

NEW BOY ALSTON SHINES FOR LUTON

THE DUCKWORTH MATCH VERDICT



WHAT a smashing game of football this was. If Luton could have only kept up the terrific pressure they asserted in the first 35 minutes, they would have been assured of their first win in the First Division.

They played some brilliant stuff with new boy Adrian Alston delighting the crowd with his skill and ideas.

Luton went ahead when John Ryan smashed in a shot off the defensive wall following a short free kick by West. And they looked as if they were going to run Rangers off their feet.

But things started to go sour in the 34th minute when Stan Bowles scored the strangest twice-taken penalty I have ever seen.

But there was a lot to be pleased about in this Luton performance, and if they can reproduce it next week they need not be frightened of going to Leeds.

I made Alston Luton's man of the match for his obvious sheer enjoyment and natural ability, but West also had a great match in midfield and Husband gave a pleasing performance of both effort and skill in the Town attack.

Luton Town 1 QPR 1
By ROGER DUCKWORTH



It's there . . . John Ryan (out of picture) puts Luton ahead

the kick should be taken again.

BOWLES scored again and Rangers drew level. A couple of minutes later Bowles was booked for a foul on Alston when he pulled the Luton man's shirt and then baited the crowd claiming that it was a fair foul.

A minute later Webb was lucky not to be booked as well when he blatantly tripped Anderson, injuring the Luton man as he raced towards the penalty area in possession.

A minute before half-time Husband was unlucky not to beat Webb as he cut in quickly from the left. But the former Chelsea defender was on the right foot and managed to get the ball back to Parkes.

And QPR very nearly turned round one up when Givens banged in a hard shot to bring out a diving save from Barber who managed to get hold of the ball at the second go and clear before the whistle went.
HT: 1-1

In the first minute of the second half Luton had a let-off. Thomson was penalised for a foul on Bowles some 20 yards out from the goal and the ex-England forward curled the kick into the Luton wall and it was deflected into the side netting.

The crowd went silent for at first it looked very like a goal. It was taking Luton some difficulty to get back into the game as they had been in the first half hour. But there was no lack of effort, and both West and Butlin went on runs at the defence that ended in robbery.

And there was some misunderstanding in the Luton defence when a ball came over from the right and Thomson ran in front of Barber to hoof the ball into the Kenilworth Road terrace.

Some good running with the ball by Husband resulted in a chance from the edge of the box by Anderson. He hit the ball hard and it would have been a goal had it not struck Busby in the face with Parkes beaten.

In the 55th minute Faulkner received his second booking in two games for a foul on Bowles whom he tackled from behind.

After a dangerous looking run by Alston had come to disaster with a miskick, Bowles broke strongly for

Rangers and after holding off two challenges got in a shot which Barber had to dive to save.

More hesitancy in the Luton defence gave Bowles ample room to shoot, but as he drew back his boot, Hindson, recovering remarkably quickly, cut in front of him to whip the ball away.

West was again outstanding in Luton's midfield and on the hour he almost put Luton back into the lead with a powerful shot that curled away from the top left-hand corner of the Oak Road goal at the last minute.

Another smart move between Alston and Husband on the left resulted in Husband's shot being deflected behind. He claimed hand ball and asked for a penalty, but Luton had to make do with a corner that was well caught by Parkes.

Husband was also having a splendid match and after more aggression by Anderson in midfield, he cut through and shot, unfortunately again just wide.

With about ten minutes left a high centre by Alston was challenged between Butlin and Parkes and the Rangers keeper was adjudged to have been fouled by the Luton centre forward.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Barber, Shanks, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, John Ryan, Hindson, Husband, Butlin, West, Alston. Sub: Chambers.

QPR: Parkes, Busby, Gillard, Venables, Mancini, Webb, Thomas, Francis, Beck, Bowles, Givens. Sub: Leach.

REFEREE: Mr L. Hayes (Doncaster).

JOHN RYAN (Luton) in 7 minutes

BOWLES (QPR) in 34 minutes. Pen.

ATTENDANCE: 18,535



Adrian Alston gets in a header, but QPR clear

THAT hoodoo — sharing the points — hit Luton again this afternoon after a thrilling start which promised to give them their first win in Division One.

John Ryan opened for the Hatters in seven minutes from a free-kick by West — but, just as things looked good, Rangers were awarded a penalty.

And Stan Bowles obliged his team mates — and fans — by putting the ball in the back of the net to even it up again.

This was the biggest day in the colourful life of 24-year-old Adrian Alston. He came into the Town side for his first full match in the First Division and beforehand he told me: "This is the one I've been waiting for."

"I have played in some big matches — 14 internationals and this year's World Cup finals, but all my life I have wanted to play in the English First Division."

Alston came into the Luton side in the second half on Wednesday night as substitute for John Aston who is having more trouble with that dodgy knee.

Of course, Luton were still without the experience in midfield of Jimmy Ryan, who made a comeback from injury with the reserves at Bourne-mouth today, and Alan Garner who is missing from the defence because of an ankle injury.

The Luton substitute was Brian Chambers for whom great things are forecast. He joined the club for about £40,000 during the summer.

Alston wore the No.11 shirt vacated by Aston, but everyone was waiting to see just what sort of role he would take up in the Luton attack. He is a striker rather than a winger, and Jimmy Husband was obviously going to have some wide running to do.

In the opening minutes Luton goalkeeper Barber looked alert and twice left his line quickly to collect through balls before QPR forwards could get near.

In the fourth minute Alston had his first shot when he nipped through with good control and fired a low shot that had Parkes grasping at the second attempt.

Then a good pass from Alston sent Husband through in an inside left position and he won a corner from which Luton might have scored had not Thomson's final centre been a shade too high for Alston.

Luton went ahead in the seventh minute when a bright looking move between Alston and Husband was halted with a foul tackle. The offence took place just outside the box, and West rolled the free kick to his right for RYAN to run in and thump a deflected shot past Parkes.

And Luton were not satisfied with the one goal. West charged through and shot just wide with a low effort and then a good centre from Alston had Butlin jumping high to beat Parkes before the ball was scrambled clear.

Alston looked full of beans and embarked on a long run through the middle, but was pulled up for handling the ball. The entertainment swung to the other end, and Thomas fired a hard left-footer just over Barber's crossbar.

Then Anderson and Shanks worked a clever overlap and the low centre found its way into open space in the goalmouth before a Rangers boot got it back to the keeper.

In the 16th minute Alston again had the home crowd jumping when he forked through and supplied a pass from which a dangerous looking Butlin shot just wide.

And the crowd was roaring again a minute later when Husband strode through and cracked a hard left-footed shot just wide of the top of the Rangers goal.

I thought referee Hayes was correct in not answering Alston's appeal for a free kick after he was tackled as he mistimed a shot, and a minute later West cut in again and shot wide from the edge of the box.

Luton were playing their best football of the season, and another grand run by Alston on the right ended with his pass being pushed on by Butlin to Husband, who put in a terrific shot which looked a goal all the way until deflected for a corner by Mancini.

A long free kick by Shanks had the Rangers defence in more trouble, and after a huge jump by Butlin he controlled the ball and got in a shot that was cleared off the line by Busby.

After a hard tackle by Ryan, Bowles had to leave the field for some treatment. Referee Hayes was adamant that he should not halt the game's flow, and the former England star was soon ready to go back on the field.

In the 34th minute Rangers were awarded a penalty for a trip on Thomas by Faulkner. An amazing incident followed. As Bowles ran up to score from the spot somebody in the crowd behind the goal threw another ball on to the pitch, and Mr Hayes directed that