

BOERSMA'S ONE-TWO IS A CUP KNOCK-OUT

PHIL BOERSMA'S best performance for the Town since he joined the club last summer shot them into the Fourth Round of the FA Cup in the replay at windswept Boundary Park, Oldham, on Tuesday night. And although the winning margin was narrow, the Town's patched-up team well deserved victory.

They played some cool and confident soccer to tame Oldham's more frantic attempts to turn the game into a blood and thunder cup-tie. Oldham, repreived at Kenilworth Road on Saturday by a foul which put Town skipper Alan West out of football for at least three weeks, had no answer to superior skill and tactics.

It was the Town's eighth consecutive game without defeat, Oldham's first reverse in 11 matches, and only the second away win of the season seen at Boundary Park.

And if Boersma's running and shooting hogged the limelight, the real foundation of success was built on a solid defence in which John Faulkner, captain in the absence of West, was outstanding.

Graham Jones was not far behind him, and although Paul Price and David Carr were obviously picked out by Oldham as the men to attack, they too stood firm.

Behind them Miljic Aleksic gave

Report by
BRIAN SWAIN
Sports Editor

away Oldham's equaliser, then redeemed himself with two outstanding saves as the home side's biggest crowd of the season tried to urge their team back to equality after Boersma's second goal.

At the end, both sides were talking about goal-chance misses that could have produced a vastly different result.

Oldham's best spell came in the very first minute. They stormed into attack from the kick-off, won a corner, and should have scored when Alan Young found space for a header.

It hit the bar, was scrambled away to the edge of the penalty area, and fell nicely for Paul Edwards to get in a drive. Aleksic leapt smartly to make a good save.

Carl Valentine's runs from midfield down the right flank caused the Town some problems, and after getting round Carr and Faulkner he laid on a chance which Vic Halom headed over the bar.

The Town took some time to settle, but in their first serious attack they shocked Oldham with a controversial goal. To overcome West's enforced absence, they had brought in Godfrey Ingram for his first full senior game, and were operating a highly mobile 4-4-2 system, with Boersma and Jim Husband playing behind Ingram and Ron Fletcher.

It called for a lot of hard work in midfield, from Boersma particularly, and a lot of patience to build up moves carefully. At times the ball had to be held back while colleagues made runs into Oldham's defensive cover.

The opening goal illustrated the calm confidence of the Town's build-up. Lil Fuccillo, Jones and Price worked the ball down Oldham's right wing from a free kick. Price's cross was headed out by Hurst, and Ricky Hill moved in to shoot from the clearance.

The shot was charged down, but Boersma was in the right spot to hammer in another drive, from a range of around 30 yards.

The shot was struck with tremendous power, and Oldham goalkeeper John



● **THE KILLER GOAL:** Phil Boersma leaves defenders sprawling as he slams in the Town's winner in the 48th minute. Boersma is Godfrey Ingram, the 18-year-old who was playing the ball into the net.

Platt beat the turf in frustration after it went over his head, through his hands, into the net.

Then came the drama as Platt retrieved the ball, and held it aloft for all to see that it had gone flat.

Referee Ron Challis, not quite the best in the business, was faced with a decision which was bound to upset one team or the other.

In the dressing rooms later, it was confirmed that the ball burst as Boersma hit it, probably ripped by a stud as a defender tried to tackle. Platt complained that the ball fizzed through his hands already out of shape "like a balloon when you let the air escape out of it."

So technically, the ball was unserviceable a split second after Boersma hit it. But Mr Challis did not have time to ask the questions that were posed after the game. To Oldham's disgust he ruled that the goal was a good one.

Fletcher missed a reasonable chance of making it 2-0 before Oldham were gifted an equaliser. Ian Wood whacked in a 30-yard shot which Aleksic caught then dropped and Alan Young knocked in the rebound.

But the Town stuck to their cool and confident game, with Ingram and Husband both flashing in and out of the action in quick bursts.

Husband might have scored but shot wide from a pass by Boersma, while Aleksic made a flying save to tip over a shot by Chapman.

Fletcher headed a good chance wide, from six yards, and Price cleared off the line after Steve

Taylor got through and beat Aleksic.

It was a fascinating battle, and fittingly it was finally won by the best touch of class of the whole 90 minutes. Ingram won possession in midfield, held off a tackle and slipped a pass of perfection through two defenders on the edge of the penalty area.

Boersma's acceleration took him on to it in a flash, and he swerved past Edwards and Hurst, drew Platt towards him, then cracked his drive low into the net.

Even Oldham's supporters applauded the artistry of the goal, both in its conception and its execution.

It knocked the optimism out of Oldham's approach by demonstrating how superior the Town were. Their only serious threat as the hopes died came when Taylor lashed a shot goalwards after a corner. It hit Jim Husband, and Oldham appealed hopefully but unsuccessfully, for a penalty.

Taylor's misery was complete later when he shot wide from a reasonable chance after a rare error by Price.

Match Details

OLDHAM ATHLETIC 1, LUTON TOWN 2
Half-time: 1-1

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Carr, Faulkner, Jones; Hill, Fuccillo, Husband, Boersma; Ingram, Ron Fletcher. Sub: McNichol, not used.

OLDHAM: Platt; Wood, Holt, Edwards, Hurst; Gardiner, Valentine, Chapman; Taylor, Halom, Young (Hoolickin, 74 minutes).

THE GOALS: Phil Boersma, 13 minutes, cannonball 30-yard shot which burst the ball as Oldham 'keeper Platt let it through his hands; Alan Young, gift equaliser, 28 minutes, after Milija Aleksic dropped a long shot by Ian Wood; Boersma again, 48 minutes, stunning finish after brilliant through ball by Godfrey Ingram.

ENTERTAINMENT: Plenty from both sides. More exciting than Saturday's draw and both sets of forwards missed chances that could have made the score much bigger.

REFEREE: Ron Challis, Tonbridge: full of strange decisions again, and left both teams less than fully satisfied with his performance.

BOOKINGS: Ron Fletcher—his fifth of the season—and Oldham's Les Chapman after the Luton player produced a foul and Chapman retaliated with a punch.

ATTENDANCE: 13,802 on a cold wet night. Oldham's biggest of the season, including about a hundred Town supporters, but not a single director.

FOURTH ROUND DRAW: Away to Millwall, who beat Rotherham 2-0 on Tuesday after a 1-1 draw at Millmoor on Saturday.

voting today
parish councillor
fighting it out wi
keeper John Abra
Stockdale, Toddin
Christopher Robert
field Avenue, Tod
and farmer
erick Russell, of
Farm, Toddington
ting at the army o
in Fins Lane, Tod
will start at 8 am
at 9 pm tonight.

SK
PL