

Endsleigh League soccer

Win brings back facts

TOWN: Fear; Alexander, Marvin Johnson, James, Harvey; Waddock, McLaren, Hughes; Oakes, Thorpe, Marshall. Unused subs: Guentchev, Rieth, Cheney.

TRANMERE: Coyne, Thomas, Teale, Garnett (O'Brien 76 mins), Rogers; Jones, Brannan, Nevill; Aldridge, Bennett (Branch 82 mins), Moore. Unused sub: goalkeeper Nixon.

GOALS: 0-1 2 mins: Gary Bennett, shot after being put through by Ian Moore; 1-1 52 mins: Dwight Marshall shot after collecting Thorpe's flighted pass from the right; 1-1 52 mins: Gary Jones looping header from John Aldridge's headed pass; 2-2 60 mins: Marshall again, set up by mischievous shot by Scott Oakes; 3-2 71 mins: Paul McLaren's first league goal, slid in from an in-clash pass by Oakes.

OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town eight saved, five wide and two shots by man of the match Dwight Marshall hit the bar; Tranmere five saved and five wide. Corners: 7-5 to Tranmere.

REFERENCE: Ken Leach, Wolverhampton. Excellent throughout, with common sense added to good interpretation of the laws of the game.

BOOKED: Carl Hughes, to earn another suspension, for a foul on Ged Brannan; Tranmere's Tony Thomas and Shaun Garnett, both for fouls to try to stifle Tony Thorpe.

ATTENDANCE: 6,025, lowest of the season, but with Tranmere having a very small following.

ENTERTAINMENT: A match to remember with three goals in one game well deserved by a team in which every man was on song.

FOOTBALL had a smile on its face again at Kenilworth Road as Luton Town threw off the worries and fears about relegation, and produced their best performance of the season. Happy fans: they started kicking "Westley Out" within minutes of chanting off, after Tranmere grabbed an early lead. But they stood and applauded the quality they had seen when the game ended.

Happy manager: Terry Westley saw his tactical changes pay off with a much-needed second home win of the season.

Happy striker: Dwight Marshall ended a run of nine league games without a win with two goals and hit the bar twice.

Happy midfielder: Paul McLaren, whose first league goal was a delightful winner to complete a rare 1-1 draw, twice fighting back from behind to football their way to a win.

Happy new skipper: Marvin Johnson, captain for the first time because Steve Davis and Trevor Peake were out of the team through injuries.

Happy return: Tony Thorpe, recalled for only his second start of the season, with lanky David Rieth on the bench. Scott Oakes and Thorpe sparked in a Town team that looked like midge compared to Tranmere's muscular team.

"We had to play it to feet, and we did," said Westley. "The fact that we are still second bottom tarnishes the day a shade, but we have shown what we are capable of."

"When we went a goal down in two minutes we could have been gone. But we scored quickly, and then we bossed the game. We passed over so well, and Tranmere couldn't get near Oakes and Thorpe."

He admitted he had a lump in his throat when 19-year-old McLaren, who was in Westley's youth squad for four years, slid in the winner. "He is a boy who can play a bit, has a feel for the ball, but can get stuck in when he has to."

"The whole team did well, and I think it has shown that we are now near relegation material."

Tranmere veteran John Aldridge, seven goals in his last seven matches against the Town, was not given a look in this time, despite the absences of Davis and

REPORT BY BRIAN SWAIN PICTURES BY GARETH OWEN

Striker makes quick return

STRIKER John Taylor has beaten the most optimistic of medical forecasts about progress after his back operation, and could step out on the comeback trail for the reserves tonight.

The plan is to give him about an hour of football, and if there are no ill-effects, he will be considered for a return to league soccer in Sunday's match against Wolves.

And that will be more than a month earlier than the medicals predicted after Taylor's operation in October. The verdict then was that he would be lucky to play league football again before middle or late January.

Manager Terry Westley said: "We were prepared to be without John for a minimum of three months, but he is very fit, and got over the operation quickly. We have missed him, because he is a key member of our squad, and the news that he is close to coming back so soon is a real bonus."

"It might also save us a lot of money, because a fit John Taylor will always score goals, and it is obvious we need to do something about our goals for column. With John back in contention, it reduces the pressure on us to buy."

Peake. Graham Alexander returned to defence, operating as a fullback, in a unit which looked compact but occasionally vulnerable to through passes.

