

SportsNews

BRIGHT START TURNS INTO A TOUGH BATTLE

A SWEET GOAL by Kingsley Black at one end and excellent work by Alec Chamberlain at the other gave Luton Town their first home win of the season at the expense of Leeds United.

And if the Town were a little lucky to hang on when Leeds powered their way back into the game, it was compensation for the home defeat against Manchester United four days earlier, when luck went the other way.

But manager Jim Ryan was under no illusions about a result that could easily have gone the other way as the Town failed to impose their bright start on the rest of the contest.



SO CLOSE: Jason Rees gets into the Town attack for a second-half shot which John Lukic managed to deflect round the post.

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Brian Swain reports. Pictures: Josh Levy

Leeds, unbeaten until the trip to Kenilworth Road, were no slouches, and despite the inclusion of Vinny Jones they offered sound football as much as brute strength.

At times I feared the Town would be muscled out of it, or destroyed by the wiles of Gordon Strachan who shaded David Preece as the best midfielder on view. The bonus for the Town was that although they rode their luck a young and inexperienced side grew up rapidly in a hard school where battling for survival became the watchword.

There was no hint of that from the first 20 minutes, when the Town should have been 2-1 ahead after the early burst put them well in command.

Gary McAllister had shot wide early on when the Town failed to clear a corner properly, but the goal that turned out to be the winner was real quality.

Jason Rees, recalled to the right of midfield, set Lars Elstrup clear down the left and the cross on its run was perfection. It was fought a little too high in Ian Dowie's huge leap, but two defenders and the goalkeeper went with him and Black stole in on a blind side behind them all to head home his first goal of the season.

It was also the first goal Leeds had conceded since the kick-off day, and it should have been followed by another in the 18th minute.

Ken Hughes, the discovery of the season so far, collected a clearance by John Dreyer, pulled in two defenders and slipped a perfect pass to set up Dowie. Perhaps the Northern Ireland striker had too much time to think about what he wanted to do. With the goal at his mercy he drove the shot straight at a relieved John Lukic.

Leeds woke up after that and the Town were indebted to a good afternoon's work by Chamberlain plus some wasteful incompetence by the Leeds free men Gary McAllister and Lee Chapman. Both might have had half-tricks if they had been sharper and Chamberlain had been below par.

CHALLENGE ON THE KEEPER

Vinny Jones got away with a crude challenge on the goalkeeper after only 40 seconds to set the tone for the contribution he intended to make. Yet he showed he could also pass the ball, and in the second half Gordon Strachan turned the midfield tide for his team.

The Town at times looked like a battling won side, soaking up pressure and looking for the counter-attacks.

I worried about the increasing aerial pressure which threatened more than it achieved, and about the power that forced the Town deeper into defence.

Covering was not always as good as it might have been, but to counteract that the Town found unexpected depths of resolve and determination to stand up to the assault. Defiance ran through the lot of



BEST FOOT FORWARD: David Preece gets down to business in a tussle with David Batty, with skipper John Dreyer watching anxiously.

Town match verdict ★ ★ ★



● MATCHWINNER: Kingsley Black leaps and heads his first goal of the season, to send Leeds to their first defeat of the campaign.

them to earn a win the hard way, with Marvin Johnson playing his part and earning a booking after he replaced Preece, who had been 'winified'.

They might have added a goal or two themselves when the inevitable gaps opened up behind a visiting team that was forced to commit more and more manpower to the search for an equaliser.

Hughes headed just wide early in the second half after a neat movement involving Rees and a cross by Preece. Elstrup had a header saved from another post cross by Preece and Rees was denied by Lukic's blocking save as he shot from a chance made by Tim Breaker's pass.

