

INCONSISTENCY OF THE TOWN TEAM

Meek Surrender After An Early Shock

By CHILTERN

61/62

NEWCASTLE UNITED 4, LUTON TOWN 1

IF those knowledgeable football fans in the north-east of England regard the Town as a sort of Jekyll and Hyde team, then no one can blame them.

Ten days before surrendering meekly to Newcastle at St. James's Park, they had turned on a high powered display only 35 miles away, at Middlesbrough and were voted a fine team.

Yet, at Newcastle, they plumbed the depths and were given the tag of being the worst team seen at Tyne-side for a long time.

Inconsistency has been an unfortunate trait of the Town so far, and it was an early goal to the opposition, the product of a bad defensive mistake that seemed to have a shattering effect on them.

Before that happened in the fifth minute, the Town had been moving so smoothly as to prompt applause from the crowd and United were just beginning to qualify for derogatory remarks when that surprise goal arrived.

In their first sortie to the Town end, McNally tried a short pass which went straight to Tuohy and from his centre which went quite close to both Cope and Morton. ALLCHURCH rammed the ball into the net.

That gave Newcastle the confidence of which they were so badly in need and sapped that of the Town so badly that Newcastle became completely on top.

After 22 minutes, HUGHES was allowed to come in, unmarked to meet a corner from Tuohy with his head and steer it past Baynham who should have been out to cut off the cross and six minutes later, there was another goal which should have been avoided.

LITTLE PRESSURE FROM TOWN

This time, Cope was beaten in the air by White, who headed the ball forward so that HALE was able to run on to it and nod it through as Baynham came out.

Meanwhile, there was little of an attacking nature from the Town whose situation worsened in the fourth minute of the second half when WHITE sold the dummy beautifully to Groves and scored with a well-placed drive.

That produced a sudden spurt from the Town who reduced their arrears two minutes later when McGUFFIE made no mistake from a low centre by Ashworth.

But there was never any hope that this would be the signal for a revival, although there was a measure of improvement in the attack when Groves and McGuffie changed places.

Weaknesses showed up in most departments of the Town team with the attack, badly lacking someone to hold the ball and begin movements in midfield, seldom achieving real cohesion.

Early on, McGuffie used the ball quite well, but was never moving freely enough and he became blotted out and looked no more like being the answer at inside-forward than he did last season.

Ashworth seems to be suffering from the fact that he is trying to be both a spearhead and a forager and Turner, from general lack of support and, certainly, little was forthcoming from the wings.

Constantly, Fleming was caught in possession and Walden, well held by McMichael, made a very slight contribution indeed. There was a measure of excuse in that he was injured just before half-time, but it did not seem to affect his mobility.

Defensively, there were far too many gaps and an evident lack

of close marking, though Morton stuck to Allchurch, as instructed, pretty well.

Without ever gaining a grip, Groves worked hard enough and the same applied to Cope, who had another struggling sort of game in which he could never be said to be in full command.

Obviously upset by his early mistake, McNally took a long time to settle down afterwards, being badly worried by the speed of Tuohy and, although he is still below his best, Bramwell was the better full-back on the day.

There was some criticism of Baynham in various quarters but, taking into account the lack of cover, I could not see that he was at fault except when the second goal came.

NEWCASTLE UNITED: Hollins; McKinney, McMichael; Neale, Heslop, Dalton; Hughes, Hale, White, Allchurch, Tuohy.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Cope, Groves; Walden, Ashworth, Turner, McGuffie, Fleming.
Referee: R Harper, Sheffield.
Attendance: 22,480.