



WINNER all the way! Luton's Ricky Hill draws back that lethal right foot and a split second later the ball was nestling in the back of the Rangers net to give Town a 100 per cent start to the new soccer season.

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Luton turf 'em out!

Hill's the hot-shot

By ERIC HARRIS
QPR 1 Luton Town 2

THERE may have been something artificial about the playing surface — but there was nothing phoney about Luton's bubbling 2-1 victory at QPR last night.

After a first half when they struggled to combat the difficulties of Rangers' new £300,000 Omniturf surface, the Town hit back with a vengeance to take their sixth point of the new season.

One down in the first half — thanks to Luton old boy Andy King's goal in the 34th minute — the Hatters made Terry Venables' million pound team look nothing more than ordinary in the second period.

Goals from Mark Aizlewood and Ricky Hill gave Luton a thoroughly deserved victory, and left the large contingent of Town fans congregated behind one goal chanting with uncontrollable delight.

It was hardly surprising that Luton manager David Pleat and his chief coach David Coates were not really interested in the practicalities of the artificial surface.

They were more occupied with the way Luton had demolished Rangers in the second half with a refreshing display of accurate passing and lethal finishing.

"It took us 30 minutes to get going," said Pleat, recalling three players making early slips on the greasy surface. "But by the end of the match, we were loving every minute of it."

And there would not have been many in the 18,000 crowd who would disagree with the Luton boss when he added: "As far as entertainment was

concerned, it was 101 per cent.

"We weren't interested in the pitch. We were more concerned with our own performance and I don't think we let anyone down tonight."

Rangers manager Venables summed up perfectly the final difference between the two teams when he said: "In the second half, Luton were positive. We didn't seem to have anyone to pass to."

It took Luton 15 minutes to direct their first shot at Rangers keeper John Burridge and, for 30 minutes the Town fought a continuous uphill battle.



Jake Findlay had earlier made an important save when he parried Terry Fenwick's shot and, when King took advantage of Bob Hazell's cross to head past Findlay at the far post, it was nothing more than Rangers deserved.

Luton had to wait 39 minutes for their first corner when Burridge fumbled Brian Stein's weak shot. But that served only to signal the Town's revival and Raddy Antic forced Burridge to make a smart save before Aizlewood's ferocious shot brought a look of relief to Burridge's face when the effort screamed over the top.

Stein could have won a penalty a minute before half time when he appeared to be bundled off the ball by Gerry

Francis, but referee Robinson awarded a corner. Then, almost on the stroke of half time, Burridge tipped Antic's powerful header over.

Findlay had to make an excellent save from Simon Stainrod before Aizlewood equalised in the 68th minute. It was a goal made by Ricky Hill, who lobbed a high ball forward and Aizlewood — probably Luton's Man of the Match — just beat Burridge in the race for possession to toe-end the ball over the keeper's head.

Aizlewood's thirst for work in the tackle was responsible for the winner.

He dispossessed Francis and pushed the ball square to White. He immediately fed Hill who gave Burridge absolutely no chance with a cracking drive from the edge of the penalty area.



NO CHANCE . . . Aizlewood's in to beat Burridge and equalise

MATCH DETAILS

QPR: Burridge, Gregory, Fenwick, Waddock, Hazell, Roeder, Flanagan, Francis, Allen, King, Stainrod. Sub: Micklewhite.

LUTON: Findlay, Stephens, Aizlewood, Horton, Saxby, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, White, Antic, Ingram. Sub: Small.

ATTENDANCE: 18,000. **GOALS:** King (34), Aizlewood (68), Hill (84). **REFEREE:** A. Robinson (Portsmouth). **BOOKING:** Stainrod (foul on Findlay).