



OWN GOAL IS A GIFT FOR MILLWALL

MILLWALL DETAILS

MILLWALL 1, LUTON TOWN 0
Half-time: 0-0

BRIAN SWAIN'S VERDICT: ★★

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Jones, McNichol, Paul Fletcher; Hill, West, Fucillo (Ingram, 80 minutes); Stein, Ron Fletcher, Boersma.

MILLWALL: Johns; Donaldson, Moore, Kitchener, Hazell; Allen, Walker, Mehmet; Lee, Seaman (Pearson, 84 minutes), Hamilton.

THE GOAL: Paul Price, own goal, 63rd minute, the first of his career, trying to head clear a free-kick by Hazell.

ATTENDANCE: 7,334, and the vast majority Millwall supporters who did all they could to cheer on their team in its battle against relegation.

REFEREE: Tony Glasson, Salisbury—added to the tension by never allowing the advantage rule.

BOOKING: Graham Jones for a foul on Seaman. Only his third booking of the season, but it takes him to 20 points because of a sending-off in a reserve match, and will mean that he will miss the start of next season.

ENTERTAINMENT: Spoiled by Millwall's anxiety and inability to settle down to play real football. The Town did, but failed to finish the job when they should have swamped Millwall with goals as well as pressure.

TO COMPLETE an unsatisfactory four-day spell, the Town went down to their second consecutive defeat at The Den on Tuesday to a desperate Millwall team which they killed but didn't bury.

The Londoners, technically inferior in every department, were in danger of being taken to the cleaners as the Town's more enterprising football took command, but just when the Town looked most dangerous the game was decided by a freak own goal.

A long free-kick by Tony Hazell pinged into the crowded penalty area and the ball was deflected on to Paul Price's head and bounced into the net.

It happened in the 63rd minute, when ragged Millwall were showing every sign of sliding further towards

**By BRIAN SWAIN
Sports Editor**

the Third Division. The Town, relaxed and composed while Millwall tried and failed to do everything at breakneck speed, were beaten by nothing more than honest toil and fighting spirit.

The mystery was how Millwall had stayed in the game so long. In the early stages the pace of John Seaman and Irish international Bryan Hamilton posed problems for Graham Jones and Jim McNichol, but with Paul Fletcher producing another brilliant display the Town rearguard settled into an effective unit again.

Millwall depended on village green football, with long clearances from defence pumped upfield in the hope that a forward would get there

first and receive some sort of inspiration when he did.

The Town, by contrast, were careful and patient in their build-up, using the midfield well, and always prepared to probe for weaknesses in the Millwall defence.

Although big Barry Kitchener was not always able to tie down Ron Fletcher, Millwall survived through the lack of punch by Town attackers in the penalty area.

Ricky Hill unleashed a ferocious bender which curved narrowly the wrong side of the post, and Ron Fletcher looped a header weakly over the bar.

He also produced the shot of the match, a thumping drive after smooth work by Alan West and Brian Stein. Goalkeeper Nicky Johns didn't see the ball until it hit him on the shoulder and bounced to safety.

Fletcher pushed another header wide from a cross by Price, and as the Town got right on top in the second half Millwall looked down and out.

But the game turned inside out when Jones, deputising for David Carr, was penalised and booked for a clumsy tackle on Seaman.

Hazell was true to Millwall form—he whacked the ball goalwards, and blind faith and hope paid off, with Price unwittingly heading the first own goal of his career to give Millwall their fourth consecutive league win.

Lil Fucillo almost saved a point with a vicious dipper from 20 yards which Johns did well to save, but with the goal to buck them up Millwall were back into the game with a vengeance.

Debut blocked by the League

THE Football League yesterday turned down a request by Town boss David Pleat for Mark Aizlewood to be given his Second Division debut at Burnley on Saturday.

He was signed after the transfer deadline, and the League ruled that the Town's final game of the season could still mathematically affect the Division Two relegation struggle.

