treat.

REFEREE: Norman Burtenshaw: used to be one of the best.

ENTERTAINMENT: A real nail-biter for the Town, and good value for money for all.

resistance to some very good Fulham attacking.

Don Shanks and Bobby Thomson put Saturday's memories behind them, and with the Town always willing to soak up Fulham's pressure, the whole defence emerged with the greatest possible credit.

The match was almost continual one-way traffic towards the Town goal, with Alan Mullery prompting Fulham from the middle and his forwards running eagerly and quickly.

The Town had not mounted a single worthwhile attack in the first quarter of an hour. But then Graham French won a corner.

It was only partly cleared and from midway inside the Fulham half Don Shanks collected the ball and crossed it from the right. Fern met it with a bullet header from near the penalty spot to send the ball accurately into the bottom corner of the net.

It was a classic goal, but although it rattled Fulham,

they still concentrated on attack.

They piled on the pressure, but for the most part the Town defence kept them at long range, and the nearest Fulham came to scoring was when Mitchell hammered a shot against the post.

Fulham twice appealed for penalties: once when Faulkner handled, and once when Mitchell fell down after making the absurd mistake of trying to run through Shanks.

Referee Norman Burtenshaw, who has been at the centre of several controversies this season, turned down both appeals. He made one or two mistakes when goal kicks were awarded instead of corners, but they balanced out for each side.

I also thought he was wrong to book Goodeve for a tackle on Earle—it was a foul, but not a booking offence.

But one man who made no mistakes at all was Keith Barber. He was brilliant. In the second half

Fulham streamed downfield in attack—they won 15 corners to the Town's two—and when they did break through Barber broke their hearts.

He made four great saves in circumstances where no-one would have complained if the ball had gone into the net.

One of them will be remembered for a long time: Strong hit a swerving shot which was going away from the goalkeeper into the top corner, but somehow Barber took off like a great bird to keep it out.

Fulham looked very good indeed in their approach work, but the Town were not to be denied. If one man was beaten, there was always another covering him.

It went a long way to blotting out the disappointment of three successive defeats in the previous ten days, and even if John Aston has not recovered from his stomach sickness for Saturday, the Town in this mood will be well able to do for Carlisle.

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Fighting win after Fern heads a gem of a goal