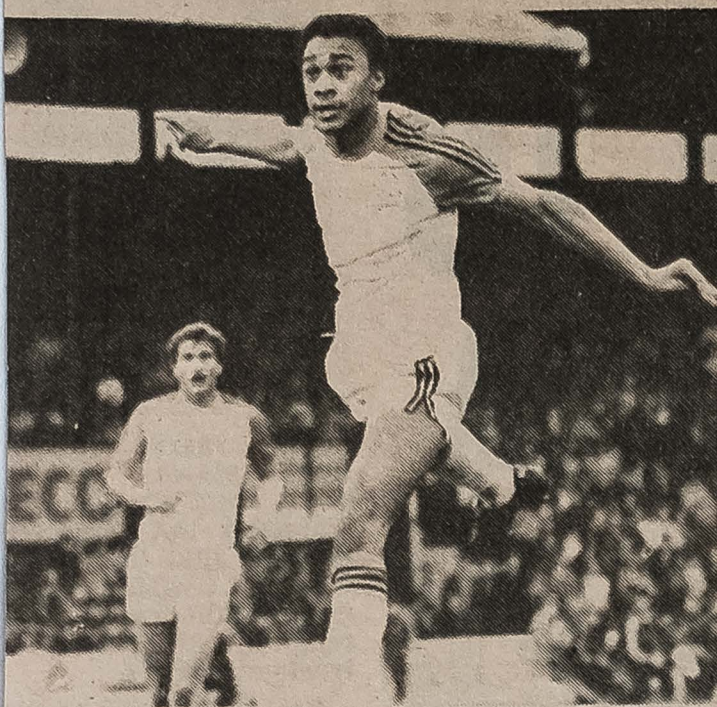


CLASSY ELLIOTT IS ON THE MARK FOR TOWN

83/84



Paul Elliott

LUTON manager David Pleat gave young Gary Parker his first senior appearance of the season at QPR this afternoon.

He wore David Moss's number 11 shirt in a side boosted by the return of Trevor Aylott, who passed a fitness test after missing last week's thumping at Liverpool.

Conditions were perfect with no wind or breeze in a stadium where many seats were unoccupied 10 minutes before the kick-off.

The Luton supporters, congregated behind one of the goals, were in good voice and obviously

QPR v LUTON Eric Harris reports

hoping for three points after last week's disastrous trip to Merseyside.

An attempt by Stein to create Luton's first opening was broken up by Gregory who intercepted his intended pass to Walsh.

Rangers' first attack also

came to nothing when Micklewhite should have done much better with an attempted cross which he pushed behind.

When the Town moved forward again Stein was penalised for running into an offside position — a decision which appeared debatable.

Play immediately swung to the other end where

TODAY'S TEAMS

QPR: Hucker, Neill, Dawes, Waddock, Wicks, Fenwick, Micklewhite, Stewart, Allen, Stainrod, Gregory. Sub: Fillery.

LUTON TOWN: Sealey, Stephens, Turner, Horton, Elliott, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Walsh, Aylott, Parker. Sub: Antic.

REFEREE: L. Burden (Dorset).



Stephens and Elliott were involved in an incident which brought a strong penalty appeal from Rangers, who thought there had been a handling offence.

But the referee showed not even the slightest interest and waved the claims away.

There was half-a-chance for Rangers when Allen moved in surrounded by a cluster of Luton defenders. The Town's close attention to him paid dividends when Allen found himself crowded out and shot wide.

But it was Luton who drew first blood by opening the scoring in the tenth minute.

Horton knocked a short corner to Parker who did extremely well to push his cross to the far post where it was met firmly by ELLIOTT who headed the ball powerfully past Hucker.

There could have been a second goal for the Town only two minutes later when Hill almost surprised the keeper with a shot which was only a couple of inches wide of Hucker's right-hand post.

Qualities

Luton's defence was copying admirably with anything Rangers could throw at them and Elliott showed his qualities at the other end with another powerful header which completely repelled a Rangers raid.

Stainrod made a desperate attempt to fire Rangers' attack but directed his tame cross straight into Sealey's waiting arms.

Neill faired even worse with yet another cross which he pushed well behind.

In the first half hour there had been hardly any threat to Sealey because Rangers couldn't mind any gaps in Luton's defence.

In contrast, the Town were always the more accurate team and a neat header by Aylott, which flicked on to Stein, almost brought another goal until the striker lost possession to Wicks.

Six minutes before half-time Luton should have increased their lead. A free-kick, knocked short

by Horton to Donaghy, produced a fine drive from the defender which Hucker tipped over splendidly.

HT: QPR 0 Luton 1.

The second half was only 20 seconds old when Aylott squandered a fine opportunity to increase Luton's lead. He should have buried Rangers when he ran through to capitalise on Parker's pass.

Aylott had only Hucker to beat but allowed the keeper to hack his shot clear with his legs.

That was followed by a brief period of Rangers' pressure which produced their first second half corner which was cleared without too much difficulty to give the Town valuable breathing space.

Escapes

That was followed by two close escapes for Luton's defence when Stainrod put Rangers' first effort on target but Sealey brilliantly turned his shot past the post.

That was followed within seconds by another good save by the keeper when he grabbed Allen's goal-bound header on the line.

Rangers were finally beginning to find their feet and started to put Luton's defence under pressure.

Rangers had come alive and were awarded their third second half corner which was worked out to Dawes whose drive was somehow charged down by Luton's defence.

Rangers came forward again and won a free kick just outside the box when Elliott bundled Stewart off the ball. Like other Rangers' attacks, that one was also successfully broken down.

Seized

But Luton were far from finished and Aylott could easily have knocked in the second in the 67th minute when he seized on Parker's pass to send his rising drive marginally wide.

The game took another twist in the 70th minute when England international Gregory was sent off after appearing to kick Sealey.