

SPORTS NEWS 1

Chelsea lose to a touch of Stein magic

THE FINAL result was much more enjoyable than the game itself as the Town put themselves within three points of the championship at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

Chelsea looked like a side who knew they were going to be second best, and the Town hardly had to move out of bottom gear to beat them.

The normal tactics for away games almost made it stalemate. Seeking to contain Chelsea at the back and then look for something on the break, the Town found it all too easy to do the containing in midfield.

With Ricky Hill's sparkle missing from midfield because of his ankle injury the Town seemed content to ease their way through the game.

Neither side put consistent pressure on the opposing goalkeeper, yet for a spell towards half-time Chelsea threatened to take control.

Before kick-off they gave bottles of champagne to the Town players, a gift from Chelsea's new chairman Ken Bates, and in an early flourish Chelsea looked as though they might finish their home season with a sparkle.

But none of their work produced clear chances, and the Town hit back with their first shot at goal. Micky Droy fouled Brian Stein 25 yards from goal and Hill's deputy, Raddy Antic, curled the free kick around the wall into the net.

That was in the 25th minute, and it stung Chelsea into greater effort. The Town defence caught the litters for a time and Jake Findlay made a couple of timely saves before the equaliser was conceded two

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minutes into first-half injury time.

It stemmed from a poor headed clearance by Brian Horton. Gary Chivers was put clear on Chelsea's right wing. Alan Mayes had the first bite at a tempting cross, but his header was saved, only for Clive Walker to beat Clive Goodyear to the rebound and toe-poke the equaliser in from close range.

The Town improved in the second half, and Steve White put a good chance wide with a header from Stein's left-wing run and cross.

But in the 54th minute Chelsea were sunk by a brilliant individual effort by Stein. Lil Fuccillo and Kirk Stephens worked the ball down the inside-right position, with Stein reaching Stephen's through-pass just ahead of goalkeeper Steve Francis. Stein chipped the ball over the keeper, and was then in an impossible position, just inside the penalty area but only a yard from the by-line.

The chance looked to be gone, but Stein kept cool and carefully clipped a shot into the net off the inside of the far post for a goal I shall remember for years. It was a touch of pure magic on an afternoon that would have been mundane without it.

STAMFORD BRIDGE DETAILS

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Money; Antic, Fuccillo; Stein, White, Moss. Sub: Small, not used.

CHELSEA: Francis; Locke, Lee, Droy, Hutchings; Pates, Chivers, Terry; Rhoades-Brown (Canoville, 75 mins), Mayes, Walker.

THE GOALS: Raddy Antic 25-yard free kick for the Town, 25 minutes; Clive Walker for Chelsea, two minutes into first-half injury time; Brian Stein classic from an impossible angle, 54th minute.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town four saved and two wide; Chelsea four wide and five saved. Corners: 5-4 to Chelsea.

ATTENDANCE: 15,044.

REFEREE: Mike Taylor, Walmer.

ENTERTAINMENT: Result the most enjoyable feature of a game which the Town might have played better if the opposition had up more of a scrap.

Town Match Verdict ★★★★★



● IN LIGHTS: The scoreboard says it all. The Town's young fans celebrate the championship message.

'WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS'

THE FOOTBALL League Second Division championship trophy will be brought to Luton on Saturday, and handed over in front of a crowd which has enjoyed one of the happiest seasons in Luton Town's history.

A double dose of capital punishment this week ended with FA Cup finalists Queens Park Rangers going the way of most teams who are brave enough to try to match the Town's style and flair.

Hoping for promotion themselves, they did at least contribute far more to an entertaining night to remember than Chelsea did at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

A sending-off sparked four dramatic minutes that turned the match the Town's way to set them on the path to a 3-2 victory.

Rangers skipper Glenn Roeder was booked in the 20th minute for a fairly harmless obstruction on Raddy Antic, then earned a second booking 12 minutes later for a trip on Ricky Hill. Rangers boss Terry Venables complained with some justification that the first booking was harsh, and he made referee Ken Baker the scapegoat for Rangers' problems.

