



● **MATCH-WINNER:** Brian Horton, second from left, hammers in the goal that gave the Town victory over Third Division Swindon, and put them in the draw for a cup-tie against Ipswich a fortnight on Saturday.

LUCKY ENOUGH FOR WEMBLEY!

SWINDON MANAGER John Trollope wouldn't be at all surprised to see Luton Town go all the way to Wembley this season. "You can do it with luck like that," he said, after an astonishing refereeing mistake had given the Town a win they did not deserve against the Third Division strugglers.

He holds the record for most appearances with one club, after nearly 900 league and cup games for Swindon, and the mistake that robbed his side of a goal was, he said, the hardest decision he had ever had to accept.

Even referee Alf Grey of Great Yarmouth, who is on the FIFA list, admitted publicly that the flashpoint incident, 12 minutes from time, was "an unfortunate situation".

Privately, and to his credit, he apologised to Trollope, and also invited the Swindon chairman into his dressing room after the game to say sorry to him.

Town players felt sympathy for a Swindon side which had played above itself, and never looked like a team which had gone ten

Report by Brian Swain Pictures: Mark Richards

matches in the Third Division without a victory.

If they could not match the Town's normal individual skills, they more than made up for it with a determination and enthusiasm which stifled the Hatters in almost every department.

Swindon lined up with only two front runners, and although one of them was largely non-existent the Town defence was strangely disorganised too many times for comfort.

Paul Rideout, a former England youth international, compensated for Andy Rowland's shortcomings with a bustling up-and-down running dis-

play as Swindon defended in depth and broke out with quick counter-attacks.

If the Town were not as positive and fluent as they can be, Swindon can take credit for that. They seemed to relish the chance of having a tilt at a top team, with nothing to lose.

HURLY-BURLY

Trollope said it was their best performance for a long time, and I had the feeling that the cup-tie hurly-burly was not the sort of game Luton Town are best at.

Tackling and covering was the basis of a Swindon performance that stopped the Town taking a grip, and even an early goal

against them failed to unsettle the stubborn resistance.

Both goalkeepers played their part in keeping the game well balanced and on chances created we might have seen four or five goals at each end.

GAPS

But there were few clear-cut openings, and those that did crop up tended to give the home supporters most to worry about.

Collectively the whole Town team looked a peg below its normal form, and there were times when counter-attacks by Swindon caught the Town with too many men pushed too far upfield, leaving gaps at the back.

Swindon exploited two with an efficiency which was almost frightening for Town supporters to see, and if the ref had not boobed on the second the Town would probably have lost.

PENALTY

They had looked competent rather than classy in a first half of incident and excitement, and Swindon had no complaints when the Town were awarded a penalty in the 19th minute after Kevin Baddeley tripped Mark Aizlewood.

David Moss scored, but Mr Trollope believed another penalty should have been awarded two minutes later when Rideout got past Clive Goodyear and went down as Kirk Stephens got in a recovery tackle.

For five minutes at the start of the second half the Town threatened to click, but the Oak Road end's pent-up cheers were stifled as Jimmy Allan made a spectacular save from a flashing volley by Stephens, then saw Ricky Hill shoot wide at the end of a penetrating run through the middle.

CRAFTY

A second goal at that stage might have finished Swindon, but instead they collected a deserved equaliser in the 75th

minute. Aizlewood missed an interception in midfield, Rideout ran at Ma Donaghy, and with no-one close enough to help the defender the ball was pulled back for Gary Emmanuel to chip a crafty shot into the net from 20 yards.

Three minutes later came the moment that broke Swindon's heart.

Another counter-attack caught the Town stretched, and Findlay charged out of his area intent on flattening Rideout. He succeeded and got the booking his challenge deserved, but Rideout recovered his balance and blasted his shot into the net.

It was a quality goal taken through determination and strength, but Mr Grey had been too quick on the whistle. He gave a free-kick and the Town cleared the danger. "I saw the foul and I blew," said the hapless ref.

SETTLED

The Town were happy enough to accept their luck and settle for a replay, but skipper Brian Horton made a very professional point by realising more than most that if your luck is running well you need to make it count.

He did just that by snapping up a close-range winner in the 88th minute, his first goal for the Town, after Stein had headed down a long cross by Stephens.

At the end Trollope went on to the pitch to ask Mr Grey why he didn't play the advantage rule when it mattered, and found his wrath turned aside by an apologetic answer.

Horton stayed on the pitch to shake hands with each Swindon player, and commiserate with them.

And if the luck goes Luton Town's way in future rounds, the dreams of Horton shaking hands with a few top people in the Royal Box at Wembley aren't as daft as they sound.

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 2, SWINDON TOWN 1

Half-time: 1-0 81/82 (FAC)

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Aizlewood; Hill, Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, White, Moss. Sub: Antic, not used.

SWINDON: Allan; Baddeley, Lewis, Stroud, Henry; Williams, Emmanuel, Carter, Pritchard; Rowland, Rideout. Sub: Greenwood, not used.

THE GOALS: David Moss, 19 minutes, penalty after Mark Aizlewood was tripped by Kevin Baddeley; Gary Emmanuel, 75 minutes, after quick break out of defence by Swindon led by Paul Rideout; Brian Horton, 88 minutes, after knock-down header by Brian Stein.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town ten saved, ten wide; Swindon five saved, seven wide and one disallowed by a refereeing error. Corners: 12-10 to the Town.

REFEREE: Alf Grey, Great Yarmouth. Made one of the worst decisions seen for a long time at Kenilworth Road when he ruled out a "goal" by Rideout in the 78th minute and gave Swindon a useless free-kick instead for Jake Findlay's foul on the striker. Swindon had every right to feel robbed.

ATTENDANCE: 9,488 — pathetic for a team doing so well in the League.

ENTERTAINMENT: Always exciting, but never a classic, with the Town very lucky to win. Swindon deserved a replay at least, and might well have won but for Mr Grey's mistake.