But on another front Mr Pleat has won a point: he has frustrated all attempts by Minnesota Kicks to get Paul Price and Alan West to America before the season ends.

They had hoped to fly out yesterday, but the Town manager has kept them back for Saturday's match. His team is already weakened by suspension to Ron Fletcher and injury to David Carr.

Fletcher's disciplinary case comes before an FA commission this afternoon, and will include a letter from Kenilworth Road appealing for leniency.

Gary Heale and Godfrey Ingram are in contention for the No. 9 shirt at Burnley, but the final team selection will not be made until tomorrow.

West took a knock on an ankle at Millwall but is expected to be fit to play against his former club.

The Town Reserves' last game, at home to QPR, has been brought forward to 7.30 tomorrow evening at QPR's request.



● THE ONLY GOAL THIS WEEK: the ball rests in Southampton's net and Ricky Hill turns away after his equaliser.

DAVID PLEAT'S VIEWPOINT

I DON'T like complaining about luck in football, but this week we have had two games and got nothing when we might easily have had a point from each.

But I also go along with the soccer saying that to a large extent you make your own luck. I thought we played well against Southampton and against Millwall on Tuesday night, and it was poor reward for all our effort on Saturday when we lost to a penalty in the last two minutes.

At The Den on Tuesday we played all the good football that was on show, but we didn't put the finishing touches to it.

A couple of scoring efforts went very close, and their goalkeeper made one lucky save when the ball hit him through no fault of his own. To top it all, we lost to an own goal.

In the last two games our failure to deal with free kicks was crucial, giving away two goals.

I hope we have better luck at Burnley, and for those who can't make the journey to Lancashire I would recommend a trip to Kenilworth Road tomorrow night, 7.30, for the reserves' last game of the season, against Queen's Park Rangers.

We have a young reserve team which will get better as the players gain experience, and they picked themselves up well on Tuesday when they beat Crystal Palace 2-0 to end a run of six consecutive defeats. Come along tomorrow night and give them a cheer, and you might well be given a lot of football pleasure.

Looking ahead to next season, the Town are planning to sign a new batch of apprentices, and face problems in finding digs for them. Coach John Moore would be delighted to hear from anyone who can help out by taking in a youngster or two as lodgers.

Saints scrape by on a penalty

ALTHOUGH THE Town lost their last home match of the season, it was hard to begrudge Southampton manager Laurie McMenemy his hour of glory on Saturday night. But it was poor reward for a fighting Town display to see Southampton win with a penalty two minutes from time to go to the top of the Second Division table.

I felt that a draw would have been a fair result, but that if either side deserved to win it was Southampton. They looked slightly the better side in approach, and moved forward with a willingness that made for an open and entertaining match.

But they found the Town defence difficult to break down, and it was a pity for Jim McNichol that his best game so far as centre-half should have been blotted by one mistake which gave Southampton their opening goal.

Before and after that incident, the Town responded to manager David Pleat's hopes that they would raise their game to show that on their day they can compare with just about anything in the Second Division.

McMenemy generously conceded that point after the match, and confessed to being relieved when the late penalty gave his team a bonus point which they barely earned.

He congratulated Pleat on an all-round Town performance which so nearly frustrated the best that Southampton could produce. It also sparked the Saints into some desperate tackling and niggles, and referee Brian Homewood eventually booked two Town players and three of Southampton's in an effort to calm things down.

Both sides could point to incidents which might have swung the match their way. Early on Phil Boyer scooped a good chance over the bar, and the Town's defence had to be re-shuffled when David Carr was carried off in the 24th minute with torn ankle ligaments.

Graham Jones took his place admirably, and for all their menace in approach Southampton were denied a clear sight of Milija Aleksic by some cool and solid work by Jones, Paul Price, McNichol and Paul Fletcher.

The Town claimed a penalty, without success, when Andruszewski brought down Phil Boersma at the end of a thrilling run made possible by an astute through pass by Ron Fletcher.

