

NICE AND EASY — BUT LUCKY HULL ESCAPE

THE WELL-EARNED point the Town collected at Boothferry Park on Saturday was only half of what they really deserved. They produced the most relaxed football I have seen from them in a long time, outsmarting a team living in fear of relegation.

Hull were lucky to escape with the draw, and they owed it to a defiant display by goalkeeper Eddie Blackburn and to the Town's only visible weakness—finishing which did not match their skill in every other department.

There is a temptation for Town followers to complain — no team should be so much better than the opposition and not win. But against that, never before this season have the Town done so much work to create so many chances.

Without any exaggeration Brian Stein alone could have had two hat-tricks. "I've never had that many shots at goal in one match before," he admitted afterwards. "I should have done better on the day."

Perhaps he should, but his display was still marvellous to watch. Hull must have thought there were three or four Steins in the forward line as he showed a mysterious ability to pop up in the right place and at the right moment to threaten danger in their penalty area.

Report by
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Sports Editor

And even on the occasions when he didn't find a space at the first attempt he produced baffling footwork and a deceiving shimmy to send defenders the wrong way and make the space.

Altogether he had eight direct shots at goal. Three were denied by the goalkeeper, who had an inspired match, and five went off target, three of them by a matter of inches as Stein realised that Blackburn would be beaten by nothing put near him.

The defence and midfield had to be reshuffled before kick-off when Paul Price went down with flu. Graham Jones went in at right-back, and after struggling for a time against the speed and deft footwork of Dave Stewart, he settled down to mark tighter after the first half-hour.

David Carr was even more effective on the other flank, and as the Town took command after a dull opening spell Paul Fletcher was able to stroll through the game demonstrating all his defensive coolness, and sometimes dribble forward to fire shots at goal.

My man of the match was Jim McNichol, who played at centre-half and completely subdued Alan Warboys, so much so that the big striker eventually kicked McNichol in a fit of temper, and was booked.

Hull went into the game saying that nothing less than outright victory was good enough as they fight



● **HULL IN DANGER:** Phil Boersma, whose work on both flanks and constant interventions in the middle of the attack kept Hull at full stretch, tries to beat goalkeeper Eddie Blackburn to a low cross.

to avoid the drop to Division Three.

But fight was hardly the word as the Town's midfield trio of Ricky Hill, Alan West and Lil Fucillo took charge. Billy Bremner

was a shadow of the player he used to be, and it looked to me as though two or three of his team-mates have already given up hope of Second Division survival.

They had an early knee change

by Sunday five coaches were busy booked as the club spokes-
man Fred Church said: "The Hungerford turn-out was
enormous and the signs are that even more are
going to Hanrow."
"The demand for coach seats has been terrific,
and as it is not so far, many more will be going by
train."
Not many Rovers' officials were left behind after
the exodus pulled out of Barton on Saturday morning.
The reserves were spared a fixture and travelled to
give their support.

Match Details

HULL CITY 1, LUTON TOWN 1

Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Knight; Jones, Carr, McNichol, Paul Fletcher; Hill, West, Fucillo; Stein, Ron Fletcher, Boersma. Sub: Ingram, not used.

HULL: Blackburn; Nisbet, Daniel, Croft, Roberts; Bremner, Haigh, Lord, Stewart; Warboys, Hawley. Sub: Dobson, not used.

THE GOALS: Alan West for the Town, 53 minutes, after a sweeping right-wing move, with Graham Jones supplying the final cross; Dave Roberts for Hull, 73 minutes, header after Tony Knight failed in an attempt to cut out high cross by Peter Daniel.

ATTENDANCE: 4,054, Hull's lowest of the season, with the locals already accepting that relegation is inevitable.

REFEREE: Jeff Sewell, Leicester: Played his part in full in a game which was full of interest after a dull first half hour.

ENTERTAINMENT: More than you might think from the score-line, with the Town playing some relaxed and effective football, and unlucky not to score half a dozen goals.

BOOKING: Alan Warboys for kicking Jim McNichol after the ball had gone.