Westley agreed that he has to consider the balance of tactics: tight defence in the past has seen one-goal defeats. Better to let in two and score three is the obvious remedy. And it also makes for more entertainment for the customers.

The biggest danger to the Town was when Tranmere avoided being caught offside, and the visitors

Taylor, 31, was bought by David Pleat from Bradford City for £200,000 last March. He scored three goals in nine games at the tail end of last season. He has yet to score in this campaign, having played five full matches through pain, before discovering that his sore back was caused by a piece of bone flaking off his spine. A decision will be made later today about Taylor's comeback, but he and his manager are both hoping it will be at Top Field, Hitchin, when the reserves entertain British Rovers (7.30).

And then it will be fingers-crossed in the hope he can be included in the squad for Sunday's First Division game.

Fans quiz night

TOWN players will join fans in the Maresca Suite at Kenilworth Road on Monday, when a quiz night will be organised by Luton Town Supporters' Club. It starts at 7.30 and everyone is welcome - admission is £2 for LTSC members, and £2.50 for others, who are welcome to save ten bob by joining the Supporters' Club on the night.

tors should have killed off the game six minutes after they had regained the lead early in the second half, against the run of play.

Ian Moore was put through by Tony Thomas' powerful headed clearance, was not given offside, but shot wide when he should have made it 3-1.

Within two minutes Marshall had belted in his second equaliser, and after that only one team looked like winning.

Aldridge was surprised by the home fans. "They

APPEARANCES... GOALS

League appearances (as sub in brackets)	Goals
Harvey...20	Marshall 1
Marshall...18	Guentchev 1
M Johnson...18	1 pen
Steve Davis...16	
Alexander...15	Assists
Feuer...15	Hughes and Harvey
Hughes...15	1 each.
Peake...14 (3)	Coca Cola Cup
Alexander...14 (1)	Sommer...2
Steve Davis...14	Johnson...2
Feuer...14	M Johnson...2
Oldfield...12 (2)	S Davis...2
Vilstrup...12	Oldfield...2
James...10 (3)	Feuer...1
Oakes...9	Harvey...1
Guentchev...8 (5)	K Davis...3
Waddock...8 (4)	S Davis...3
McLaren...6	Harvey...3
Vilstrup...6	Marshall...2
Taylor...5 (3)	Taylor...2
Rieth...5 (1)	Guentchev...2
Lincoln...5 (1)	Thorpe...2
Kevin Davis...4	James...2
Thorpe...2 (6)	Waddock...2
Sommer...2	Matthews...2
Douglas...2	
Patterson...2	Goals
Woodford...1 (2)	Marshall and Marvin
Thomas...1 (1)	Johnson 1 each
Marshall...5	Assists
Davis...2	Steve Davis and
Guentchev...2 pens	Rieth...1
Thorpe...1	Patterson...1
Hughes...1	Upson...1
Harvey...1	

LUTON TOWN 3 TRANMERE ROVERS 2 Half-time: 1-1

really got behind Luton, and it was quite an atmosphere," he said. "It was like a cup-tie."

Perhaps the best news for the Town is that Oakes is getting back to form. He admitted that after a long injury-lay off he had "lost everything" when he first came back.

But with fitness returning, he is much more confident. "We are all working for each other," he said. "And there is a good feeling among the players. We all want to do it for the boss. He is trying his utmost."

And there was extra pleasure in seeing a 4-3 formation pay off. The last time the Town tried it, they were hammered 5-0 at Stoke.

Memories of that unhappy afternoon flooded back from the first attack of the game. Moore fed a pass down the middle, and Gary Bennett capitalised on the "Westley out" shouts were drowned by a delighted roar of approval as Thorpe crossed from the right, and Marshall turned and drilled in his sixth goal of the season.

Suddenly the Town were on top of their game, passing and moving, with Gary Waddock and Carl Hughes putting bite into the middle and down.

Ian Fear had to make a good point-blank save from Bennett following a scramble from a corner, but the Town created much the bet-

ter chances.

Marshall slammed a shot against the bar, with the goalkeeper beaten and Tranmere were relieved to reach the interval still level.

They seemed to have done the business seven minutes after half-time, when a quick break led to Pat Nevill crossing deep. Aldridge headed carefully to set up Gary Jones for a looping header which made it 2-1 to the visitors. It also made a mockery of the way the game was going, but two minutes after Moore's miss of the match Thorpe went down the right, got to the by-line and crossed to the back of the penalty area.