Roeder, a class player, may also wonder why he was daft enough to commit the foul on Hill having already received a caution. He left the unfortunate Mr Baker very little option.

Until then Rangers, sparked by the fiery determination of Gary Waddock in midfield, had threatened to get well

Report by Brian Swain Pictures : Mark Richards

into the game after blunting the Town's early thrusts.

But four minutes after the sending off Hill went streaming through again, following a through-ball by Stephens, and carefully shot the first goal over the head of Peter Hucker.

Rangers made a fight of it and Hucker made the best save we have seen for a long time at Kenilworth Road to deny David Moss, but was left tangled up with one of his own defenders when Steve White scored the second in the 48th minute after Moss had set up a quick break following the clearing of a Rangers corner.

The Town's teamwork looked better than that of Rangers, but Brian Horton had to clear off the line from Clive Allen before the Londoners got back into the game in the 69th minute with a diving header by Terry Fenwick after a corner had been

Title clinched with a capital double



● ON THE WAY: Steve White wriggles round QPR's Steve Wicks en-route to his 19th goal of the season.

QPR DETAILS

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

QPR: Hucker; Neill, Wicks, Roeder, Dawes; Waddock, Micklewhite, Flanagan, Fenwick, Allen, Stainrod. Sub: Burke, not used.

THE GOALS: Ricky Hill for the Town, 36 minutes; Steve White for the Town, 48 minutes; Terry Fenwick for Rangers, 69 minutes; David Moss, penalty for the Town, 80 minutes; Simon Stainrod for Rangers, 65 minutes.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town seven saved and five wide; Rangers four saved and six off target. Corners 8-8.

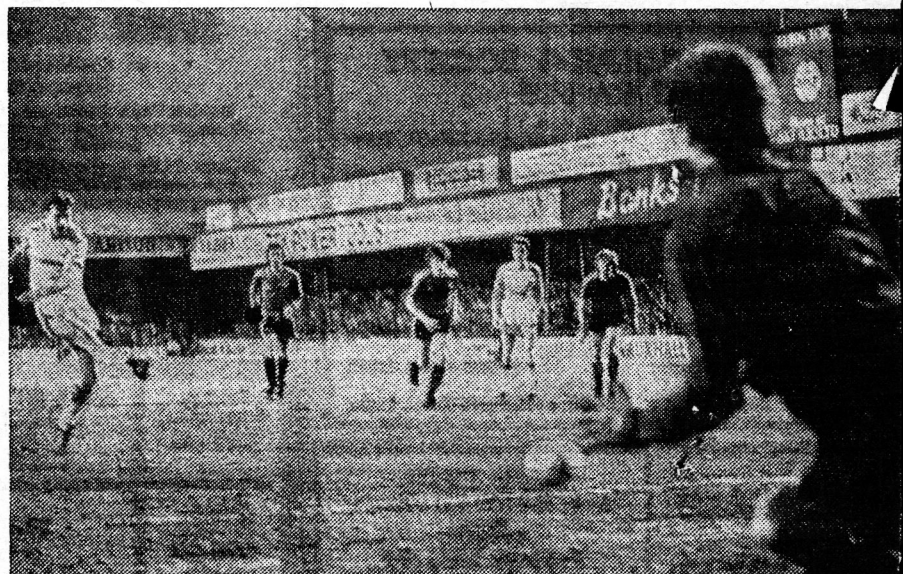
ATTENDANCE: 16,657, highest league gate of the season.

REFEREE: Ken Baker, Rugby. **ENTERTAINMENT:** All-action encounter, worthy of the game to win the Second Division championship.

SENT OFF: Glenn Roeder for another foul after a caution, 32 minutes.



● CLINCHER: Steve White cracks home the Town's second goal which sparked the championship celebrations. Despite the brave fight-back by ten-men QPR, this was goal that left the Rangers with too much to do.



● SPOT-ON: Penalty king David Moss cracks home his 12th goal from the spot this season for the Town's third goal after he had been brought down by Steve Wicks.