

SPORTS NEWS 1

DELIGHT AND DESPAIR IN 40 SECONDS

NEWCASTLE UTD 3 LUTON TOWN 2
Half-time: 2-0

AN AMAZING final 40 seconds at Newcastle in which the Town equalised, then conceded a winner when they might have pinched a point, saw the end of the last unbeaten away record in the Football League.

But the Town left St James's Park with another large addition to the unofficial Luton Town fan club. Newcastle's skipper Mick Martin said: "They're the best footballing side we have seen this season. When we went two up I expected the game to be over, but Luton kept playing their football, and kept coming back at us."

"We raised our game to meet them, and they still came close to taking a point. If that's the way they normally play they won't lose many games this season, and I think they could do well in the First Division, too."

Martin, whose prompting from midfield gave Newcastle their early supremacy, wasn't to know that the Town's overall performance was not the best we have seen this season, although it improved sharply after the interval.

When you equalise in the last minute and then lose you may be entitled to feel choked. But on the general run of play I thought Newcastle deserved to be winners.

FORECAST WAS RIGHT

Manager David Pleat had talked before the game about the dangers which Imre Varadi and Alan Brown might pose, and his forecast was only too accurate.

They became the only attackers I have seen this season capable of getting through and around the Town defence through sheer pace, with Varadi adding an edge to his game against the club that turned him down as a 16-year-old trialist.

He was my choice as man of the match, laying on both goals which gave Newcastle their 2-0 half-time lead. Clive Goodyear and Mal Donaghy were the men beaten for speed as Varadi raced down the flank and crossed, and each time Brown, on loan from Sunderland, was given much too much space, and his scoring shots were formalities.

The first came after only 45 seconds and the second in the 37th minute, and between the goals Chris Waddle hit the post when he should have scored.

The Town's only serious goal attempt of the first half was a free kick by David Moss, tipped over the bar by Kevin Carr.

Not much went right for Moss, but in the second half Ricky Hill started to get going, and with Newcastle's biggest crowd of the season getting frantic the game was fought at a cracking pace.

Newcastle defended stoutly and pulled extra men back with the result that for all their pressure the Town rarely got a clear sight of goal.

Steve White was inches short with a lunge which would have scored as a cross by Moss flashed across the goal area, and Raddy Antic, put on as sub for Goodyear in the 61st minute, had a stinging drive deflected over the bar.

The late drama started in the 83rd minute when Brian Stein, trying to find a way through on the right, was tripped by Wes Saunders and Moss scored from the penalty to pull it back to 2-1.

Suddenly Newcastle were frightened by the Town's all-out attacks. On my watch the match was 20 seconds short of 90 minutes when a cross-shot by Moss was pushed out but met by Donaghy for an equaliser that was a credit to a full-back.

My watch had reached exactly 90 minutes when Newcastle re-started, and with fans standing on their seats in excitement the Town's jubilation disappeared as the ball was pumped forward for Varadi to hit a spectacular winner, a 20-yard drive.

DETAILS

OWN: Aleksic; Stephens, Goodyear (Antic, 61 mins), Donaghy, Aizlewood; Hill, Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, White, Moss.
EWCASTLE: Carr; Brownlie, Carney, Haddock, Saunders; Frewick, Wharton, Martin; Brown (Shoulder, 70 mins), Varadi, Whiddle.
GOALS: Brown for Newcastle, 45 seconds and 37 mins; David Moss penalty, 83 mins; Mal Donaghy, 89 mins; Varadi, injury time.
OTHER STRIKES: Town six saved and two wide; Newcastle six saved, five wide, one hit the post. Corners 7-6 to Newcastle.
REFEREE: Trevor Fitzharris, Bolton.
ATTENDANCE: 21,037, highest in any Town match this season.
ENTERTAINMENT: Tremendous, especially in the second half.

Verdict on the Town's week ★★

Pulling clear with help from the pack

AFTER losing at Newcastle on Saturday, Luton Town came back to strengthen their grip on the leadership of the Second Division at Kenilworth Road on Tuesday night.