Oakes missed a shot for goal, but the ball fell nicely for Marshall to fire in another equaliser.

With the crowd realising that a much-needed win was there for the taking, the happy noise reached peak decibel level in the 71st minute when Oakes went unopposed with the ball, saw McLaren's good run ahead of him, and delivered a perfect pass. The teenager's winner was taken with equal skill.

McLaren read the game as well as anybody afterwards: "We played a lot of good stuff," he said. "We've been taking stick from the fans in the past few games, so it was good to have them behind us, and to hear them backing us."

Windowcraft Chiltern Youth League tables

Under-15 Div 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Warden Hill	12	11	0	1	36	7	33
Hillingdon	11	5	4	0	18	5	19
Leighton Cor	10	5	3	1	21	4	17
Ramridge A	9	7	0	4	17	22	6
Leighton Tn	4	2	1	1	7	4	6
St Joseph's	3	2	0	1	20	5	5
Bedford Tn	4	1	1	2	5	9	2
Lewsey	6	0	2	4	15	2	2
One Nation	5	0	0	5	3	52	0

Under-15 Div 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stevensboro	8	8	0	0	44	7	16
St Joseph's	7	6	0	1	24	12	12
Leighton Tn	8	6	0	2	28	15	12
Leighton Tn	7	5	0	2	24	12	10
Quesnel	7	4	2	1	13	6	10
St Mary's	8	3	0	5	11	24	6
Sunderland	7	2	1	4	10	18	5
Ramridge Maroon	7	1	0	6	12	33	2
Barton Ath	7	1	1	5	8	24	3
Lea Sports	7	0	1	6	7	26	1

Under-17 Div 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ACD Dynamos	10	7	0	3	44	13	17
Leighton Tn	10	6	2	2	35	16	14
Warden Hill	8	6	1	1	37	16	13
St Joseph's	9	6	1	2	30	22	13
Astra	8	5	1	2	32	13	11
St Joseph's	10	4	2	4	26	31	5
Caddington	9	2	2	5	18	22	6
Fitwick Eagles	10	3	0	7	16	35	3
Leighton Tn	11	1	1	9	17	51	3
Lions	9	0	0	9	17	66	0

Under-18 Div 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	7	5	1	1	38	13	11
Dragons A	8	5	1	2	27	12	13
Slip End	8	3	2	3	35	38	8
Ramridge	8	3	2	3	18	18	8
Sacred Heart	8	3	2	3	19	4	7
St Joseph's	3	3	0	0	24	1	6
Astra	10	1	1	8	13	35	5
Eaton Bray	6	1	2	3	14	23	4
Bushmead A	6	1	1	4	3	31	3
Sunderland	6	1	0	5	6	40	2

Under-18 Div 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Copenhagen C	10	8	1	1	44	19	17
Dragons A	12	7	2	3	23	16	16
Amphill Boys	9	7	0	2	28	13	14
Houghton Tn	9	7	0	2	42	14	14
Donstable Tn	10	6	1	3	48	31	13
Fitwick Eagles	9	3	3	3	31	29	9
Marleye	7	3	3	1	21	9	9
Walsley	7	3	1	3	13	12	7
Ramridge	7	2	0	5	7	17	4
Bushmead A	9	2	0	7	20	32	4
Leighton Tn	9	0	0	9	6	40	2

Under-19 Div 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ACD Dynamos	9	8	0	1	52	11	16
Leighton Tn	8	6	1	1	45	12	13
St Joseph's	9	6	1	2	33	14	13
St Joseph's	8	4	0	4	23	16	8
MK Rangers	8	4	0	4	14	35	8
Leighton Tn	7	3	1	3	13	27	7
Lewsey	7	3	1	3	12	27	7
Ramridge	7	2	0	5	7	17	4
Bushmead A	9	2	0	7	20	32	4
Leighton Tn	9	0	0	9	6	40	2

Tables for teams playing in the morning matches will be in next week's Luton News

Reports and gossip from Town



Walker pops in but is not in the frame

TERRY Westley is under no illusions today that his job as manager of Luton Town is still in the balance. Mike Walker, formerly in charge at Norwich and Everton is the latest name to be linked with a job that is not even vacant, which must be dreadful for Westley and his family.

Walker was in the stand, in a seat booked for a Middlesex FC scout, at the game against Tranmere.

