

Sports News



ROKER CASH OUT A LESSON IN THE ART OF FLASHING

**Brian Swain reports
Pictures: Josh Levy**

BECAUSE HE ALWAYS wants to be a winner manager Jim Ryan was wary of accepting congratulations from all quarters on Luton Town's contribution to a superb football match at Roker Park.

Losers don't win medals, and while I loved a lot of the Town's free flowing soccer it was galling to see it come to nothing for want of the sort of penalty area expertise Marco Gabbiadini showed at the other end of the pitch.

GOALKEEPER THE STAR

He sounds as though he should be a gifted Italian or Brazilian. On Saturday he played up to that thought. The Nottingham boy began his career at York was the difference between the sides. In a match full of attack and counter-attack both defences looked rocky. But look at the match details panel and note 13 scoring attempts by the away side.

Sunderland created even more, while the Town could have taken a point with more accuracy in the box the result could have been worse because Alec Chamberlain was their man of the match, with

the mercurial Gabbiadini denied a hat-trick at last by a string of fine saves.

He and Peter Davenport led the Town's corner defenders a merry dance at times.

Mr Ryan's game plan had been to work up an inevitable early burst of home attacking which was backed by the amazing continuous roar of support that can make Roker an intimidating place for visitors.

That policy was lost when Sunderland took a 13 minute lead and doubled it on the half hour.

Lesser teams would have fallen apart from the twin assault of quick passing and hard running and deafening lung power from the terraces.

Instead the Town stuck to their football idea. David Preece and Steve Williams used their experience to calm things down and I always felt one goal would turn things round, and perhaps quieten the Rokerites around.

But it was not to be, with Lars Elstrup wanting the best chance four minutes after Sunderland's goal. Good work by Kingsley Black gave the chance to wriggle into space in the penalty area but with only Tony Norman in his way he blasted his shot onto the top of the bar and into the grandstand of a Sunderland fan half-way up the terrace.

And before Sunderland's second goal John Dreyer had the chance to make amends for his contribution to the first goal. He got up on the far post to meet a cross from Kingsley Black after a short run routine with Preece, but volleyed wildly off target from a good position.

CLEARED OFF THE LINE

They turned out to be the best efforts the Town produced, and that was what cost them the game. Norman was never extended to the dramatic at times almost unbelievable shot-stopping of Chamberlain displayed.

Marvin Johnson came in for his first start of the season at right back, as replacement for John James, and came through the testing and sometimes crude attacks of Paul Hardyman, who expected a reward for an awful challenge on the defender but was collected a yellow card for a late tackle on Steve Williams.

Some of the refereeing decisions were left to either side, or to the entertainment, but Williams will not be able to overturn his caution: he stood in the way, and blocked the ball from a yard's range away. Sunderland tried to take a quick free kick. But understood what the Town midfielder was up to, needed a calming and slowing influence in that ten minutes to try to counteract Sunderland's fire and passion.

Ceri Hughes had shown it in the seventh minute when Sunderland almost scored from their first corner. Hardyman hit it long. Gordon Armstrong had back across the penalty area and the header hit Gary Owens as it was into the net until Hughes still on his mettle by the post, headed clear with Chamberlain beaten.

On Wearside they say that Gabbiadini and Davenport are men who delight or frustrate: when they are good they are brilliant, and when they are poor they are dreadful.

The blighers not only had a brilliant afternoon — the locals were doubly delighted because it was the first time they had both done the business in the same match.

In the 12th minute Davenport's forward pass set Gabbiadini on a run. Dreyer had him covered but failed to make the challenge Town fans expected, and Gabbiadini punished him with a whirlash shot into the corner.

After a hopeful long-range shot by Iain Dowie had Chamberlain was soon in action again, smothering the ball as Kevin Bull's feet after the Town made a mess of trying to clear another corner, and it took 25 minutes for the Town to look capable of quelling the home side and hitting back on their own account.

Kingsley Black, carrying an injury, worked as hard as anyone and he and Preece carved out a chance for Elstrup which was deflected for the corner from which Dreyer missed the opportunity to equalise.

SLIT DOWN THE MIDDLE

But just as the Town were evening up the balance of play Gabbiadini and Davenport struck again. A quick solo dribble by Gabbiadini split the Town down the middle and from his pass Davenport shot another crisp goal to make it 2-0 in the 30th minute. Elstrup's shot onto and over the bar was so nearly a bright reply, but as both sides went for goals it was mainly Sunderland who looked more likely to get them. Dowie and Elstrup, sadly, were second best compared to the Sunderland front runners.

Twice in the closing minutes of the first half Chamberlain intervened when Gabbiadini looked like scoring, but after the break the Town enjoyed a lifetime spell of consistent pressure.

Richard Harvey, more assertive and pushy than when he first came into the side, joined up with midfield and attack to good effect — except that Black put two efforts off target. Dowie had a drive deflected and Preece shot wide from an opening made by Hughes.

