

Town Slog To Victory In Deluge

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 4, CHARLTON ATHLETIC 1

BAD luck seems to attach to the Town's home fixture with Charlton. Originally, it was put off in February because of the waterlogged state of the pitch, and last night at Kenilworth-road it was nearly washed into oblivion by a torrential downpour.

For nearly half an hour, the game, which had been quite entertaining while conditions were reasonably normal, became farcical.

The pitch was a sheet of water, players often disappeared in a torrent of spray, and the whole thing was too ludicrous to warrant description.

Once or twice I thought the referee was considering applying the closure. Many people must have expected it, but play went on with players barely able to move the ball and often finding their feet shooting from under them, with the result that they were given an uncomfortable bath in muddy water.

Before all this submarine effort began, the Town had recovered from the shock of going into arrears early on, and had gained a 2-1 lead.

Then, with Ashworth's first goal, the football virtually ended, but the persistent Ashworth obtained another in the closing stages.

HOME RECORD MAINTAINED

In the circumstances, considering their weakened position through injuries, the Town did well to maintain their home record, which has remained unbeaten since October.

While the forward display was not all that convincing, the defence was adequate, with Collins playing quite usefully at centre-half.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Pacey, Collins, Groves; R. Chandler, Ashworth, Morton, McGuffie, Legate.

CHARLTON: Duff; Sewell, Townsend; Hewie, Hinton, Tocknell; Lawrie, Edwards, Leary, Werge, Summers.

Referee: H. Horner, of Coventry.

Without managing to produce a telling shot, the Town forwards moved quite promisingly early on, and had the Charlton defence outstretched two or three times.

However, Charlton were the first to score, in the eighth minute.

In a quick breakaway Lawrie made an awkward shot that Baynham stopped at the foot of the post with his foot. Speedily the ball was returned into the goal-mouth, where slowness by Groves enabled WERGE to ram it into the roof of the net.

There was a prompt Town response, during which Morton had a cross-drive finger-tipped over the bar by Duff. From the corner kick, Ashworth was too high as he shot on the half turn.

McGuffie nearly caught Duff napping with a terrific first-time drive that the goalkeeper could only push out—fortunately for him straight to Hinton.

EXCITING EXCHANGES

This was the start of an exciting few minutes, in which Duff excelled himself with a great one-handed save from a flying header by Pacey, and with another good effort from Chandler.

At least one of three efforts

HOW THE GOALS CAME

WERGE for Charlton after minutes.

LEGATE for Luton after 44 minutes.

ASHWORTH for Luton after 60 minutes.

ASHWORTH for Luton after 79 minutes.

LEGATE for Luton after 89 minutes.

could have been expected to count in normal circumstances, and the Town scarcely deserved to be behind, because they were exerting the more persistent pressure.

Seconds before the half-time whistle, the Town reached equality from the corner kick. It was placed short to McNally, who drove in a terrific low cross that rebounded off someone and then shot into the net from the legs of LEGATE, standing almost on the goal-line. Half-time:

LUTON 1

CHARLTON 1

With a quarter of an hour of the second half gone, the referee signalled for the lights to go on.

Immediately, the Town scored through ASHWORTH, who fastened on to a through pass, and, after appearing to have taken the ball too far, reached it to drive it in past the oncoming Duff.

Then the rains really came, pelt-ing down in semi-tropical fashion so that in a few minutes the pitch was mostly one large lake. Any sort of constructive football was a sheer impossibility.

With 18 minutes left the referee went across to one of the lines-men and seemed to be assuring himself that the line on that side was still visible, but play went on in rapidly worsening conditions.

PURE FARCE

Much of what went on was pure farce, and a shot by Lawrie with Baynham sprawled in a muddy heap was stopped on the goal-line by Collins. Baynham was injured and there was a hold-up while he recovered.

With 11 minutes left ASHWORTH, always a chaser of forlorn hopes, went out after another and found luck in his way because Duff, in his attempt to punch clear, sent the ball hard against him and it rebounded into the net.

With one minute left LEGATE put the seal on the Town's victory with a beautifully headed goal from a centre by Chandler.

Result:

LUTON 4

CHARLTON 1

Attendance: 7,149