Alan West, Fucillo and Ricky Hill earned an honourable draw in competition with Alan Ball and Steve Williams, but Brian Stein, Ron Fletcher and Boersma found as much difficulty in attack as did the Southampton forwards at the other end.

Ron Fletcher forced his way past Pickering to blaze a drive over the bar, and from a brilliant turn and knock-back by Stein he produced a dipping volley which was a foot too high to be the goal of the season.

The game was littered with free kicks, and at half-time McMenemy had given his team an ear-bashing for not making best use of theirs. In the 52nd minute they put it right: the Town's defence stood off long enough for MacDougall to rise unchallenged to head Southampton into the lead from Ball's free kick.

Back came the Town, and Stein, under pressure, fired wide after Ron Fletcher had burst through and forced Wells to parry his shot, but in the 63rd minute

Southampton Details

LUTON TOWN 1, SOUTHAMPTON 2
Half-time: 0-0

BRIAN SWAIN'S VERDICT: ★★★

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Carr (Jones, 24 minutes), McNichol, Paul Fletcher; Hill, Fucillo, West, Stein, Ron Fletcher, Boersma.

SOUTHAMPTON: Wells; Andruszewski, Peach, Nicholl, Pickering; Williams, Ball, Holmes; Boyer, McDougall, Funnell, Sub: Hebbard, not used.

THE GOALS: Ted MacDougall, 52 minutes, unmarked for a firm header from Alan Ball's free-kick; Ricky Hill, 63 minutes, after Lil Fucillo's through-ball beat the offside trap; David Peach, penalty, 88 minutes, after Paul Fletcher mistimed a tackle on Alan Ball on the edge of the penalty area.

ATTENDANCE: 14,302, biggest since the visit of Spurs. More than half the crowd seemed to be Southampton supporters, who staged a delirious celebration on the terrace and on the pitch as their team's victory put them on top of the Second Division.

ENTERTAINMENT: You could hardly ask for more on the last home match of the season, with the Town slightly unlucky to lose.

REFEREE: Brian Homewood, Sunbury: Never popular at Kenilworth Road, but despite a few mistakes did a very difficult job well.

BOOKINGS: Ron Fletcher, foul on Williams; his eighth of the season; Lil Fucillo, his first of the season, for dissent; Peach and Ball of Southampton for fouls and Wells for dissent—for telling Mr Homewood he had missed seeing a handling offence. He had too.

Hill made goal-scoring look easy as he collected the equaliser.

Jones broke up a Southampton holding operation near the half-way line, and fed a short square pass to Fucillo. Southampton's defence charged forward to try to win an offside decision, but Fucillo's timing was spot on—and so was Hill's.

Fucillo's through pass sliced through a square defence, and Hill took the ball 30 yards at speed and carefully drilled his shot into the corner of the net as Wells advanced hopefully to the edge of his area.

Two minutes from time Alan Ball tried to wriggle his way into the penalty area, and for once Paul Fletcher mistimed his tackle. Mr Homewood was close to the incident, looked hard, and gave a penalty, and David Peach, Fletcher's colleague in the England under-21 team, stepped up to score from the spot—his 37th consecutive penalty goal in three seasons.

THE TOWN LOTTERY RESULTS

RESULTS OF LOTTERY No. 12

1st. **£1000** WINNING No. 26992
PLUS Three £100 Consolation Prizes to holders of tickets with the Last Four Numbers Correct.

2nd **£500** WINNING No. 20429
PLUS Thirty-nine £10 Consolation Prizes to holders of tickets with the Last Three Numbers Correct.

3rd **£250** WINNING No. 03359
PLUS Three Hundred & Ninety-nine £1 Consolation Prizes to holders of tickets with the Last Two Numbers Correct.

4th **£200** IN BONUS PRIZES
4 Winners x £50 each
WINNING Nos.
19964 02131
27014 37905

Promoter: R.J. Powell, 74 Kenilworth Road, Luton Reg. with the Gaming Board for Great Britain No. LO 150/118/1

TO CLAIM PRIZES AND FOR INFORMATION