The game slowed at breakneck speed from one goal area to the other but eventually the need to chase it was too much for the Town.

Sunderland finished on top, but relieved to hear the final whistle because they and their fans knew they had been involved in a top quality contest which would so easily have been less decisive than the result suggested.

Match details

SUNDERLAND 2 LUTON TOWN 0
Half-time: 2-0

OWN: Chamberlain; Johnson, Beaumont, Dreyer, Preece, Elstrup, Dowie, Black (Rees 65 mins).
SUNDERLAND: Norman; Kay, Bennett, Ball, Smith, Ingham, Owens, Armstrong, Davenport, Gabbiadini.
GOALS: Marco Gabbiadini, 12th minute, quick shot after John Dreyer played out for a crucial second, from inside again after Gabbiadini's solo run and pass.

OTHER STRIKES: Town six saved, six wide and one hit the bar; Sunderland eight saved, seven wide. Corners: 5-3 to Sunderland.

REFeree: William Burns, Scarborough — did neither side any favours with several mysterious decisions. **BOOKED:** Steve Williams for preventing Sunderland taking a quick free kick; Paul Hardyman for a foul on Marvin Johnson.

ATTENDANCE: 20,025 — and they sounded like twice as many as the Baker Road game gave us memories of what football passion used to be like.

UPPERMOUTH: One of the best games I have seen for Town on a day they otherwise deserved some reward for an excellent team performance.



● **STRETCHING:** Iain Dowie, with Steve Williams in support, tries to find a route to goal.

Crop of draws is helpful

THE THIRD away defeat of the season dropped the Town one notch in the First Division, to eighth place.

Nottingham Forest moved above them, on goal difference, with a 0-0 draw at Chelsea.

Other teams in the midtable pack below the Town lost points all over the place, with half of Saturday's First Division games ending in draws.

They included Norwich v Liverpool, with the 1-1 result the first draw in Liverpool's 100 per cent record, in the ninth match of the season.

At least Liverpool will not now be looking to set a new record for a winning start when the Town go on Sheffield on November 10.

The First Division

	HOME	AWAY
	P W D L F A	P W D L F A
Liverpool.....	9 4 0 0 10 1	4 1 0 10 5 25
Arsenal.....	9 3 1 0 8 2	2 2 0 9 3 21
Tottenham.....	9 4 1 0 13 3	1 3 0 2 0 19
C. Palace.....	9 2 2 0 6 4	2 3 0 7 2 17
Man City.....	9 4 0 0 7 2	0 4 1 5 7 16
Nottm For.....	9 2 1 1 7 5	1 3 1 5 6 15
Man United.....	9 3 0 2 8 5	1 1 2 2 6 13
Luton Town.....	9 2 1 1 3 2	0 3 0 7 12 13
A. Villa.....	9 2 2 0 8 4	1 1 3 5 6 12
QPR.....	9 2 1 1 7 2	1 2 2 8 11 12
Leeds.....	9 1 2 2 7 7	2 1 1 6 4 12
Wimbledon.....	9 0 3 2 4 8	2 2 0 4 2 11
Sheff Wed.....	9 2 1 1 7 5	1 1 3 6 11 11
Sheff Utd.....	9 2 1 0 6 0	1 1 3 10 10
Cardiff.....	9 2 2 1 6 4	0 1 3 6 11 9
Coventry.....	9 2 2 1 9 6	0 0 4 1 7 8
Norwich.....	9 2 1 2 7 10	0 0 4 1 7 8
Everton.....	9 1 2 2 8 7	0 1 3 4 9 6
Derby Co.....	9 0 3 2 3 7	0 0 4 2 9 3
Sheff Utd.....	9 0 1 3 3 8	0 2 3 10 3

● **SUCCESS STORY:** Richard Harvey, now established at left back, gets forward during a second-half spell of Town pressure.



● **BLOCKED:** Tony Norman gets down to saving from Kingsley Black.

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 2).....	14,878
4 Man United (h) 0-1.....	12,576
8 Leeds Utd (h) 1-0 (Black).....	10,185
15 QPR (a) 1-0 (Hughes).....	10,196
22 Coventry (h) 1-0 (Dowie).....	8,336
29 Norwich (a) 3-1 (Elstrup 3).....	12,794
October	
20 Sunderland (a) 0-2.....	20,925
LEAGUE APPEARANCES, including as sub in brackets:	
Chamberlain 9, Breacker 9, Beaumont 9, Dreyer 9,	
Hughes 9, Preece 3, Elstrup 9, Dowie 9, Black 8, James	
5/11, Rees 4/4, McDonough 3 (2), Harvey 4 (2), Williams	
2, Nogan 3 (1), Johnson 1 (2).	
LEAGUE GOALS: Elstrup 6, Dowie 2, Black and Hughes 1.	

