

YORKSHIRE GRIT AND DETERMINATION WINS

Recovery effort is too little, too late

IF THE TOWN'S promotion hopes are not quite dead they need a miracle to get over the mauling rival contenders Sheffield Wednesday dished out at Hillsborough. A recovery in the last 20 minutes lifted a little of my dejection, but by that time the Town's attempts to play dainty football had been over-run by a more-basic direct approach.

An early injury which took Ricky Hill out of the game destroyed the Town's tactical planning, and old-fashioned grit and determination enabled Wednesday to leapfrog over the Town in the league table.

Crafty Jack Charlton got his players wound up — he's been telling everyone this season that they're not good enough for the First Division. And to gee them up just a little more for the Town's visit he lashed out in his match programme column with a surprising attack on his team. He praised their skill and ability, but added: "What is missing is the right attitude . . .

"Until we develop that extra determination, that extra will to win, then all the skill in the world would be no good to us in the First Division."

His words goaded his men into finding the extra yard of pace and the extra ounce of effort that makes the difference between winners and losers.

If Charlton's preparations were right, we had little chance to judge David Pleat's. But they looked less than ambitious: Steve White was dropped, Mark Aizlewood was recalled and with Mal Donaghy going into a midfield defensive role the Town began the game with only two orthodox attackers, Brian Stein and David Moss.

The idea, presumably, was that they would pull

**REPORT FROM HILLSBOROUGH BY
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defenders wide and make spaces for midfield men to break into. Defensively, the system looked good enough, but the plans fell apart when Hill collected a bad bruise on a hip and had to go off after 21 minutes.

Godfrey Ingram went on as sub, and the more orthodox formation rarely matched the home team's Yorkshire grit.

The strange thing was that on clear chances the Town might have pinched a point they didn't deserve. Stein twice went through with only the goalkeeper to beat, and saw his efforts smothered each time.

Both misses were crucial: the first was within a minute of Sheffield taking the lead, and the second came early in the second half before Wednesday had scored their second goal.

The Town had expected the major Sheffield attacking threat to come down the middle, but with Mike Saxby holding big Andy McCulloch well, the home team's success came from good work on the flanks.

In Mellor, on the left, sparked a succession of swinging attacks. He hit the bar in the sixth minute, and started the move which put the home side ahead in the 26th. He attacked down the left wing, crossed to the far right, and with the Town defence stretched Ante Mirocevic was nicely in place to head a simple goal when Terry Curran delivered the final cross.

Moss had a half-chance when the ball ran loose to him just outside the penalty area, but lifted his shot over the stranded goalkeeper and over the bar, and for too long the Town's

attacking threats were sporadic answers to more consistent pressure at the other end.

Stein's second miss came four minutes before the second goal, and was all the more galling because although he was at an angle he chose to try to take on the goalkeeper when a pass square across the box would have put Ingram in.

With the crowd roaring them on to greater effort, the Wednesday players were in danger of getting too frantic as they tried to build on their lead, but two goals in a minute by Curran put them in the clear.

There was some doubt about whether Paul Price or Jake Findlay was fouled in the crowded goal-mouth as both goals came from quick direct assaults, but in each case attempted clearances failed. It meant that in five short minutes the Town had missed the chance to equalise, then found themselves without a hope, three down and in danger of being crushed.

Curran should have completed a four-minute hat-trick, but scooped a close-range shot over the bar when he met a cross by Kevin Taylor, and McCulloch missed an equally good chance from a centre by Mellor.

In the last 20 minutes Wednesday went off the boil and at long last the Town showed something more like their old style.

A break led by Donaghy led to a goal in the 75th minute. Stein took the ball down the right wing, did very well to beat Dave Grant and get in a hard low cross which Ingram converted into his sixth goal in 12 appearances.



CONSOLATION: Godfrey Ingram forces himself between two defenders and gets airborne to score the Town's goal at Hillsborough from a cross by Brian Stein.

4-4-81

Sinking—but gap still two points

3466

Match Details

**SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 3
LUTON TOWN 1**
Half-time: 1-0

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Saxby, Price, Aizlewood; Antic, Hill (Ingram, 21 mins), Grealish, Donaghy; Stein, Moss.

SHEFFIELD WED: Bolder; Blackhall, Smith, Shirliff, Grant; Mirocevic, Johnson, Taylor (Hornsby, 76 mins), Mellor; McCulloch, Curran.

THE GOALS: Ante Mirocevic header from Terry Curran centre, 26 minutes; Curran twice, 50 and 51 minutes; Godfrey Ingram, 75 minutes, from good right wing run and cross by Brian Stein.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town three saved and eight wide; Wednesday three saved, nine wide, two hit the woodwork. Corners: 8-5 to the Town.

REFEREE: Alan Banks, Manchester — interrupted play more often than necessary by ignoring the advantage rule.

ATTENDANCE: 17,006—Second highest in the division, and better than two in the First.

ENTERTAINMENT: Pretty good to watch once the Town started to get their game together in the last 20 minutes or so, Wednesday were easily the better team until then.

BOOKING: Peter Shirliff for a body-check on Mr Donaghy.

ALTHOUGH THE Hillsborough defeat sent them down two places in the Second Division table, to eighth, the Town are still only a couple of points below the third promotion place in the Second Division. West Ham ensured their return to the First Division when they beat bottom club Bristol Rovers 2-0 at Upton Park, and Notts County are four points clear of the pack in second place after a 1-1 Sunday home draw with Wrexham.

Swansea seem to be hitting form at the right moment and moved into third place with a crucial 2-0 home victory over Blackburn. Goal difference divides the two teams, and Grimsby share the 41-point mark with them after being beaten by a disputed penalty at Loftus Road. That win for QPR put the Londoners ahead of the Town on goal difference, and as they come to Kenilworth Road on Saturday a decisive result could finally end the losers hopes.

Derby County also need a positive result when they take on Notts County at the Baseball Ground, because they have dropped to ninth after a surprise one-goal defeat away to relegation battlers Shrewsbury.

Another surprise result looks like being the end of Chelsea's hopes.

Consistently in the top three until the turn of the year, they were beaten by the only goal at home to Cardiff.

West Ham's promotion was not the only issue settled this week. Crystal Palace are definitely relegated from the First Division, with Brighton, Norwich and Leicester locked level on points in a survival battle.

If Cardiff pick up at least a point at home to Preston on Saturday, Bristol Rovers will definitely be relegated to the Third Division. Bristol City and Preston are favourites to make the drop with them.

Rotherham and Charlton are five points clear at the top of the Third Division, with Huddersfield and Barnsley leading the scramble for the third promotion place.

Promotion-chasers in the Second Division:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
West Ham	36	23	9	4	67	28	55
Notts Co	36	15	15	6	40	33	45
Swansea	36	15	11	10	52	38	41
Grimsby	36	14	13	9	39	32	41
Blackburn	36	13	15	8	37	29	41
Sheff Wed	35	16	8	11	46	37	40
QPR	37	14	11	12	48	37	39
Luton Town	36	14	11	11	49	42	39
Derby Co	37	13	13	11	50	48	39



● MISSED: Bob Bolder saves from Brian Stein, with Godfrey Ingram in the background hoping to see an equaliser created.