

Town's team effort is rewarded with Southampton tie

SATURDAY'S meeting with Southampton was earned by a dedicated effort by the whole team in the FA Cup third round replay at Twerton Park.

Second Division Bristol Rovers, unbeaten at home this season, and roared on by their biggest crowd for three years, were quick, very direct, and well fired up.

"They chased and we had to resist," was the summing up of Town manager David Pleat.

The Town were under the cosh but strong in defence for a long time before they made their First Division class tell with a superb winner in the 62nd minute.

The Town's successes included 17-year-old Ben Chenery, making his debut in place of suspended Julian James at right back.

Rovers poured a lot of effort into attacking that flank, but after a scare in the first minute he settled down to play with calm composure and assurance.

In a first half dominated by Rovers, Scott Oakes cleared a header by Gareth Taylor off the line, and soon after the break Jurgen Sommer had to make a brilliant tip-over save from Worrell Sterling.

The key to drawing Rovers' sting was to keep possession of the ball whenever possible, and with David Preece flourishing the longer the game went on the Town got well into it in the second half.

The winner was pure class. Paul Telfer won the ball in central midfield, back-heeled

BRISTOL ROVERS 0 LUTON TOWN 1

it out of a rock of players, and set Gary Waddock free to make progress against his old club.

He in turn fed Preece down the left wing, and the veteran midfielder tricked his would-be tackler before delivering a perfectly-weighted and flighted cross to the far post.

Dwight Marshall came in from deep and made all the time and space he needed to head his seventh goal of the season.

Said Pleat: "As a team we were very strong, and everybody contributed in their way. We got the goal and then grew in confidence."

THE MATCH DETAILS

● **TOWN:** Sommer, Chenery, Peake, Johnson, Thomas, Marshall, Telfer, Waddock, Preece, Oakes, Dixon. Unused subs: Sinton, Woodhead and goalkeeper Davis.

● **BRISTOL ROVERS:** Parkin, Frithard (Hardyman 80 mins), Clark, Tillson, Curney, Sterling, Browning, Channing, Archer, Miller, Taylor. Other subs: Davis and goalkeeper Higgs.

● **THE GOAL:** Dwight Marshall, far post header, 62 mins, from a left wing cross by David Preece.

● **OTHER ATTEMPTS:** Town five saved and four wide; Rovers four saved and nine wide. Corners: 4-4 to Bristol Rovers.

● **REFEREE:** Paul Rejer, Tipton, West Midlands.

● **BOOKED:** No-one.

● **ATTENDANCE:** 8,218, including 776 from Luton.

● **ENTERTAINMENT:** A typical cup-tie for an hour, with underdogs Rovers threatening to bite before the touch of class brought the winner and ended the contest.



DWIGHT MARSHALL