

Looking up, not down

FOUR games without defeat have transformed the Town's league position. Three weeks ago they were hovering marginally above the relegation zone.

Today they are midway up the Second Division table in a comfortable 11th place, and an assault on the promotion positions is possible, if improbable.

Fourteen points from 15 matches leaves them three points clear of the wrong end of the table, but seven behind the nearest promotion place.

Queen's Park Rangers, who entertain the Town on Saturday, edged out of the bottom three on goal difference with a 0-0 draw at Grimsby.

Watford, the Town's opponents on Tuesday, followed their midweek league shock win over Nottingham Forest by losing 1-2 at Newcastle and 1-3 at Bristol Rovers on Tuesday night, and are now two points behind the Town.

Notts County held on to top place with a 1-1 draw at Wrexham. West Ham, unbeaten since the Town won at Upton Park on the first day of the season, beat bottom club Bristol Rovers at Eastville to keep second place with 22 points, two behind County.

Next come Chelsea, with 21, after a one-goal win at Ninian Park, a result which dropped Cardiff into the bottom three for the first time this season.

Town Match Verdict ★★★★★

1-11-80

3443



● **GOAL OF THE MONTH CONTENDER:** Steve White (pictured left) eludes his marker to meet Brian Stein's cross. Right: goalkeeper Bob Bolder is grounded as White scores the Town's third goal.



EVEN BETTER THAN IT LOOKED ON TV!

IF MANAGER David Pleat had his way, armchair fans would have missed seeing the Town produce a splendid TV advert for Second Division soccer as they demolished promotion contenders Sheffield Wednesday at Kenilworth Road.

The BBC made it look a pretty good match. But TV viewers didn't see the half of it — it was even better on the day. With so many good things to see, the film editors had no choice but to give TV watchers short measure.

Mr Pleat reckoned that his team had not quite produced its best, but I found it hard to agree with that. Negative visitors interested only in holding on to a point were broken down by persistence and determination, then swept aside imperiously in the last half hour.

The Town produced the

Report by Brian Swain Pictures: Mark Richards

right mixture of patience and self-discipline, and if they got what they deserved, so did Sheffield Wednesday.

They kicked off with four men across the middle, and promptly pulled two of them back to soak up heavy pressure and hope for something on the break.

Terry Curran threatened danger occasionally with darting runs down the flanks, but otherwise the only consistent Wednesday attacking plan was to bash

the ball high and hard towards Andy McCulloch's head.

The scheme never had a hope because Clive Goodyear had his best game yet at centre-half. Mr Pleat spent a sleepless night wondering whether to re-

call Mike Saxby, and was rewarded by a dream performance by Goodyear.

Alan Judge came into the side for his second league appearance after Jake Findlay failed a fitness test. He didn't look as confident going for crosses as Findlay, but benefited from his understanding with Goodyear, and pulled off a late save which could not have been bettered by any goalkeeper.

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 3, SHEFFIELD WED 0
Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Judge; Stephens, Aizlewood, Goodyear, Price; Grealish, Hill, Donaghy; Stein, White, Moss. Sub: Antic, not needed.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY: Bolder; Blackhall, Grant, Smith, Pickering; Hornsby, Taylor (Mirocevic 57 mins), Johnson, Sterland; McCulloch, Curran.

THE GOALS: David Moss, penalty, 51 minutes, after Malcolm Smith tripped Ricky Hill; Moss again, 68 minutes, brilliant chip from Hill's pass; Steve White, 80 minutes from pitch-long move involving Kirk Stephens, Hill and Brian Stein.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town ten saved and seven off target; Wednesday eight saved and four wide.

ENTERTAINMENT: High-speed excitement, with the Town back to form with a vengeance once the deadlock was broken.

ATTENDANCE: 12,092. Second highest of the season, after Watford, with up to 4,000 making the journey from Sheffield.

REFEREE: Tom Bune, Cranleigh; proved that good referees can have off days with two or three glaring mistakes.

The biggest factor of all was that the Town won total domination of midfield and Ricky Hill recaptured his best form on the ball and off it.

He played a part in all three goals and the only possible complaint is that the result should have been a bigger hiding over a side which refused to compete positively until the first goal went in.

Referee Tom Bune may have done the Town a favour by mistake. Mike Pickering felled Brian Stein in the penalty area in the 18th minute. Television confirmed what most of us believed at the time — it was a penalty and Mr Bune boobyed by waving play on.

DEFENSIVE

The decision encouraged Wednesday to persevere with their defensive tactics and they protected goalkeeper Bob Bolder with a human wall.

He had to make a brave spreading save at Steve White's feet in the 27th minute, but Wednesday's lack of enterprise finally left him defenceless.

Jack Charlton had told his players to be on their best behaviour to avoid further additions to their long list of bookings.

STOPPED

In the 51st minute Pickering fouled White in midfield. He stopped to apologise and pick up the Luton player, and was out

of position as the Town took the free kick quickly.

Mark Aizlewood's through pass set Hill free and Malcolm Smith's lunge brought him down.

DUMMY

David Moss stroked home the penalty, then added a gem of a goal in the 68th minute. Tony Grealish and Hill worked the ball through midfield, Stein sold the defence a dummy by letting the ball run, and Moss neatly chipped the goalkeeper.

With Wednesday forced to come out of their shell, the Town made full use of every yard of space on the pitch, and ten minutes from time came the second contender for the goal of the month award.

BURST

It started in the Town's penalty area. Judge hesitated in going for a low cross and Kirk Stephens took command. He burst out of defence and switched the ball to Hill. He kept it moving quickly and accurately, on to Stein, and his early cross over the top of the defence put White in for a chance which was taken quite beautifully.

Judge's late reflex save from Mel Sterland's header completed a day to remember, with the Town's first clean sheet since Grimsby six matches ago, and only the fourth in 18 league and cup matches.



● **FOILED:** Brian Stein bursts through as the Town pour on the second-half pressure against Sheffield Wednesday. Goalkeeper Bob Bolder has closed his eyes, but the save has been made and Wednesday breathe again.



● **EXPOSED:** Bolder, alone and without cover, spreads his body to save first half.