

Dr Martens Premier Division – Tuesday, 18th March, 2003

Halesowen Town 1 Newport County 2

Halesowen's run of good form came to an abrupt end by letting a first half lead slip against out-of-form Newport to produce yet another disappointing home result.

In an even opening, a Kristian Dimond cross from the right fell for the unmarked Steve Benton in the 6th minute but he volleyed wide while at the other end Jason Perry kept out a Lee Williams cross with a diving header to concede a 10th minute corner. After 25 minutes Tim Clarke dropped a Dimond corner but Lee Collins was on hand to clear off the line and a minute later Neil Davis volleyed high from 10 yards for County.

With the game played at a lightning pace on a hard surface, stand-in novice Newport goalkeeper Gareth Wesson raced out to gather from the on-rushing Jason Ashby on the half-hour and Mark Danks sent in a 15-yard shot across the ground 8 minutes later.

The Yeltz took the lead at an ideal time just a minute before the break when a long punt out of defence found **ASHBY** and he turned his marker on the left of the area to beat Wesson with a shot along the ground.

Halesowen's joy was short-lived when they allowed Newport to equalise in the first minute of the second half with a 15-yard shot from Gary **SHEPHERD** rolling into the corner of the net with Clarke late seeing the ball. On the hour Danks fed Ashby on the break but he shot weakly at Wesson and in the 63rd minute Frazer McHugh's 20-yard shot was deflected for a corner that was headed high by Lee Collins. In a lightning 65th minute move Les Hines crossed for his fellow full-back Richard Colwell to meet the ball with a diving header but Wesson made a point-blank save.

In end-to-end play Neil Davis then went close twice for Newport in the 69th minute by dispossessing Colwell to hammer a 25-yard shot that beat Clarke but rebounded off the inside of the post and from the following cross Davis then headed onto the roof of the net.

Halesowen re-organised themselves in the 74th minute with Phil Trainer replacing Gary Bauress and the pivotal moment of the game arrived five minutes later. In the 78th minute Wesson pulled off another fine reflex save from Leadbeater after Ashby flicked on a Williams cross and as the ball broke down the other end **DIMOND** headed a left-wing cross strongly past Clarke from close range to register Newport's first win since January and sink Halesowen back into trouble.

Halesowen Town: Clarke; Colwell, Hines, Bauress (Trainer 71), L. Collins, Stone, Williams, Ashby, Danks (Leadbeater 64), McHugh, Skidmore. Unused Subs: Master, Spencer, Charlton.

Newport County: Wesson; C. Collins, Benton, Clark (Thomas HT), Perry, Eckhardt, Rose, Nathan Davis, Neil Davis (Plant 90), Shepherd, Dimond. Unused Subs: French, Stevenson, Idzi.

Referee: D. Brockwell (Northampton)

Attendance: 555

Sponsors' Man of the Match: Frazer McHugh