And while they were beating Bolton, results elsewhere conspired to help the Town's promotion bid. Rivals met each other and managed draws all round, which meant that the Town have now stretched their lead over the fourth place to ten points.

Second-placed Watford cut the gap to two points on Saturday when they beat Blackburn 3-2 at Vicarage Road, but are now five points

behind the Town. Their game in hand is against Grimsby, which had to be postponed because Watford were in League Cup action at Lincoln last night.

Queens Park Rangers lost third place when Shrewsbury beat them 2-1 in Shropshire, and Barnsley took advantage by moving into the top three for the first time.

Sheffield Wednesday kept in touch by win-

ning 2-1 at Cambridge, but on Tuesday night all the Town's main rivals failed to take full points.

Oldham forced a 0-0 draw on QPR's plastic pitch, and Sheffield Wednesday were held 2-2 at Hillsborough by Barnsley.

THE LEADING PLACES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Luton Tn	16	12	1	3	36	16	37
Watford	15	10	2	3	24	14	32
Barnsley	16	8	3	5	27	18	27
QPR	16	8	3	5	24	15	27
Oldham	16	7	6	3	22	16	27
Sheff Wed	16	8	3	5	18	19	27



● **OPENER:** Brian Stein ends a run of 10 games without a goal when he turns to crack in a low drive to put the Town in front in the 67th minute.

DOUBLE IS PRIZE FOR PERSISTENCE

Report by Brian Swain Pictures: Mark Richards

Weight of numbers stifled Town attacks for the first hour as Bolton concentrated on playing it tight at the back and throwing up a deep defensive barrier in front of goalkeeper Jim McDonagh.

It was frustrating for players and fans alike. The Town looked the better team, but patience and persistence had to be the priority.

The danger at half-time was that frustration and tension would take over, but as the non-stop attacking kept Bolton under pressure only one result looked possible.

It came as a shock in the 58th minute when Bolton mounted their first serious attack, and should have taken a preposterous lead.

They were using only two front runners, but one of them, Mick Carter, looking offside, got clear of a Town defence which had been pushed forward.

He ran on to Chris Thompson's through-pass, and was unopposed as Milija Aleksic faced him. Luckily for the Town Carter shot wide.

It came as a huge relief when Brian Stein, as persistent as any player on the field, finally got the goal.

the Town needed, in the 67th minute.

Mark Aizlewood's diagonal cross from the left swerved and bounced disconcertingly for the Bolton defence, and Stein was quick to control it and lash in a cracking low shot from the edge of the penalty area for his first goal in ten games.

Stein, David Moss and Steve White all began to find a little more space, and Moss wrapped up the points with a cheeky free kick ten minutes from time.

His chipped shot from a yard outside the penalty area took a deflection off the defensive wall to leave McDonagh helpless.

Aleksic had to make a couple of saves as Bolton made their final fling, and was injured in the last minute with a dive at Wayne Foster's feet.

Mal Donaghy, for the second time in his Luton career, took over in goal, and delighted everyone except the Bolton players with a flying catch in injury time.

● **LATEST** on Aleksic's injury, and David Pleat's Viewpoint: See SportsNews 4.

