

# TEAM TRIUMPH AT GOODISON

88/89

THE SWEET TASTE of success at Goodison Park on Saturday was the product of a soccer rarity — one of those days when every member of a team played well.

But for the excellence of goalkeeper Neville Southall Everton would have been buried under five or six goals.

Late strikes by David Oldfield and Kingsley Black rounded off the best Town performance since their Wembley triumph.

Manager Ray Harford took double delight from the Town's first away win in Division One, at the 15th attempt, since the trip to Watford ten months ago.

## STILL IMPROVING

"It wasn't just the good result I enjoyed," he said. "Even more it was the good team performance that earned it."

"We were the better team, still improving with each match, and it was a day of good individual performances from everybody."

In so much excellence the manager and coach Richie Barker earned their share of credit as well. They knew Everton would have a makeshift defence and organised the right tactics.

Danny Wilson had a more central role in midfield and his tenacity and bubbling enthusiasm to compete was one major foundation stone in the build-up to victory.

Steve Williams had his best game since joining the club, with perceptive passing cutting through the opposition time and time again.

Mick Harford was my man of the match, winning

## EVERTON 0 LUTON TOWN 2

almost everything in attack, and getting back to defend when Everton tried to get through to Les Sealey.

Black puzzled Everton by his ability to pop up in unexpected places, while from Oldfield there was pace and stamina that discomforted older players.

## COOL ASSURANCE

He likes Merseyside, and handled post-match Press questions with cool assurance. He scored twice at Goodison on his Town debut, in the Simod Cup, then got another in a 1-1 draw at Anfield on a day when he was unlucky not to get a late winner.

The Town's resilient midfield and defence was the key as Everton went down to their second home league defeat in 12 months, and their manager Colin Harvey had no complaints. "We seemed a bit uptight," he said. "Luton did what mattered — they took their chances and we didn't."

Sealey made a couple of saves which were important, if not too difficult, and was let off the hook by some inept Everton finishing.

My biggest worry was early in the second half when Tony Cottee, who wasted the few opportunities to come his way, headed against a post from close range.

Graeme Sharp and Stuart McCall were the others who missed chances on a day when Sealey was never seriously tested.

The Town's clean sheet was another bonus for the manager. It was the first in the league, home or away since the 1-0 home win over Derby in January, 20 games ago.

Mal Donaghy and Steve Foster held Sharp and Cottee with only rare alarms, and John Dreyer and Rob Johnson were rock solid on the flanks.

Ricky Hill's marauding in midfield attacking positions helped to pull Everton's rearguard out of shape, and without Kevin Ratcliffe, Neil Pointon and Pat Van den Hauwe the emergency home defence was caught for speed of thought and action.

As entertainment, it was the best for Town fans for a long time, with skill and flair taking its just rewards. There was also a defiant willingness to stand up to physical assault when it mattered.

Referee Michael Peck booked Foster and Williams, and Everton's Heath and Sharp, all for fouls, with Sharp lucky to escape a red card for using an elbow to fell Donaghy.

Leg-breaker Peter Reid was by-passed by the Town's incisive football and looked well past it, leaden-footed compared to the men he tried to catch.

Southall's heroics kept Everton in with a chance until the last 16 minutes. His best saves were in the fifth minute, to finger-tip a header by Wilson away from the top corner after a corner by Williams and another in the 56th minute, diving to his right to deny Wilson again from a flick at Rob Johnson's hard low centre.

## HEADER HIT POST

Cottee's header against the post came after Heath had got away when he looked well offside.

There was another scare when Harford closed down Neil McDonald after an Everton corner. The home fans howled for a penalty because the ball was driven at Harford's hand from about two yards. Mr Peck declined to succumb to that pressure.

Everton were busy moving forward, without the touch of coolness that might have made the difference, with Cottee missing a hat-trick of opportunities.

Southall was lucky to escape when his defence was by-passed and Oldfield went clear to collect Harford's pass down the right wing.

The goalkeeper got to within a couple of yards of the corner flag. Oldfield dribbled round him, hit a quick cross and Ian Snodin headed clear.

It was a brief reprieve because with 16 minutes to go the Town mounted another attack down the middle, started by Williams and continued by Harford. Oldfield pushed the third short pass forward, Black left Watson and Snodin standing, and shot hard and accurately.

Southall blocked it, for another good save, but Oldfield had kept running and carefully drove in his first goal of the season from the rebound.

Sealey made an important save when McCall was left clear after a scramble. The shot was weak but accurate, and Sealey dived gratefully to make the catch.

Everton's fans were already deserting in droves when Williams, Harford and Oldfield set up another incisive move. Oldfield put Black clear in the inside left channel and the 20-year-old showed maturity beyond his years. He waited for Southall to dive in, skipped past him, and despite being angled struck the shot quickly and expertly into the net.

The Everton manager admitted: "That kind of finishing was the difference between the sides. We can't complain about the result."

## THE MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Sealey; R. Johnson, Foster, Donaghy, Dreyer; Wilson, Williams, Black; Hill (Breacker, 83 mins); Oldfield (Allinson, 89 mins), Harford.

EVERTON: Southall; McDonald (Clarke, 83 mins), Snodin, Watson, Wilson; Reid, Heath, McCall, Sheedy; Sharp, Cottee. Other sub: Jones, not used.

THE GOALS: David Oldfield, 74 minutes; Kingsley Black, 83 minutes.

OTHER STRIKES: Town six saved and five wide; Everton five saved and eight wide. Corners: 7-5 to Everton.

ATTENDANCE: 26,017, lower by 6,000 on the corresponding league game last season.

REFEREE: Michael Peck, Kendal. Kept firm control, and took pressure from home fans well.

ENTERTAINMENT: A match to remember for the Town's best all-round team display since Wembley last April.