Match details

LUTON TOWN 1 LEEDS UNITED 0 (Half-time: 1-0)

TOWN: Chamberlain; Breaker, Beaumont, Dreyer, James; Rees, Hughes, Preece (Johnson 60 mins); Black (Nogan 87 mins), Dowie, Elstrup.
LEEDS: Lake, Sterland, Haddock, Whyte, Snodin (Speed 71 mins); Strachan, Jones (Varadi 63 mins), Batty, Whitlow, McAllister, Chapman.
THE GOAL: Kingsley Black far post header from perfect curling cross by Lars Elstrup after five minutes.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town five saved and five wide; Leeds seven saved and eight wide. Corners: 7-5 to Leeds.

REFEREE: Peter Foakes. Clacton: not consistent enough nor sharp enough to see his linesmen's signals very time. Vinny Jones should have been booked after 40 seconds for an intimidating lunge at man of the match Alec Chamberlain and might then not have got involved in the foul which led to David Preece going to hospital with concussion.

BOOKED: Marvin Johnson for a foul on Gordon Strachan.

ATTENDANCE: 10,185 including a good following from Leeds—and all but 36 of them were well behaved and stayed to watch without bother.

ENTERTAINMENT: Absorbing rather than brilliant with the Town turning on the early style and then keeping as on tenterhooks as they survived a long spell of Leeds supremacy. The mixture of Chamberlain's expertise and poor finishing by Leeds made it a lovely afternoon for Town fans.

The season so far

THE TOWN's results, scorers, attendances and league table position:

August		
25 C. Palace (h) 1-1 (Dowie)	9,583	—
28 Arsenal (a) 1-2 (Elstrup)	32,723	—
September		
1 Southampton (a) 2-1 (Elstrup)	14,878	8
4 Man United (h) 1-1 (Black)	12,576	8
7 Leeds Utd (h) 1-1 (Black)	16,185	8
LEEDS APPEARANCES, including		
Chamberlain 5, Breaker 5,		
Dowie 5, Hughes 5, McDonough		
5, Black 4, Rees 2(3),		
Johnson 2(1).		
LEAGUE GOALS: Elstrup 3, Dowie and		

JUST LIKE THE LEEDS OF OLD!"— Jim Ryan

THE CONTRIBUTION of Vinny Jones came under examination at the post-match press conference. Town boss Jim Ryan was critical of him and the ref.

The game was just 40 seconds old when Jones clattered Alec Chamberlain with a late challenge.

And it was Jones who committed the foul which gave David Preece concussion and led to him paying a brief visit to the Luton and Dunstable Hospital on Saturday night.

"The Leeds of old," said Mr. Ryan. "Commit a foul and then apologise for it. If Jones had been booked for the foul on Alec Chamberlain he wouldn't have

Managers' viewpoint

made the challenge that sent David Preece to hospital."

Leeds boss Howard Wilkinson was irritated at being asked questions on the performance of Jones. He saw the first foul as just one of those things, and said the other was a case of little David Preece ducking to head a ball Jones was entitled to kick.

There was agreement by both managers on the overall judgement of the game.

FLATTERED

Mr. Ryan admitted that the score flattered his men, but added that if they were lucky it did no more than make up for the bad luck they had suffered when they lost

to Manchester United. Mr. Wilkinson complained that Leeds didn't

LESSONS

He added that his young team would have learned valuable lessons in the way they had been forced to defend when Leeds looked like taking charge.

Cup defeat

THE TOWN'S YOUTH team fell at the first hurdle when they were knocked out of the Southern Junior Floodlit Cup by Birmingham at Kenilworth Road on Monday evening. A lot of their passing football was encouraging, but no-one took charge of things when they got into the visitors' penalty box.

David Gornley and Jamie Campbell had long-range drives well saved but Paul Hancock was just busy in the Luton goal, and had no chance with a deflected shot in the first half and a header by an unmarked player in the second which gave the young blues a 2-0 win.

On Saturday the lads play Oxford (11am) in the SE Counties Cup and the reserves entertain Watford (2pm). Both games are at Kenilworth Road and admission is free.



LOCKED: John Lukic forces Jason Rees wide as the Town look for their goal.

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