

LOCAL SOCCER

Rovers snap is missing up front

BY ERIC NORRIS

BARTON ROV O EGHAM TN 1

A GLOOMY Christmas at Sharpenhoe Road ended with a second home defeat for the Rovers, who slipped a place to 14th in Division Two of the Diadora League.

It was the same old story, with not enough finishing power, despite the return of Bobby Smith to the attack.

The visitors were well on top in the first half, and the only goal came in the 31st minute when Mark Butler cracked his 31st goal of the season from the edge of the box.

The drive beat a despairing dive by Paul Marshall, and slid into the corner of the net by the left hand post.

Good saves

Marshall pulled off a couple of good saves to prevent Egham adding to the score before half time.

Paul Young went on for Micky Thomas to try

DIADORA LEAGUE

to add punch to Barton's attack after the break, but to no avail.

Just off target

In fact their best effort came from defender Kevin Wright, who intercepted a clearance and volleyed just over the Egham bar.

FIXTURES

TOMORROW the Rovers go to Harefield (3pm) and on Saturday they are at home to Lewes (3pm).

Next Tuesday they entertain Southwick in the second round of the Lotite Trophy (7.45).

Southwick, who were second from bottom of the table, changed places with bottom club Southall on Saturday when they crashed 7-1 to their fellow strugglers.

Sports News

FULL POINTS A HOLIDAY OF



● GUNNED DOWN: The Arsenal cover is non-existent as Mick Harford drifts off his markers to smash in his Boxing Day goal.

PRIME MINISTER John Major was a favourite team well and truly handbagged. Luton Town completed their Christmas for years by beating Chelsea 1-0 on the holiday to lift themselves off bottom place of the First Division.

Suddenly, 1992 looks capable of being happier than we had dared hope for after the poor start to the season.

It was the first time in 18 months that the Town had won three games on the trot.

Then, as now, they were results desperately needed because of fears of relegation.

Difficult

Manager David Pleat was quick to bring us down to earth in the Pressroom, with reminders that there is a long way to go, and that we could once again be marooned after difficult away games on the near horizon.

Perhaps so. But for Town fans Christmas was a real joy, all the more pleasurable because even the boss had not expected nine points out of nine.

It was a tremendous

Luton Tn.2 Chelsea..0

team show all round, and former Town star Paul Elliott, one of the few Chelsea success stories, summed it all up.

"Luton needed the points more than we did and played like they wanted to win."

"We put on a lot of second-half pressure, but the result wasn't what we wanted."

There was a real danger that if the defence had cracked once Chelsea might have saved a point.

But the covering and doing down was so good that Steve Sutton, who had a reasonably easy time.

Elliott hit the top of the bar with a lob, but many other Chelsea shots failed to get through the never-say-die last line.

It was just reward for

Chelsea DETAILS

TOWN: Sutton; James, Peake, Dreyer, Harvey; Telfer, Kamara, Pembroke, Preece (Oakes 70 mins); Stein (Campbell 84 mins); Harford.

Chelsea: Beasant; Clarke (Stuart HT), Elliott, Nelson, Boyd; Wise, Jones (Dickens 72 mins), Townsend, Le Saout, Dixon, Allen.

GOALS: Richard Harvey, 38 minutes, 25-yard shot; Paul Elliott, 41 minutes, after Dave Beasant pulled down Mark Pembroke.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town four saved, four wide and a second-half penalty by Mick Harford hit the bar; Chelsea three saved, six wide and a lob by Paul Elliott hit the top of the bar. Corners: 10-4 to Chelsea.

REFEREE: John Deakin, South Glamorgan. Set pieces: Town problems with important decisions — Beasant being let off for a yellow card when it should have been a red, and refusing a second-half penalty until a referee's signal changed his mind.

BOOKED: Beasant for the foul on Pembroke; Harford for a foul on Denis Wise; Paul Elliott for dissent.

ATTENDANCE: 10,738, including Prime Minister John Major. You'd think he had enough problems without being a Chelsea fan as well.

ENTERTAINMENT: A cracking game, with Chelsea being let off for a yellow card when it should have been a red, and refusing a second-half penalty until a referee's signal changed his mind.

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Town's Xmas verdict ★★★★★

MAKE IT DELIGHT

PM sees red and more Capital punishment

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I was delighted for Julian James, who had a rotten Boxing Day. He came good against Chelsea, and once he had seen off the threat of Graham Le Saux all Chelsea's huffing and puffing came to nothing.

Peake and John Dreyer were too good for Kerry Dixon and Clive Allen, and the Town midfield neatly combined attack with defence.

David Preece and Mark Pembroke gave Chelsea right back Steve Clarke a nightmare afternoon after he had felt the full effect of a Mick Harford crunch tackle in the first 30 seconds.

Graham Stuart replaced Clarke at half-time and fared only a little better.

Life was made no easier for him when Scott Oakes went on for Preece with 20 minutes to go.

Paul Telfer had to do more work on his own on the other flank, and got through it without

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fuss, but effectively.

Sutton had to make a good save from Dixon in the first half, but neither side got too many goal attempts on target.

So it was a real bonus for the Town to convert two and keep a clean sheet for the third match on the trot.

Harford shot over from close range with the Town's first chance, made by Harvey's diagonal pass to the flank and Pembroke's run and low cross from the left wing.

On 38 minutes James went on a forward run, and was fouled by Elliott a few yards outside the penalty area.

Cracker

The free kick routine that followed was a real Christmas cracker.

Preece rolled the ball to his right, and Telfer knocked it back.

