

HAVING CLIMBED to eighth place in the Second Division with Saturday's home win against Orient, the Town had the rug pulled from beneath them at Turf Moor on Tuesday night.

They were victims of a knife-edge penalty decision, then of their own inability to add the telling finishing touches to some attractive attacking soccer.

A penalty award, which surprised even Burnley followers, hit them just before half-time and despite looking the better side for almost all the game they were beaten by the old combination of poor finishing and some bad luck.

Burnley pinched a goal with a quick break, but then had to sweat for the last half-hour after Bob Hatton came up with a gem to pull it back to 1-2.

The penalty, which rubbed out the Town's calm supremacy of the first half, incensed all the team. Referee Trelford Mills, from Barnsley, made a lot of controversial decisions, but few agreed when Steve Kindon's pace took him in pursuit of a weak back-header by Chris Turner.

Jake Findlay raced out of goal, spread himself perfectly and scooped up the ball at Kindon's feet. The experienced striker had the sense to roll headlong on the wet, slippery turf, and the penalty was given.

For the second consecutive match Findlay dived to his left, and saved the kick, but he had moved early. After Mark Aizlewood had been booked for dissent, Peter Noble scored with the second attempt, shooting into the other corner.

The Town, with David Carr having a forceful game in midfield, and the defence coping well with the speed of Kindon and Leighton James, did everything but score as they took control for most of the rest of the game.

But half their scoring attempts were off target, and for the rest Burnley had a mixture of good luck and good goalkeeping to keep them ahead.

They began to look like an away team, pinned in defence and hoping for a quick break, and in the 53rd minute, with the Town caught stretched, Kindon and James mounted a sweeping high-speed counter-attack.

James crossed hard and low from the left wing, and as Noble and Mal Donaghy raced for the ball, the Town man got there first, under pressure, and turned the ball into the net.

The reply six minutes later was a classic goal from Bob Hatton, taking Carr's pass on the edge of the box and turning quickly round Rodaway before hammering a spectacular drive into the top corner.

And for the rest of the game Burnley were on tenterhooks as the Town controlled the middle of the field and maintained pressure.

But goalkeeper Alan Stevenson made thrilling saves from Carr and Chris Turner, watched Brian Stein head a good chance way over the bar, and then escaped when another Carr effort screamed an inch or two the wrong side of the post.



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REPORTS
FROM LUTON,
MAINE ROAD
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Burnley Details

BURNLEY 2, LUTON TOWN 1

Half-time: 1-0

78/79

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Aizlewood, Donaghy, Turner; Hill, West, Carr; Taylor, Hatton, Stein. Sub: Price, not used.

BURNLEY: Stephenson; Scott, Brennan, Thomson, Rodaway; Noble, Jakub, Robinson (Hall, 53 mins); Fletcher, Kindon, James.

THE GOALS: Peter Noble penalty, second attempt after first saved, 42 mins, after Jake Findlay went down at Kindon's feet and came out with the ball; Mal Donaghy, own goal, 53 mins, under pressure from Noble, trying to clear near-post cross; Bob Hatton, 59 mins, clinical top corner shot from edge of box after turning round his marker.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town six saved and five off target; Burnley three off target and one saved.

REFEREE: Trelford Mills, Barnsley: quick with the book and even Burnley players thought he should not have given the penalty which began the scoring.

BOOKINGS: David Carr for a trip on Kindon; Mark Aizlewood for dissent over the penalty—and that takes him past 20 points to bring him a three-match suspension. Rodaway of Burnley for dissent.

ATTENDANCE: 7,540 on a wet, cold night, but including a handful from Luton.

ENTERTAINMENT: Good neat soccer played by the Town, but lacking the final thrust; Burnley looked good with quick breaks.