



EASY ON THE EARS... BUT NOT TO LOOK AT

Gift goals put Rovers clear before late rally

NEWS that the Town had done no worse than lose by the odd goal in five at Eastville Stadium on Tuesday night may have sounded positively encouraging to Luton ears 130 miles away. But Luton eyes at Bristol had to look very hard indeed to find bright spots.

I for one could not disagree with Bristol Rovers boss Bobby Campbell when he said: "The score-line flattered Luton—if they had gone down 3-0 it would have been a truer reflection on the game."

Two late goals by David Moss, one a free-kick and the other a penalty, put a sheen on the result which was rarely visible in the Town's performance.

The fact that four goals scored so far this season have all come from set pieces speaks for itself, and once again it was hard to see goals arriving in any other way.

**SPORTS EDITOR BRIAN SWAIN
REPORTS FROM EASTVILLE**

Brian Stein was pulled off when the Town were two down, with Ricky Hill moving forward to the right flank of attack and Alan Birchenall going into midfield.

clearance, and while Saxby was still flat on his back White collected the second gift goal of the night.

CAUGHT

Wayne Turner, who had played consistently well, came under increasing pressure from the speed and trickery of Barraclough, the former Newcastle and Birmingham winger. With the Town forced to go further forward in the search for a goal, Turner was caught for once and Barraclough's centre dropped perfectly for White to head his second goal.

Rovers goalkeeper Martin Thomas had to make his first save of the match in the 79th minute, when Moss went through on a solo run, but three minutes later the goalkeeper stood a yard off his line at a free-kick and from the edge of the penalty area Moss curled the ball over the wall and into the net.

Two minutes from time Williams tripped Tony Grealish and Moss hammered his second goal from the penalty spot.

It left Rovers on edge for the last couple of minutes when they should have been home and dry, but all the Town's efforts broke down long before they reached the danger zone.

"They played some good football at times, but they lack a bit of penetration," said the Rovers manager. It was a polite way of summing up a problem which showed no sign of easing despite Moss's notable contributions.

NEW FAULTS

It made very little difference, and the Town's problems stemmed from the fact that while all the old faults arose in the opposing side's penalty area, some alarming new ones appeared at the other end.

The early stages of the game suggested that two well-matched sides would see stalemate last for 90 minutes, with Bristol Rovers doing most attacking and the Town defending well.

Paul Price got in a timely clearance to deny Stewart Barraclough, and Jake Findlay made saves from David Williams and Steve White.

BATTLE

Holding on to a 0-0 scoreline at half-time, there was a chance that the Town might battle through to keep their point, even if they showed precious little sign of taking both.

But Findlay made a basic error in the 57th minute when he drop-kicked a pathetic clearance straight to Miah Dennehy, who collected the pass and strode forward to score a gift for his first goal in league football.

Seven minutes later Mike Saxby, who had been beaten on the round by Steve White earlier, slipped in an attempt to stop the same player reaching a high

● **MOSS MAGIC:** Above is the 84th-minute scene as David Moss second from the right, floats a free kick over the wall for the Town's first goal. Left: the penalty that made it 2-3 with two minutes to go.

Pictures by
**MARK
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Match Details

BRISTOL ROVERS 3, LUTON TOWN 2

Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Turner, Saxby, Price; Hill, Donaghy, Grealish; Stein (Birchenall, 66 mins), Hatton, Moss.

BRISTOL ROVERS: Thomas; Pulis, Bater, Aitken Harding; Emmanuel, Williams, Clarke; Barrowclough, White, Dennehy. Sub: Taylor, not needed.

THE GOALS: Miah Dennehy for Rovers, 57 minute, pass supplied by Jake Findlay; Steve White for Rovers, 64 minutes, volley after Mike Saxby fell over in clearance attempt; White again, 68 minutes, far post header from Barrowclough's centre; David Moss for the Town, 84 minutes, free-kick curled over wall from edge of penalty area; Moss again, 88 minutes, penalty after Williams fouled Grealish.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town four off target and one saved; Rovers eight off target and three saved.

ENTERTAINMENT: Flashes of pretty football from the Town, but no shooting power to finish it off.

REFEREE: Lester Shapter, Newton Abbot—firmly in control.

BOOKING: Wayne Turner for a body-check on Stewart Barraclough in the second minute.

ATTENDANCE: 5,614, with the Town regulars still turning up in hope.