

TAYLOR'S PARTING SHOT IS SO VITAL

92/93



UP AND AWAY: David Meheew (left) duels with Luton's Marvin Johnson.

JOHN Taylor admits the goal that keeps alive Rovers' faint hopes of First Division survival will probably be his last for the club.

He hopes to complete his much-delayed £300,000 move to Portsmouth this week.

And the striker's 10th goal of the season — scored after coming off the bench — is likely to heighten Pompey boss Jim Smith's interest.

"It was my first League goal of the year so I really enjoyed it," he said.

"It will probably be my last for Rovers — let's hope it could turn out to be an important one at the end of the season. The move to Portsmouth is on ice — but I'm fairly confident it will happen.

Shattered

"At this stage of my career I have to think about financial security and the package I'm being offered is too good to miss.

"I'm just waiting by the phone — but if nothing happens in the next four days, then I'll still be doing my best for Bristol Rovers."

Taylor's strike salvaged a deserved point after Rovers' conceded a goal which could easily have shattered Lee Maddison's confidence.

The young left-back,



ROVERS defender Andy Tillson clears his lines at Kenilworth Road.

called in for his first game since October, swung his foot to clear Marvin Johnson's 58th-minute cross — but could only look on in horror after volleying a spectacular mis-kick past Brian Parkin.

The fact Maddison recovered his composure

to turn in an otherwise solid display pleased boss John Ward, watching his new side for the first time.

The first half was a grim spectacle, with two nervous teams struggling to find any pattern on a bouncy pitch.

Wingers Tony Pounder and David Meheew were too often sucked into mid-field tussles to provide the width that Ward had been looking for.

But it was Pounder's cross that provided the leveller.

Flashed

Sent to the goalline by Carl Saunders, he cut back to swing over the pass which saw Taylor rise emphatically above keeper Alec Chamberlain and score with a looping header.

David Preece crashed Kerry Dixon's flick-on against the bar with 15 minutes left as Luton looked for the winner.

But Rovers could have pinched all three points in the closing moments. Saunders wasn't far away when David Meheew's cross ran across the face of goal, and seconds later the striker flashed a shot from the edge of the box narrowly wide.

CHRIS SWIFT
reports from
KENILWORTH RD.

MATCH FACTS

Entertainment rating
(maximum 5 stars)

★ ★

Rovers form

Resilient

Man of the Match

SCOTT OAKES (Luton)

... lively on the left

flank

Referee

TONY WARD (London)

... good

Goals

LUTON Maddison (own goal, 58 mins)

ROVERS Taylor (72 mins)

Corners

LUTON 10

ROVERS 3

Shots on target

LUTON 2 (Oakes, Dixon)

ROVERS 8 (Saunders 2, Tillson, Waddock, Alexander, Browning, Pounder, Taylor)

Off-target

LUTON 6

ROVERS 1

Fouls

LUTON 10

ROVERS 16

Offsides

LUTON 3

ROVERS 4

Bookings

LUTON Hughes (foul, 47 mins)

ROVERS none

Teams

LUTON (4-4-2):

Chamberlain; James (sub Hughes, 45 mins),

Peake, Dreyer,

Johnson; Rees, Telfer,

Preece, Oakes; Gray,

Dixon. Sub (not used):

Skelton.

ROVERS (4-4-2):

Parkin; Alexander (sub

Clark, 85 mins),

Tillson, Yates,

Maddison; Meheew,

Browning, Waddock,

Pounder; Stewart (sub

Taylor, 57 mins),

Saunders.

Attendance: 7,717

Weather: Sunny

Pitch: Heavily sanded

Reserves slip

Martin Paul scored a consolation goal for Bristol Rovers who slumped to a disappointing 3-1 defeat at Oxford United's Manor Ground in a South East Counties League clash.

John Ward
says...

Fighting spirit was pleasing

JOHN Ward watched the First Division relegation zone results flash in on TV at Kenilworth Road and shrugged.

"That's life," he said. "I can't control what happens outside Bristol Rovers. We can only try to get ourselves right."

Ward was pleased with the fighting spirit he found from his first Bristol Rovers side.

"We didn't see their heads go down after conceding an unfortunate goal, and that was a good sign," he said.

"In normal circumstances you would be pleased with a point away."