One Sunday paper claimed that he would be interviewed for Westley's job, but Town chairman David Kohler said: "That's not true. I spoke to him at the game, as I did to a lot of other people."

I was chatting to Bruce Rioch and David Pleat a week ago at a reserve match, but you can be sure they're not in the frame for Terry Westley's job either. There's no frame to be in."

But Kohler would not comment when asked if Westley would have been sacked if the Town had lost at home again to Tranmere.

He said: "Of course the pressure is on Terry. Look at the results and the league table. He knows the board is considering what is best for Luton Town. Perhaps the fact that it was known that he helped on Saturday - I felt that the players gave him 100 per cent, which is all we can ask."

"I wouldn't stand for the way we played at Barnsley, but against Tranmere it was very different. The players wanted to do it for Terry Westley, and they did."

In view of the latest TV deal, with First Division clubs receiving up to £1 million each in future seasons, the league table has become even more crucial to the future of several managers, including Westley.

"We cannot afford to be relegated," said Kohler. "As a board we could not allow the situation to carry on as it is."

"I try not to worry about it, and to try to enjoy the job. Mick McGivern is the same, and we both have confidence in our own ability, and in our players."

But Saturday's game changed things. I have no doubt Terry Westley is going to be a fantastic manager. But our problem was what to do to stay in this league."

"Against Tranmere he got the players going. They were fully committed, and I don't think I can ever remember Luton coming back twice and winning a game."

Westley kept his cool and cracked a joke to the Press after the Tranmere game after being furious to read a Thursday freshet report quoting Ricky Hill as saying he would like to be the Town manager.

"Ricky will have to wait another week or two, won't he," said the manager, with a smile.

But he added: "I know I can do this job, and we have enough talent to do well in this league. And I don't forget that we have still not been asked to pick what we would consider our best team - Steve Davis, Darren Patterson and Johnny Johnson."

I read about my job being on the line, and I know that sort of speculation is inevitable."

and try to enjoy the job. Mick McGivern is the same, and we both have confidence in our own ability, and in our players."

Youth team let it slip

A 2-2 draw with Spurs sounds like a good result for the Town's youth side - but coach John Moore was not best pleased by it. "We were two up after six minutes, and it's disappointing to draw after a start like that," he said. "But the Spurs equaliser was a tremendous goal."

Andrew Fotiadis laid on both Stuart Douglas and the second knocked into his own net by a Tottenham defender.

The youth's junior games are both against Bristol Rovers, the reserves at Hitchin tonight and the youth teams at Bristol on Saturday.

Town's season at a glance....

DATE... OPPONENTS... RESULT... SCORERS... ATTENDANCE... LEAGUE POSITION

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE DIV I

August 1995

3 Norwich	(H) 1-3	(Guentchev, pen)	7,848	-
3 Southend	(A) 1-0	(Thorpe)	4,630	-
6 Leicester	(H) 1-1	(Hughes)	7,612	16
9 Grimsby	(A) 0-0		4,289	10

September

Derby	(H) 1-2	(Marshall)	6,427	17
Reading	(A) 1-3	(Marshall)	8,550	20
Millwall	(A) 0-1		7,076	22
Sunderland	(H) 0-2		6,955	23
Wolves	(A) 0-0		23,659	24
Portsmouth	(H) 3-1	(Marshall, Davis, Guentchev pen)	7,795	23

October

Tranmere	(A) 0-1		6,880	24
West Brom	(H) 1-2	(Harvey)	8,042	24
Ipswich	(A) 1-0	(Oldfield)	9,125	21
Charlton	(H) 0-1		6,270	22

November

Stoke	(A) 0-5		9,382	24
Oldham	(H) 1-1	(Douglas)	6,047	23
Watford	(A) 1-1	(Davis)	10,042	23
Barnsley	(A) 0-1		6,437	23

December

Tranmere	(H) 3-2	(Marshall 2, McLaren)	6,023	23
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COCA-COLA CUP (First Round)

August 1995

Bournemouth (H)	1-1	(Marshall)	2,728	
Bournemouth (A)	1-2	(aet) (M Johnson)	4,844	

ANGLO ITALIAN CUP

September 5 1995

Perugia (H)	1-4	(Guentchev pen)	2,352	
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October 11

Genoa (A)	0-4		3,759	
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November 8

Cesena (A)	1-2	(Marshall)	400	
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How they stand in Division One

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How they stand in Division One

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