

# STRIKING SKILL IS SWEET IN MILK CUP

LUTON TOWN 4, BLACKPOOL 2

ONE OF SOCCER'S most crucial arts put the Town within four matches of Wembley this week. They beat Fourth Division Blackpool in the Milk Cup third round at Kenilworth Road on Tuesday night mainly because they had the skill to put chances away better than the visitors.

Blackpool could have earned a replay at least but were beaten when the Town found their goal touch in the last 20 minutes to go into the last 16.

REPORT by BRIAN SWAIN  
PICTURES: MARK RICHARDS

Both managers had agreed that the decisive factor was the Town's success in both penalty areas. When they attacked, there was always the chance that the ball would fall to their strikers when it was moved into the danger area.

Yet the Fourth Division side, with nothing to lose, looked in with the chance of at least a draw.

Manager Sam Ellis had part of his football education at Watford, and it showed. Graham Taylor would have been proud of some of Blackpool's long passing and hard running. And lots of managers would be pleased with striker David Bamber, whose enthusiasm personified Blackpool's method.

All arms and legs, prepared to take and give knocks, he stands at 6ft 3ins and weighs nearly 14 stone. He had pace and strength on the ball and set major physical problems for Clive Goodyear.

The Town had threatened more than they achieved before Bamber rocked them by heading his 12th goal of the season in the 39th minute after David Hockaday had got down the Town's left flank.

Billy Kellock, in the side because Ricky Hill was injured, headed a timely equaliser from David Moss's corner 60 seconds later to

make it level at half-time.

Alan Judge did well as deputy for the suspended Jake Findlay, and the defence slowly settled down after getting used to another new formation—Kirk Stephens returned at right back, with Wayne Turner dropped and Mal Donaghy going to left back.

A further re-shuffle was needed at half-time. Goodyear had taken a buffeting, and was unable to resume after the interval because of a neck injury. Lil Fuccillo moved to left back, Donaghy moved across into the middle and Brian Stein played deeper and wider on the right to accommodate Frank Bunn as centre-forward.

Bunn had been given the No. 12 shirt because David Pleat anticipated the need to have a physical player in reserve if things weren't going well.

His foresight had the best possible result. Ten minutes into the second half Bunn struck at speed after Iain Hesford fumbled a shot by Stein to make it 2-1.

A brave save by Judge at Bamber's feet denied Blackpool a quick equaliser, and in the 68th minute the

Town at last looked comfortable. Moss belted in a marvellous right-footer from 30 yards from Fuccillo's short free kick and two minutes later Kellock got his second after a sweet passing movement down the right flank involving Brian Horton, Paul Walsh and Stein.

Blackpool kept bashing away and Bamber headed against the bar before Terry Pashley got their second with 12 minutes to go, too late to affect the outcome.

### DETAILS

**TOWN:** Judge; Stephens, Goodyear (Bunn, 45 mins), Money, Donaghy; Kell/fck, Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, Walsh, Moss.  
**BLACKPOOL:** Hesford; Simonite, Hetzke, Serella, Hart, Deary, Hockaday, Pashley, Downes; Stewart, Bamber, Sub: Noble, not used.

**THE GOALS:** Kellock two for Luton, 40 and 70 mins, Bunn 55 mins, Moss 68 mins; Bamber for Blackpool, 39 mins and Pashley 78 mins.

**OTHER ATTEMPTS:** Town eight saved five wide; Blackpool three saved 11 wide, one hit the bar. Corners: 10-9 to Blackpool.

**ATTENDANCE:** 6,409, lowest for years. The fans' answer to being asked to pay full league prices for the third consecutive home match.

**REFEREE:** Alan Gunn, Sussex.

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Good cup-tie, and not the easy ride the score might suggest.



● **CLASSIC:** The moment the Town's fighting recovery against Arsenal got under way. David Moss, in the background, watches goal-keeper George Wood stretch in vain to try to stop the winger's clever angled chip shot.



LEVELLER: Billy Kellock's first goal for the club equalises against Blackpool, with Kellock in the background starting to celebrate.



ON TOP: Frank Bunn stretches a leg to put the Town ahead in the cup, with a defender trying in vain to rescue Blackpool after Iain Hesford had fumbled Brian Stein's shot.

## FIRST DIVISION: ARSENAL PEGGED BACK

# Bad start but good finish

LUTON TOWN 2, ARSENAL 2  
AFTER giving the Arsenal an hour's start the Town rekindled their confidence and spirit at a vital time to earn a point in a thrilling game. But their fourth consecutive defeat looked likely for a long time.

