

PANTOMIME IS A LITTLE EARLY...

THE HOPE that Watford will be caught by the backlash on Monday was the only slight consolation for Luton Town supporters who made the trip to Merseyside to see the worst performance the team has given for many years.

Everton were as far ahead in every facet of football as the 5-0 result suggests, even if the first two goals were early Christmas presents.

REPORT BY BRIAN SWAIN
PICTURES: MARK RICHARDS

and Fuccillo went into a midfield that badly needed more drive, but the change was ineffective.

The Town's game was littered by mistakes in all parts of the field, and the attacking threat was about as potent as a snowflake in hell.

Brian Stein's absence may be some excuse, and David Geddis, signed on loan from Aston Villa, had no chance to show the power he had when he was at Kenilworth Road for a couple of months nearly six years ago.

When the Town had the ball they had no-one able to use it accurately. They were invariably second best in the tackle, and rarely able to find spaces in the last 25 yards of the field.

A volley by David Moss which was tipped over the bar, and two shots by Geddis, one wide and one blocked, was the sum total of the Town's serious attacking threat.

Everton goalkeeper Jim Arnold was in danger of catching frostbite, and was once seen to squat with his hands pressed hard down onto the turf as he watched the action at the distant end. He was, apparently, trying to keep warm from the under-soil heating which made the pitch soft and sometimes tricky on a day when most of the North of England was covered by frost, snow and hail.

The only storm at Goodison Park was the thundering pressure which finally destroyed the Town, with three goals in the last 20 minutes.

And it should be added that Everton got their killer goals through pure football. Their first two had an element of luck about them, but there was nothing fluky about the way they footballed through for the other three.

And if referee Michael Peck of Kendal had been better there would have been another goal because Richard Money was lucky to escape giving away a penalty.

And while Jake Findlay goes down as the culprit for the first goal—a super-bounce by a tango ball—he did make good saves from Adrian Heath and Kevin Sheedy.

The opening goal, in the 14th minute, was pure pantomime. Left back John Bailey tried to feed a long high pass for David Johnson to chase. He overhit it, and had turned away to run back into defence. But the 50-yard effort, given up by Johnson, caught Findlay ten yards off his line and bounced over his head into the net.

The match still looked reasonably well balanced in the 39th minute when Everton got their second. Brian Horton, getting in hard to make the tackles count, was penalised for one of his less physical blocks on Heath five yards outside the penalty area.

DEFLECTED

The free kick was touched off twice to take the move sideways before Sheedy shot from 20 yards. His drive caught a deflection off a defender to leave Findlay wrong-footed.

Curran's solo finale started in the 71st minute. He collected a headed pass by Johnson on the half-way line, attacked down the right wing, and with Goodyear backing off all the time finished with a shot into the bottom corner to put Everton safe at 3-0.

He left Donahy beaten two minutes later to complete another run by pulling a pass back for Heath to score the fourth, and with six minutes to go the humiliation was concluded with Curran's back-heel in his own half giving Steve McMahon the chance to race past Donahy. Kirk Stephens crossed over to try to cover and McMahon's pass cut him out, with Heath unattended in the centre to score with ease.



Three points off relegation zone

WITH OTHER results being kind to them this week, the Town go into Christmas in 19th place in the First Division, one victory above three teams level on points at the bottom.

Sunderland were the only endangered team to win.

Gary Rowell scored a hat-trick in their 3-0 victory over Arsenal at Roker Park to lift them two places up the table, and dump Birmingham back on the bottom.

Birmingham, Norwich and Sunderland all have 17 points, three fewer than the Town.

Spurs did the Town a favour by beating Birmingham 2-1 at White Hart Lane, while Nottingham Forest also helped by winning 1-0 at Norwich, where the Town play on Tuesday night.

Today's home and away First Division table:

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	P	W	D	L	F	Pt
Liverpool	19	7	2	0	27	8	5	2	3	18	9
Manchester United	19	7	2	0	19	4	3	3	4	9	10
Nottingham Forest	19	7	1	1	18	6	4	1	5	15	19
Watford	19	7	2	1	24	6	3	1	5	13	16
Aston Villa	19	8	0	2	24	10	2	1	6	6	14
West Ham	19	6	1	2	20	9	4	0	6	13	19
Coventry	20	8	2	1	18	7	1	2	6	7	17
WBA	19	7	1	1	21	7	2	2	6	10	21
Manchester City	19	6	3	1	14	8	2	1	6	9	18
Ipswich	20	4	1	4	15	11	3	5	3	17	13
Tottenham	19	6	2	2	26	11	2	1	6	4	16
Everton	19	5	4	1	21	11	2	1	6	11	15
Southampton	19	6	1	3	15	10	1	3	5	9	22
Sheke	19	5	2	2	21	15	2	1	7	11	16
Notts County	19	5	2	3	14	15	2	1	6	10	19
Arsenal	19	3	3	3	12	12	3	2	5	9	14
Swansea	19	6	1	3	17	11	0	3	6	9	19
Brighton	19	6	2	1	14	7	0	2	8	5	30
Luton	19	3	4	2	20	15	1	4	5	16	28
Sunderland	19	3	4	2	15	11	1	1	7	9	26
Norwich	19	4	2	4	15	12	0	3	6	5	21
Birmingham	19	3	3	3	9	12	0	5	5	3	17

● **HEADING BACK:** David Geddis, making his "second debut" for the Town, puts in a header at Goodison Park. He has been signed on a month's loan from Aston Villa to replace Brian Stein.

He was at Kenilworth Road on loan from Ipswich in the spring of 1977, when he scored on his debut, his first full league game.

But there was no fairytale happy ending for Geddis or the Town this time.

POSSIBLE

And for the first 20 minutes of the second half a familiar task of pulling off a two-goal deficit did not look impossible. But Terry Curran, a winger who seems to play on or three brilliant moves a season, once again veered up one for the Town. On loan from Sheffield United, he completed a series of moves for a Town defence that looked the worst in the First Division. Clive Goodyear, doggedly determined, was the only man in the back four to emerge with any credit, though even he found Everton too hot to handle. The major destruction is done on the flanks, with Kevin Sheedy sharp and incisive down Everton's left before Curran took over down their right the second half. The defence simply crumbled in, despite a re-uffe. The Town started with Wayne Turner at left-back and Mal Donahy in midfield. When Turner went off after an hour to be replaced by Lil Fuccillo, the score was still only 0-2. Donahy dropped back

Match Details

EVERTON 5 LUTON TOWN 0
Half-time: 2-0

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Money, Turner (Fuccillo, 60 mins); Hill, Horton, Donahy; Geddis, Walsh, Moss.

EVERTON: Arnold; Stevens, Ratcliffe, Higgins, Bailey; McMahon, Richardson, Sheedy; Curran, Johnson (Sharp, 75 mins), Heath.

KEY GOALS: John Bailey, 14 mins, 50-yard pass that bounced over Findlay; Kevin Sheedy, 39 mins, from 20-yard free-kick routine; Terry Curran solo run and shot, 71 mins; Adrian Heath, 73 mins, from Curran's run and cross; Heath, 84 mins, from McMahon's run and cross.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town five saved and three wide; Everton five saved and seven wide. Corners: 7-6 to the Town.

ATTENDANCE: 14,982, second lowest of the season so far at Goodison Park, on a bitterly cold day.

REFEREE: Michael Peck, Kendal. Made some decisions that were hard to understand, but played better than most of the Town's men.

ENTERTAINMENT: Everton fans thought it was smashing. It was agony for the rest of us.



● **OUTNUMBERED:** Ricky Hill battles to try to attack the Everton goal.

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