

SWANSEA SWAMPED IN GOAL-RUSH

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UNBEATEN IN 17 league games, and with two promotion seasons behind them, Swansea City were forced to swallow a large, nasty dose of their own medicine at Kenilworth Road as the Town turned on a super-show to grab top place in the Second Division.

"They could have scored ten," admitted Swansea manager John Toshack after the Town's scintillating soccer had put five past a ponderous defence. "Luton's football was quite brilliant at times."

Journalists charged with the duty of choosing a man of the match from each team for the Sunday papers found the task nearly impossible; the Town had so many men playing at peak form, while Swansea

seemed to have none.

Town defenders made their jobs look so easy that they had few opportunities to compete for the man of the match tag, although Jake Findlay had to make a difficult and important save in the first minute when Alan Waddle burst

Report

By **BRIAN SWAIN**
Sports Editor

through with the ball at his feet.

That early scare was the only real threat to the Town's control, with Findlay and the defence never in danger until the match had been won.

It was a day to savour the delights of a Town side combining individual talents with smart teamwork. Tony Grealish put the steel into midfield with another impressive performance, and the delicate control of Ricky Hill and the devastating passing of Alan West destroyed Swansea's attempts to play it tight at the back, where they started with four defenders plus a sweeper.

David Moss was a marvel of pace, trickery and expert dead-ball shooting. Brian Stein used his brain as well as his feet to take men out of position and work openings for himself or for team-mates, and Bob Hatton responded with his sharpest display of the season.

Swansea showed little sign of being able to survive such individual superiority, and they were destroyed when such talent was harnessed into a real team game.

Town boss David Pleat picked out the second goal, tucked away by Hatton in the 17th minute, as the best of the lot. "It was as



good a goal as you will ever see in your life," he said.

It was a goal typical of the Town's general performance, with a compact defence halting a Swansea raid, West's pass exposing Swansea to a quick run by Moss, and Hatton wrong-footing the goalkeeper as the shot was whipped low into the net.

The Town's third, in the 58th minute, after a spell in which Swansea had at last begun to look like a team, was another classic. Quick passing from midfield involving Hill, Hatton and Stein ripped Swansea apart and West finished it off perfectly for his first goal of the season.

Swansea's only excuses for being outplayed were that Toshack and Robbie

James were out of the attack with injuries, and Alan Waddle had to limp off in the 24th minute.

But the first two goals had already been scored by then. David Moss had hit the first from a penalty after Dave Rushbury tripped Stein. Town fans thought the same player had given away a penalty earlier on, but referee Jeff Bray ruled that Moss's shot at goal had hit the defender's hand, and had not been handled intentionally.

Two down at half-time, Swansea re-organised for the second half. Centre-half Jeremy Charles, son of Mel and nephew of Big John, and newly named young player of the month, moved into attack and got absolutely nowhere against Mike Saxby.

The pace and accuracy of the Town's passing swamped the Welshmen and their token attempts at a second-half fightback were killed by West's goal, then buried within two minutes as Hill snapped up the Town's fourth, his third of the season, from Hatton's pass.

The rest was academic, with the Town free to express themselves in sheer entertainment, and in the last minute the fifth goal completed Swansea's misery.

Another perceptive pass by West sent Moss racing through the middle. Stevenson was beaten for speed, and pulled the winger down. He collected a booking for that, and after treatment Moss got up, examined the defensive wall and the goalkeeper's position, and flighted the free kick into the net for his seventh goal of the season.

● **QUEUING UP:** Alan West, far left, turns away after putting the Town three goals clear in the 58th minute, with Bob Hatton also in the picture after laying on the final pass.

● **BELOW: TWO'S UP:** Ricky Hill celebrates his goal, the Town's fourth, with two-goal marksman David Moss sharing the pleasure.



Match Details

LUTON TOWN 5, SWANSEA CITY 0
Half-time 2-0

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Donaghy, Saxby, Price; Grealish, Hill, West; Hatton, Stein, Moss. Sub: Aizlewood, not needed.

SWANSEA: Crudgington; Attley, Marustik, Charles, Phillips, Rushbury; Craig, Mahoney, Callaghan; Waddle (Stevenson, 24 mins), Baker.

THE GOALS: David Moss, penalty, 10 mins, after Rushbury tripped Brian Stein; Bob Hatton super-goal, 17 mins, brilliantly created by Alan West and Moss; West, 58 mins, another gem, from build-up work by Ricky Hill, Hatton and Stein; Hill, 60 mins, crashing drive from Hatton's pass; Moss again, 89 mins, direct from free kick after Stevenson had tripped him on the edge of the box.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town nine off target and five saved; Swansea two off target and four saved.

ENTERTAINMENT: Breathtaking, with the Town's performance easily as superior as the score-line suggests.

ATTENDANCE: 10,004 — best so far this season, but nearly 5,000 lower than when the sides last met in the league at Kenilworth Road, in the Fourth Division 12 years ago.

FREE: Jeff Bray, Hinckley — widely accused of missing a penalty, but I thought he was right then, and

LOOKING: Nigel Stevenson for the trip on Moss which got its due reward with the fifth goal.

Table-toppers for first time since war

VICTORY over Swansea created history for Luton Town: they went to the top of the Second Division, and it is the first time they have held that exalted place since 1939, when the season ended after a few weeks because of the war.

The Town have been promoted from the Second Division twice since the war, but each time as runners-up, and at no time in those campaigns did they lead the division.

But while Town supporters can savour the pleasure of the league table produced by Saturday's results, it has to be noted that 14 other clubs are within two points of them.

The Town are one of five teams at the top, with seven points from five games. As it turned out, Alan West's 58th-minute gem was the goal which put them ahead on goal difference.

Their 13 league goals make them leading scorers in the top three divi-

sions of the Football League, and they have a goal difference of plus seven. Newcastle, Leicester and Notts County all have a goal difference figure of four and are second, third and fourth according to goals scored. Sunderland are fifth, also with seven points, but with a goal figure of only plus two.

First lap indications are that it is going to be a wide open race for promotion — the last three unbeaten records tumbled on Saturday. While Swansea were losing thirs at Kenilworth Road, Cambridge United lost 0-2 at Sunderland and Notts County, who entertain the Town on Saturday, went down at Leicester when Alan Young popped in the only goal of the game five minutes from time.

Newcastle's 4-1 win at Orient put the Londoners in familiar territory

at the wrong end of the table.

Shrewsbury are still bottom, with one point. Oldham, Burnley, West Ham, Orient and Charlton are all on three points. Queens Park Rangers have four following a 3-0 home win over Fulham, with Tony Currie scoring on his home debut after his £400,000 transfer from Leeds.

All the strugglers know that they have enough time to make up the leeway. But a year ago, at the same stage of the season, three of the bottom five clubs were the three who went down at the end of the campaign.

And Town followers can note with pleasure that after five games last season the top three clubs were Stoke, Crystal Palace and Brighton, who all went on to win promotion.



WRONG WAY: Swansea goalkeeper Crudgington leaves a yard too much at the near post, and is left helpless as Hill's shot beats him.