With two away matches to come in the First Division, even one point will look like failure if things are still tight in six months time. But the way it was earned showed that even one of the best defences in the country can be beaten when the Town click.

The mystery was how the same team could be so bad in the first half and so good in the second. Manager David Pleat thought the wind had something to do with it, gusting behind Arsenal before the interval and then assisting the Town after the break.

But not even a gale would have been fair excuse for the Town's first-half shambles of a performance. Nothing they tried went right, and as Arsenal dominated proceedings Jake Findlay's defiance was all that kept the Town level.

He made three important saves, saw an angled shot by Bryan Talbot hit the outside of the post, and was let off the hook by inaccurate shooting by Graham Rix and Alan Sunderland.

The disjointed Town produced two counter-attacks that might have succeeded, but Paul Walsh could not get solid contact to a low cross by Ricky Hill and David Moss was foiled by a double save when Walsh's through-pass put him clear.

At half-time, knowing their professional pride was near to ruin, the town's players didn't need much of a pep talk from the manager.

A major problem was down the

Town's left side, where Arsenal boss Terry Neill had instructed Rix and Tony Woodcock to pressurise Wayne Turner. Lil Fuccillo, recalled in preference to Billy Kellock in midfield, had to be more concerned with defence than attack and in the end all Arsenal's tactical planning failed to give them a win that they seemed to have earned inside the first hour.

Rix curled in the opening goal in the 53rd minute, when he was left unmarked at the angle of the penalty area to meet a pulled-back corner by Talbot. Two minutes later Rix fed Sunderland who beat Turner and crossed hard and low into the penalty area. Talbot raced through and just beat Clive Goodyear to the ball to score the second.

Goodyear, improving every week, is entitled to ask why he was not given more help at that moment to deal with a scorer coming through from midfield.

Ironically Arsenal's own inexperienced full-back, Danny O'Shea, playing only his second game in the First Division, was the unfortunate culprit twice when the Town finally clicked into gear.

He gave the ball away with a poor clearance to Brian Horton, and the Town skipper knocked off a quick pass at an angle to send Moss running clear on the left wing. His angled chip was a delight — George Wood had come off his line to try to narrow the angle and the ball sailed over him into the top corner.

At last Arsenal were more than matched by a Town team that realised they could play a bit. Horton drove forward relentlessly and more variety appeared in midfield when Raddy Antic went on in place of Turner, and Fuc-

cillo dropped back.

The Yugoslav's first touch was a swerving free kick which was deflected narrowly wide by the defensive wall, but Arsenal's relief was brief.

In the 68th minute the luckless O'Shea, worried by Moss's threat, hung back a yard too much as Hill picked up a clearance in midfield and gave the ball to Horton.

The skipper produced another incisive pass. This time Walsh was picked out in a gap down the middle of the Arsenal defence. O'Shea, out wide, wrecked the offside trap and the Town striker took the ball on his chest, stepped a yard clear of David O'Leary and smashed a thumping shot into the net.

For entertainment, it was a treat for supporters, and the team deserved the ovation they received as they went off. It had been a fascinating contest, much of it played at high speed and with much determination.

Saturday's draw turned out to be two points dropped rather than one gained — the Town slipped back one place in the league table as a result, to 17th, two points above third from bottom. And that crucial third from bottom place is held by Sunderland, this week's opposition.

### FACTS AND FIGURES

**TOWN:** Findlay; Donaghy, Goodyear, Money, Turner (Antic, 63 mins); Hill, Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, Walsh, Moss.

**ARSENAL:** Wood; O'Shea, O'Leary, Whyte, Sansom; Talbot, Woodcock, Davis, Rix; Sunderland, Robson, Sub: Chapman, not used.

**GOALS:** Rix and Talbot for Arsenal, 53 and 55 mins; Moss and Walsh for the Town, 63 and 68 mins. Other strikes at goal: Town eight saved, eight wide; Arsenal six saved, six wide, one hit the post. Corners: 6-2 to Arsenal first half and 5-3 to the Town in the second, many of them wind-assisted.

**REFEREE:** Eric Read, Brighol.

**ATTENDANCE:** 15,597, second highest of the season. Was there really room for nearly 6,000 more?

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Marvellous second half when the Town finally started playing after giving Arsenal a two-goal start.