Tuesday's Details

LUTON TOWN 2 BOLTON WDRS 0
Half-time: 0-0

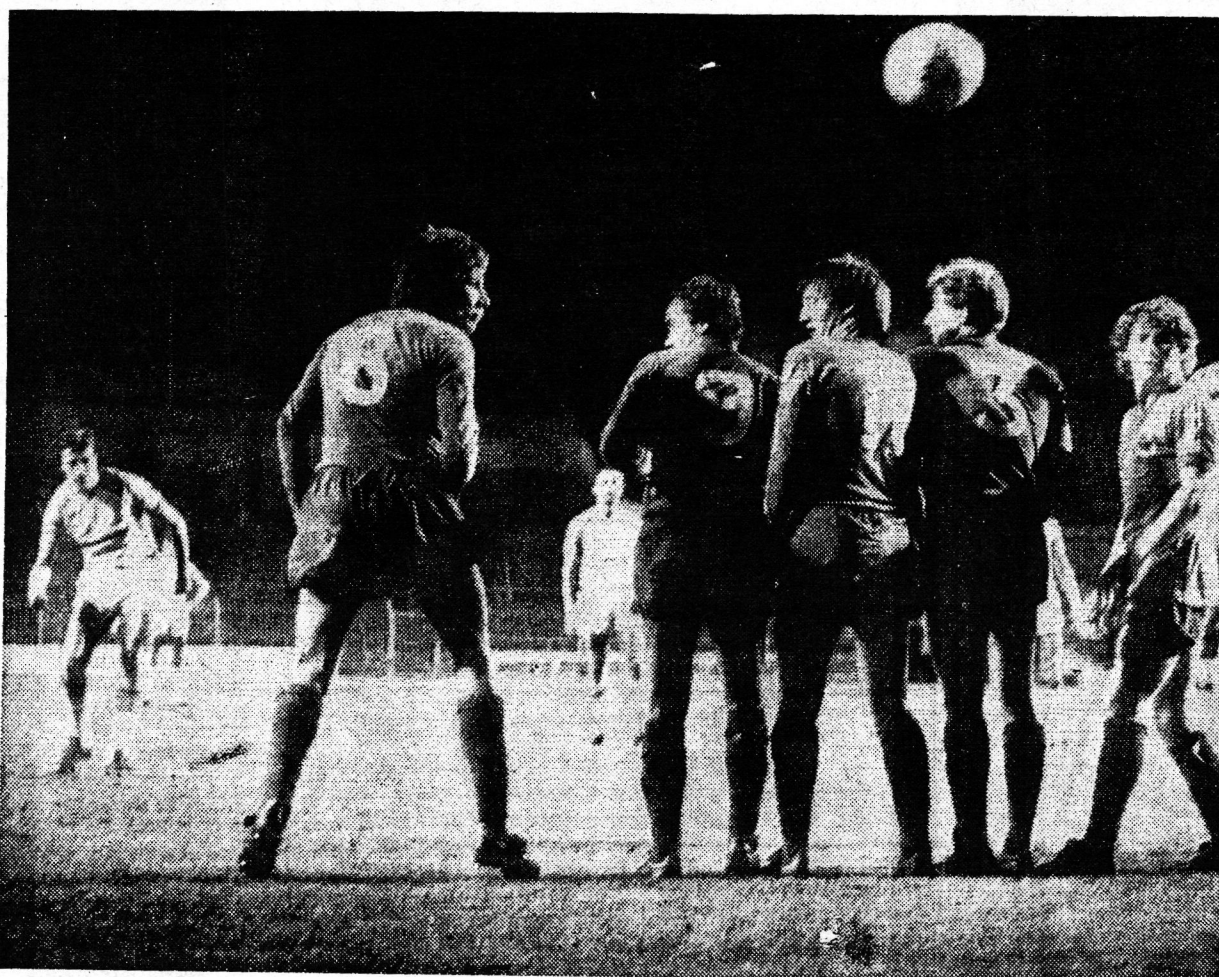
TOWN: Aleksic (Antic, 89 mins, Donaghy going into goal); Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Aizlewood; Hill, Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, White, Moss.
BOLTON: McDonagh; Whitworth, Jones, McElhinney, Bailey; Henry, Cantello, Hoggan, Chandler; Thompson (Foster, 82, mins), Carter.

THE GOALS: Brian Stein, 67 mins, turn and low shot edge of box; David Moss, 80 mins, free kick from 20 yards, deflected off the wall.

OTHER STRIKES AT GOAL: Town 11 off target and six saved; Bolton three saved and three wide. Corners: 9-6 to the Town.

ATTENDANCE: 8,889—lowest league gate since the visit of Charlton on the opening day of the season.

ENTERTAINMENT: Not the most sparkling match we have seen, with Bolton directing most of their energy into defence, and frustrating the Town and their supporters for a long time.
REFEREE: John Huntling, Leicester—missed or ignored more than he should have done, but at least he was impartial.



● **CLINCHER:** David Moss's free kick gets a deflection off Bolton number eight Chris Thompson in the wall to spin into the net for the Town's second goal.