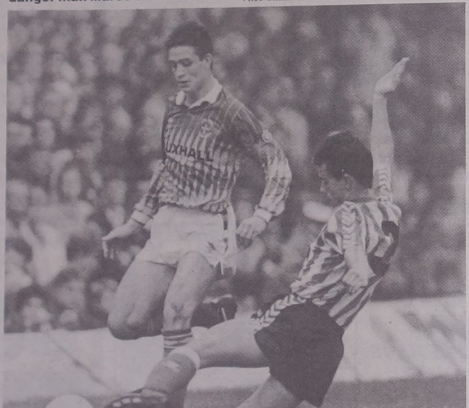
THE RUMBLEBOWS CUP

September	
23 Bradford (a) 1-1 (Harvey).....	5,120
October	
10 Bradford (a) 1-1 (Black) — lost on pens.....	6,180
APPEARANCES: Chamberlain 2, Dreyer 2, Beaumont 2,	
Hughes 2, Preece 2, Black 2, Dowie 2, Harvey 2, Rees 1	
(1), James 1 (1), Nogan 1 (1), Breacker 1, Elstrup 1,	
Williams 1, Johnson 1 (1).	
GOALS: Harvey and Black one each.	

MIDAS CLUB

C100 WINNERS	
WEEK 35	
COMMENCING MONDAY	
15th OCTOBER	
E5912	
MRS V. HARRISON, LEAFIELDS,	
HOUGHTON REGIS	
E5 consolation prizes A5912, B5912, C5912,	
D5912, F5912, G5912	
TUESDAY 16th OCTOBER	
G4511	
MISS T. WALSH, LAYHAM DRIVE,	
LUTON, BEDFORDSHIRE	
E5 consolation prizes A4511, B4511, C4511,	
D4511, F4511, G4511	
WEDNESDAY 17th OCTOBER	
G4854	
G.E. EVANS, HIGHLAND ROAD, LUTON,	
BEDFORDSHIRE	
E5 consolation prizes A4854, B4854, C4854,	
D4854, F4854, G4854	
THURSDAY 18th OCTOBER	
A0140	
J. LYONS, LEAGRAVE HIGH STREET,	
LUTON, BEDFORDSHIRE	
E5 consolation prizes B0140, C0140, D0140,	
E0140, F0140, G0140	
FRIDAY 19th OCTOBER	
G2911	
MISS V. WILSON, BEACONSFIELD,	
LUTON, BEDFORDSHIRE	
E5 consolation prizes A2911, B2911, C2911,	
D2911, E2911, F2911	
If you would like to be in the next week's C100	
winners please contact your local Newsagent or	
ring us on LUTON 411622.	
Prizes & rules on page 62.	

● **NOT THIS TIME:** David Beaumont is on the ball to stop danger man Marco Gabbiadini.



● **COUNTER ATTACK:** Ceri Hughes takes on Anthony Smith as the Town follow their attacking policy as the best for of defence.

Not much consolation

The managers' viewpoints

EVEN Sunderland manager Dennis Smith applauded the Luton Town style at Roker Park.

He was relieved to see Sunderland's second win of the season — Manchester United were the Roker Park losers in early September.

Mr Smith believed his team deserved the points because they had been the sharper attackers.

The fact that Alec Chamberlain had to play so brilliantly underlined that, he said.

Jim Ryan found it difficult to take it as consolation that the Town had played good football and contributed handsomely to one of the best matches the Roker Park fans had seen for a long

time.

"I know we played our part in the entertainment and we were always threatening to get goals. But that's pointless if it doesn't produce the results," he said.

He had marked out Gabbiadini as the major Sunderland attacking threat after seeing him on the losing side at Villa Park a fortnight previously.

On Saturday, said the Town boss, Gabbiadini was in the sort of form that made him look as good as any striker in the First Division.

But the Town boss was unhappy about the way the Town defence handled him and Peter Davenport.

"We made enough chances to give ourselves the opportunity to win the game," he said.

"And the goals Sunderland scored, especially the first one, were down to poor defence."

Gabbiadini was sharp, strong and quick, but John Dreyer accepts he should not have been allowed to get his goal.

"We defended too deeply. We should have been winning the ball 30 or 40 yards from goal. It gets to be desperate in the area. We must defend further up the field."

On the question of his attack Mr Ryan was pleased with the build-up

work, and thought the whole game might have changed, as it did at Norwich, if Lars Elstrup had hit the bar instead of the bar when he was one of the clearest chances of the afternoon.

But to put things in perspective of the first away game this season is what the Town had failed to score.

And Mr Ryan will continue his policy of travelling to away matches trying to win them. "We go and we will continue to do so and points system that gives you one point for a draw makes it worthwhile to go for all three if you can, and set the one if you have to."