Pembroke dummied, and the Chelsea defenders were still looking baffled as Harvey lashed in a bullet of a 25-yarder.

It was his second league goal — the first was also from a free kick play worked by Preece and Pembroke, against Southampton.

Within a minute a mistake by Boyd sent Pembroke through on his own, and Beasant brought him down.

John Deakin, who learned his ref's trade locally in the South Midlands League while he was stationed at RAF Henlow, upset the Chelsea goalkeeper and manager by giving the penalty for what they claimed was a fair challenge.

Walk-up

That was ludicrous, and so was the referee's decision to let the keeper off with a yellow card. Under today's rules, it was a sending-off offence.

It took two minutes for Chelsea protests to

Linesman

Mr. Deakin seemed at first to signal no foul, but then saw his linesman signalling that it was a penalty offence.

This time the Chelsea man was sent off, but Harford hit the penalty against the underside of the bar and Beasant got to the rebound just ahead of Brian Stein.

The extra goal would have been useful in view of the poor goals difference figures, but no-one was too worried about that as the Town completed a very happy Christmas.

APPEARANCES, including as sub in brackets: 22 each by Dreyer and Pembroke; Peake 18; Chamberlain 17, Stein 16(3); Preece 14(4); Telfer 13(3), Harvey 13(1),

Reports by Brian Swain Pictures by Josh Levy



● IT WAS HERE REF: Chelsea try to persuade John Deakin that the tackle in which Paul Telfer was brought down was just outside the penalty area, not inside. See below.



● OH NO IT WASN'T! Tommy Boyd's tackle that earned him a red card and the Town a penalty is pictured inside the line.

THE SEASON SO FAR

THE TOWN'S record in league and cup competitions to date:

Barclays League Div One

Results, Town scorers, attendances and league position:

August		
17 West Ham (a) 0-0	25,079	—
21 Coventry (a) 0-5	10,084	—
24 Liverpool (h) 0-0	11,132	—
27 Arsenal (a) 0-2	25,898	21
31 Chelsea (a) 1-4 (Gray)	17,457	22

September

4 Southampton (h) 2-1 (Gray, Harvey)	8,055	19
7 Wimbledon (a) 0-3	3,231	20
14 Oldham (h) 2-1 (Harford 2)	9,005	17
17 QPR (h) 0-1	9,185	19
21 Man Utd (a) 0-5	46,491	21
28 Notts Co (h) 1-1 (Gray)	7,629	20

October

5 A. Villa (a) 0-4	18,722	21
19 Sheff Wed (h) 2-2 (Harford, Nogan)	9,401	21
26 Norwich (a) 0-1	10,514	21
November		
2 Everton (h) 0-1	8,002	21
20 Coventry (h) 1-0 (Harford)	27,543	22
26 Man City (h) 2-2 (Harford, Dreyer)	10,031	22
30 Sheff Utd (a) 1-1 (Telfer)	21,804	22

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7 Leeds (h) 0-2	11,550	22
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LEADERS GIVEN A DERBY POUNDING

LUTON OB 4 ASHCROFT 1

THERE WAS A Boxing Day derby by shock for the leaders of Division One of the Camptri South Midlands League.

Ashcroft were over-run from the kick-off, and with the Old Boys pushing four men up front the leaders found themselves three down in 25 minutes, and never recovered.

Brendan Kerrigan began the onslaught, and the other goals came in quick succession from Jason Lannin and Steve Georgiou.

Ashcroft pulled themselves together in the second half, but

South Midlands League

Lannin hit his second before Mark Cochrane got a consolation effort for Ashcroft.

CRANFIELD 1 ASHCROFT 2

AGAINST strugglers from the other end of the table Ashcroft got back on the winning path on Saturday, but needed a bit of luck to do it.

The villagers turned on the pressure early in the second half, and deservedly cancelled out Mark Cochrane's opener.

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Local holiday results

BOXING DAY

PREMIER DIVISION: Brache 0 Pistone 0; Harpenden 4 61 FC 0; Leighton 5 Tottenham 0.

DIV ONE: Caddington 1 Delco 2; Luton OB 4 Ashcroft 1; Taddington 6 Sandy 1; Walden 1 Ickleford 0.

SATURDAY

PREMIER DIV: Brache Sp 1 Leighton 1; N Bradwell 1 Tottenham 2; Pistone 0 Buckingham Ath 0; Hoddesdon 2 Shillington 1.

DIV ONE: Cranfield 1 Ashcroft 2; Amptill 2 Caddington 3; Luton OB 2 Delco 1; Shenley 3 Walden 2; Stony 1 Taddington 1.

RESERVE DIV ONE: Biggleswade 3 Brache 2; Buckingham 2 TFC 2; Leighton 2 Barton 2; Tottenham 1 Pistone 1.

DIV TWO: Ashcroft 3 Amptill 0; Caddington 4 N. Bradwell 6; Delco 4 Risboro 2; Taddington 1 Flamstead 0; Walden 2 Sandy 0.

LADIES HOCKEY

Linda Fletcher (2) and Tracy Brooks.

The Chiltern third team were unlucky to lose an evenly-matched game by the only goal at home to ICL of Letchworth.

But the club's fourth team helped make it a happy holiday for Chiltern when they beat their arch-rivals from Luton 2-1 despite being able to field only ten players. R. Hooper and L. Beaumont were the Chiltern goal scorers.

Champs made to look like rubbish

THE GAME we thought would be the hardest of the Christmas trio turned out to be a real delight for Luton Town.

Arsenal attracted the biggest attendance of the season so far for a match they expected to win to maintain their championship challenge.