

MOSS DOUBLE SHOWS MILLWALL THE WAY HOME

TWO BEAUTIFUL goals by David Moss ended the Town's recent bad run at The Den on Tuesday, to give Millwall another nudge towards the Third Division and ease worries that the Town might be slipping towards the relegation zone.

After three consecutive league defeats, the Town swamped Millwall, and the only possible cause for complaint over their performance was that they might have scored half a dozen goals.

But manager David Pleat was not complaining, and nor would I after a thoroughly professional performance by a Town side which looked a class above the home side in all departments.

Everyone enjoyed the quality of Moss's goals, and the Town boss said: "Once we had got in front I knew we wouldn't lose unless we panicked. We kept playing our football and showed composure and determination."

For Millwall, who had lost at Orient on Saturday, it was the end of a mini-revival which had taken them off the bottom of the league table for the first time since September.

But manager George Petchey was sporting and honest in defeat. "We can't complain at that," he said. "Luton played better football than we did and they deserved to win. We never got going."

The Town's superiority stemmed from a powerful display by the defence, with Chris Turner outstanding, and some cool work in midfield by David Carr, Ricky Hill and Alan West.

That blotted out most of the threats posed by a poor Millwall side, and Bob Hatton, Brian Stein and Moss completed the home side's agony with some inventive attacking.

But it has to be said that on this display Millwall are exactly where they belong, nailed to the foot of the Second Division and already three points adrift of the nearest safety spot.

They operated a 4-4-2 formation, in an attempt to close down the Town's midfield, and failed completely.

On a heavy pitch Brian Chambers never looked like sparkling against his old team, and with Phil Walker and Nick Chatterton also outplayed the Town were able to put a stranglehold on proceedings.

The only occasional threats from Millwall came when Towner broke down their right wing, but although he sometimes got the better of Mark Aizlewood the Town's covering was sure and safe, and Jake Findlay dominated his goal area.

At the other end, Millwall always looked in danger as Hatton and Stein created space and openings from the flanks. Carr provided the ball-winning element in the middle, and West and Hill both gave the front runners plenty of service with passes which

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Match Details

MILLWALL 0, LUTON TOWN 2
Half-time: 0-2

MILLWALL: Cuff; Donaldson, Gregory, Kitchener, Blyth; Chambers (Mehmet, 53 minutes), Towner, Walker, Chatterton; Seasman, Mitchell.

TOWN: Findlay; Price, Aizlewood, Turner, Donaghy; Carr (Jones, 88 minutes), Hill, West; Hatton, Stein, Moss.

THE GOALS: Two gems by David Moss — header from Hatton's cross in the 22nd minute, and neatly-placed chip from 25 yards after superb through ball by Hill in the 36th minute.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town seven saved and six off target; Millwall four saved and three off target.

REFEREE: Clive Thomas, Treorchy — if only another 45 like him could be found every Saturday . . .

ATTENDANCE: 6,068, a fair reflection on the standard of soccer served up by Millwall.

ENTERTAINMENT: Provided only by the Town, with some of their flowing football a sheer delight, but worth more goals.

BOOKING: Mal Donaghy for hands to cut out a through ball in midfield.

sliced through a square Millwall defence.

The Town got on top from the start, with Turner putting a header wide when he was unmarked to meet a free kick by Hill and Hatton seeing a header bundled off the line by Donaldson after a corner by Moss.

But Millwall might have pinched the lead in the 20th minute when John Seasman brought a lovely save out of Findlay with a 25-yard shot towards the top corner.

Two minutes later came a perfect lesson for Millwall in how to create and take a goal. Turner won a tackle in his own penalty area and cleared with a low kick down the left flank.

The ball was speeding towards West, who was being marked — although the word here is used loosely — by Chambers. West shook his hips to dummy the Millwall man, and the ball went on for Hatton to collect it on the Town's left wing.

A flick and a swerve took Hatton towards the goal-line, with Kitchener beaten, and Hatton's centre dropped accurately for Moss to head a picture goal. The whole thing, from one penalty area to the other, took less time to complete than to read about.

The second goal was equally quick in its execution, and again it started

in the Town's own penalty area.

Millwall, desperate but not convincing, were frantically pushing men forward in an attempt to find a gap in the Town penalty area, and Walker almost got through.

But as he shot for goal Findlay had come off his line to smother the shot. The ball ran loose and Hill took command. He ran perhaps 20 yards with it, then threaded a 30-yard pass down the middle, where Moss and Blyth were in a one-to-one confrontation.

It was never a real contest, with Moss beating Blyth by pace. Goalkeeper Pat Cuff had to come out to try to cut down the angle, and Moss watched him move then, from 25 yards, chipped the ball over his head into the net.

It finished Millwall, and they were lucky to reach half-time with no more goals against them.

Aizlewood burst through after robbing Chambers and shot a yard wide with Cuff beaten, and Moss, showing the sort of form that he normally turns on at Kenilworth Road, deserved a hat-trick as he exposed Millwall's defensive failings.

He almost got it in the second half when West put him clear, but Cuff pulled off the save off the match to finger-tip a blockbuster round the post.

In the end Millwall escaped lightly as the Town eased off. Hatton put a half-chance wide from about seven yards and Paul Price had a header from a corner tipped over the bar.

It was all too much for the faithful 6,000 who had turned up to cheer Millwall. Long before the end the only sound to be heard from the half-empty terracing was the shuffling of weary feet towards the exits. Their team had been made to look capable of doing little more itself.



● **HOT SHOT:** David Moss who scored both the Town goals at Millwall on Boxing Day to take his season's tally to nine.