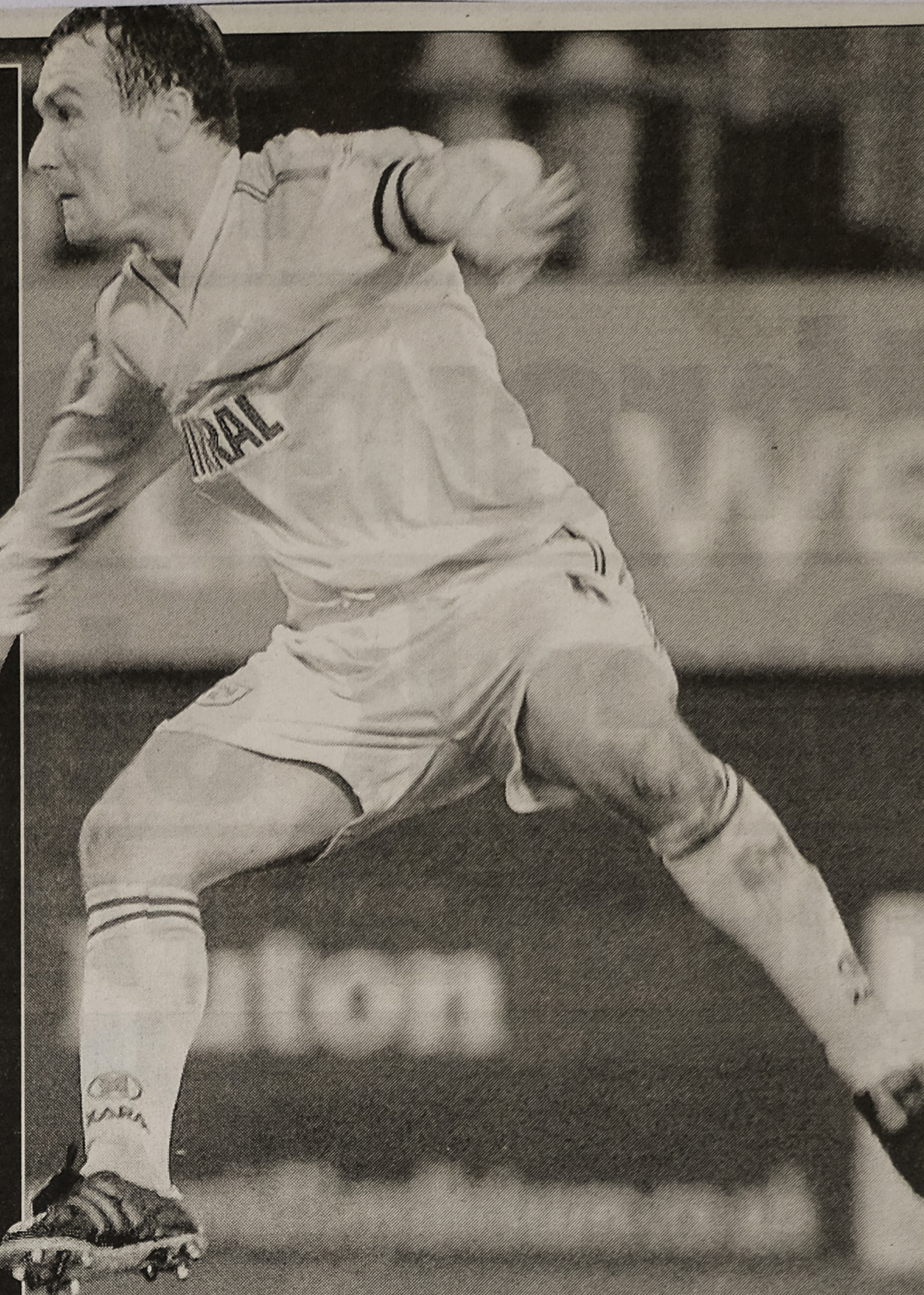


BRIAN LOVES BEING A MILD ROVER

Boss Little is
taking it easy



WINNER TAKES ALL . . . Micky Mellon drills in Tranmere's winner

TONY STENSON at 03/04
Kenilworth Road (FAC)

TRANMERE manager Brian Little has lost his anger — but not his hunger.

Days when he twisted himself into a mental knot have long gone.

His return to football with Rovers has once again fired his flames of ambition and he still believes managing once more in the Premiership is a possibility.

Little said: "I would not have accepted this job if I didn't think like that."

He quit soccer nearly two years ago because he no longer enjoyed the kind of win his side achieved on Saturday.

The former Aston Villa boss said: "It was work, work, work. I couldn't relax. Being out of the game gave me time to take stock. I've done that and I now know where I'm going."

He took up golf, worked for Sky TV and generally re-charged the batteries.

Little added: "I turned down two jobs before I accepted Tranmere's offer."

"I wanted a club that had the same kind of ambitions as I did, one with potential, a club that can develop."

"But it will no longer be at a cost. If I want to take the day off now to go shopping, I'll take it. Simple as that."

"I've been in the Premiership but I walked. Now I would like the chance one day of going back again."

Little admits Tranmere rode their luck to achieve a fifth-round place and revive their headline-grabbing days of four years ago when they reached the quarter-finals, losing to Liverpool.

Yet for long periods the word glamour was missing. Two defences dominated attacks that lacked pace and invention.

Little added: "We were fortunate to survive the first-half. Usually I give my team details of the opposition, what to look for, but it was impossible because Luton had so many players out."

"I have never sent a side out before without that kind of information. It was only at half-time I could get to them and say 'you've seen them, now react'."

Luton, who had lost only two of their previous 17 games, tried everything they



**LUTON
TRANMERE**
Mellon 81

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could but the odds were always stacked against them.

Front-line strikers Steve Howard and Adrian Forbes plus midfield aces Matt Spring and Steve Robinson were missing either through injury or suspension.

The Hatters needed a massive cup run to help their desperate financial plight. They cannot buy because there's no money but are hopeful of finding a backer soon.

Even giant striker Enoch Showunmi was plucked from North London park football. He plays purely for expenses but has already become a cult figure at Kenilworth Road for moments of pure magic or outrageous mirth.

Luton can justifiably claim they were denied a penalty when sub Keith Keane was felled by Gary Jones in the 71st minute — but Tranmere's second-half display shaded the day.

Micky Mellon struck their only goal, driving home in the 81st minute via a post. He said: "I've just been kissed by our chairman Richard Johnson, one of Britain's 50th richest men, so I must have done something right."

"I'm very pleased with the goal but even more so that Tranmere are into the last 16 which is a massive thing for a club like us. All the lads want a big Premiership club, ideally at home, in the next round."

"We've had a couple of away ties so far and played a bit of everything with Hornchurch and Bolton. We didn't think we got the credit we deserved for winning at Bolton and we'd like the opportunity to prove it wasn't a fluke."

Luton boss Mike Newell said: "The odds were always stacked against us with our injuries and suspensions. We had chances to win but just didn't have a cutting edge."

SUN STAR MAN
MICKEY MELLON (Tranmere). Ended the game with a melon-shaped smile.

MATCH STATS

LUTON		TRANMERE
52%	POSSESSION	48%
2	SHOTS ON TARGET	5
8	SHOTS OFF TARGET	2
4	BLOCKED SHOTS	2
5	CORNERS	9
17	FOULS CONCEDED	13
5	OFFSIDES	4
2	YELLOW CARDS	3
0	RED CARDS	0



MY LITTLE PAL
... Boss Brian
with hero Mellon