



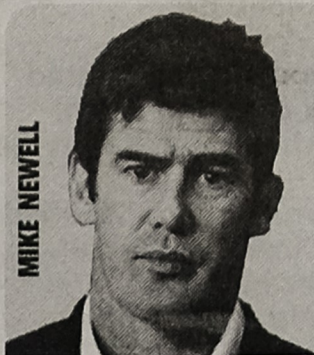
LUTON TOWN..3

Vine 28 pen, 29, Bell 81

VINE DUO



COMING THROUGH: Birmingham's Mikael Forssell manages to wriggle past the Luton Town defence but his shot was off target



MIKE NEWELL

WE STARTED slowly for the first ten or 15 minutes, but that was down to Birmingham. They're an ex-Premier League team who still have a lot of Premier League players so you would expect that. But we've got goals in our side and when they come they usually come one after the other, which was the case again.



STEVE BRUCE

WE WERE in control, 1-0 up and looked a threat up until that point. Again we scored goals away from home and should have seen the game out.

The only threat they seemed to have was set-pieces and corners, but that's bread and butter stuff and in this league.



06/07

HAS BLUES WITHERING

DJ's lead wasted as Bell tolls late

By BRIAN HOWARD

LUTON TOWN'S impressive home form continued as they beat Birmingham City in a thriller at Kenilworth Road.

The visitors went ahead through DJ Campbell, but two goals in three minutes from Rowan Vine put Town 2-1 up at the break.

Neil Danns made it 2-2 in the second period, only for substitute David Bell to bring the house down with the winner nine minutes from time.

The visitors started the game in purposeful fashion and Markus Heikkinen had to be alert to slide in ahead of Cameron Jerome at the near post in the third minute after Danns' right-wing cross.

Jerome then beat Leon Barnett on the left four minutes later and squared to former-Town loanee Gary McSheffrey, but the ex-Coventry man mis-kicked from eight yards.

It was no surprise when Birmingham finally took the lead in the 14th minute as Campbell expertly held off Heikkinen, before drilling McSheffrey's angled cross into the bottom corner from 12 yards.

Campbell almost got in for his second when he robbed Heikkinen just inside his own half, only for Marlon Beresford to quickly leave his area to clear.

Instead, the hosts forced their first effort on goal in the 21st minute when Stephen O'Leary found Kevin Foley to cross for Steve Robinson, whose 15-yard volley went straight into the arms of Maik Taylor.

Sam Parkin nodded at Taylor in the 24th minute after another Emanuel corner, but three minutes later Luton drew level with Lewis Emanuel involved again.

The winger ran into the penalty area on to O'Leary's superbly weighted pass and fell under the challenge of Stephen Kelly.

Referee Jon Moss pointed to the spot and Vine stepped up to hit the ball low under the body of Taylor.

Two minutes later Luton were ahead as another Emanuel corner



ON THE RUN: Rowan Vine celebrates scoring Luton's second

PICTURES: Action Images

MATCH STATS

LUTON v BIRMINGHAM

4	Shots on target	5
4	Shots off target	4
8	Corners	4
2	Offside	6
11	Fouls conceded	12
1	Yellow Cards	0
0	Red Cards	0
50	Possession %	50

Aft: 9,275 Rating: ★★★★★
Ref: J Moss - 7/10

caused havoc in the box and after Barnett headed the ball down, Vine swept home from two yards.

But Birmingham proved they couldn't be written off as firstly Radhi Jaidi headed

McSheffrey's 38th minute corner just wide and then Jerome, cutting inside Heikkinen from McSheffrey's pass, forced a fine save from Beresford from 20 yards a minute before the break.

Birmingham started the second half as they did the first as the lively Campbell immediately nipped ahead

of Barnett to a long ball and turned Heikkinen, only to see his 20-yard shot hit the recovering Barnett.

The Blues saw wingers McSheffrey and Danns switch flanks as they attempted to get back into the game.

However, both sides struggled to create openings until Luton substitute Dean Morgan hit a 25-yard free-kick at Taylor in the 65th minute.

Sixty seconds later though Birmingham were level with an absolute peach of a goal.

Campbell created the chance by stealing in ahead of Barnett and laying back for Matt Sadler to cross.

Heikkinen got a head on the ball, but could only divert it to Danns, who, after one bounce, arrowed an

unstoppable right-foot effort over his head into the top corner off the post from 16 yards.

Luton made a change by brining on Bell for O'Leary and the move proved a masterstroke as the sub hit the winner in the 81st minute.

Vine fed Sol Davis to cross from the left and when the ball went over Sam Parkin, Carlos Edwards tapped inside for the on-rushing Bell to sidefoot home from 12 yards.

The Hatters were given an almighty scare when Blues substitute Sebastian Larsson saw a speculative 45-yard cross deceive Beresford and come back off the far post, but they held on for an important win.

LUTON

MARLON BERESFORD 7/10

Competent display and a fine save from Cameron Jerome before half-time

LEON BARNETT 6/10

Competed well with the powerful Cameron Jerome

SOL DAVIS 5/10

First game back after injury and his rustiness showed on occasions

KEVIN FOLEY 6/10

Had his work cut-out tracking former teammate Gary McSheffrey

MARKUS HEIKKINEN 5/10

Was troubled at times by the pace of Dudley Campbell

LEWIS EMANUEL 6/10

Fouled for the penalty and was heavily involved before limping off after the break

STEVE ROBINSON 6/10

Busy as ever in the centre of midfield

STEPHEN O'LEARY 7/10

Tenacious and hard-working on his first start of the season

CARLOS EDWARDS 6/10

Not quite up to his usual high-standards, but always looked to go forwards

SAM PARKIN 4/10

Struggled to impose himself on the game as the action passed him by

ROWAN VINE 8/10

Two goals and his star man display caused trouble for Birmingham throughout

SUBSTITUTES

MORGAN - 6/10; FOR EMANUEL (55)

BELL - 6/10; FOR O'LEARY (70)

FEENEY; FOR VINE (86)

NOT USED: BRILL; KEANE

STAR PLAYERS

Rowan Vine

DJ Campbell



STAR RATING 8



STAR RATING 9

BIRMINGHAM

MAIK TAYLOR 6/10

Very frustrated to see Rowan Vine's penalty go in under his dive

MATHEW SADLER 8/10

Was superb throughout as he kept Carlos Edwards quiet

STEPHEN KELLY 6/10

Will be annoyed that his challenge on Emanuel was deemed a penalty

BRUNO N'GOTTY 6/10

Had a difficult afternoon racing around after Rowan Vine

RADHI JAIDI 6/10

Got forwards well from the back and was unlucky with some headers from corners

FABRICE MUAMBA 5/10

Had a quiet afternoon before being substituted early in the second half

MEDHI NAFTI 6/10

Broke up Luton's midfield and was tidy in possession

NEIL DANNIS 7/10

Fantastic technique for the equaliser at 2-2 and dangerous for most of the game

DUDLEY CAMPBELL 9/10

By far Birmingham's most dangerous player, took his goal superbly

CAMERON JEROME 6/10

Put himself about up front without getting the breaks

GARY MCSHEFFREY 7/10

Some superb balls from the left of midfield, but was quiet in the second half

SUBSTITUTES

KILKENNY - 6/10; FOR MUAMBA (55)

FORSSELL - 5/10; FOR JEROME (68)

LARSSON; FOR NAFTI (82)

NOT USED: DOYLE; TEBILY