

THIS SHOULD STIR RELUCTANT FANS

Ashworth Proved To Be A Lively Leader

By CHILTERN

NORWICH CITY 0, LUTON TOWN 4

IF this result does not stir some of the reluctant Town followers into more activity than they have been showing recently, then it is difficult to see what will cause a revival of interest.

Even taking into account the salient fact that the Town caught the Canaries on a distinctly off day which produced their worst performance for a long time, this was an excellent feat, particularly bearing in mind that the Town were deprived of the services of their leading marksman, Gordon Turner, who had to be content with being a spectator.

Adversity often produces its own consolation and so it was in this case with Ashworth, who had been tried previously in the middle, with not a great deal of success, scoring a triumph by the lively way in which he led the line.

Always, he was probing at, and harassing, an uncertain defence which began on the wrong foot and continued to make mistakes under pressure throughout the match.

Certainly, Manager Sam Bartram's sweeping forward changes worked far better than he could have hoped. To switch the left-wing over to the right was rather an unorthodox move, but it came off because both Fleming and McKechnie seemed to benefit from the change.

Particularly was this so in the case of the winger, who gave the much-experienced Ashman a punishing time and he seems to be able to use the ball to better advantage when he is on this side of the field.

McKechnie, too, was always prominent with his clever footwork and the fact that Groves was in the other inside position relieved him of much of the responsibility for the fetching and carrying.

While I doubt whether Groves will ever be regarded as the automatic choice for inside-left, he does a useful job when he is called up into the attack and his hard work in midfield is invaluable.

More than that, he was responsible for some good distribution and, as a whole, the front line used the ball with far more accuracy and, as a result, greater effect, than has been the case in some previous matches.

While Legate may not prove to be the final answer to the outside-left problem, he played a valuable part, not only because of the goal he scored, but for the way in which he tried to get the ball into the goalmouth without waste of time.

As a result of that and the improvement from Fleming, there was a much better service from the extreme wings.

From the start, there was neat, constructive football from the Town forwards, well backed up by the half-backs, and they went ahead in six minutes.

ASHWORTH was the scorer and his shot from just inside the penalty area seemed to take Kennon by surprise because he dived much too late.

From then on, the Town always looked the more effective side and it was no surprise when, after 21 minutes, LEGATE came racing in from the wing to take full advantage of indecision by Butler and Thurlow and plant the ball firmly into the far corner of the net.

Seldom were Norwich in it as an attacking force and the Town continued to be the more forceful, so that their third goal came in the 35th minute when, following some clever initial work by Fleming and ASHWORTH, the latter got a foot to a shot from McKechnie and deflected it wide of Kennon.

Just about the only clear-cut chance Norwich had came just before half-time when Mannion laid on a perfect opening for Conway who blazed the ball high over.

Early in the second half, there

was some show of fight by Norwich which might have been turned to advantage but for the fact that Standen interposed his body, with painful results, in order to stop a power drive by Conway, who had been allowed to make a long solo run.

What finally killed any thought of a Norwich revival though came in the 51st minute when SCOTT, harassed by McKechnie and Ashworth, after a bad goal kick by Kennon, tried to pass back to his goalkeeper who had advanced and the ball sailed into the roof of the net.

After that, the Town played it canny, as they were entitled to in their position. They tightened up their defence, making certain that Norwich would not secure the goal that might have sparked off a rally.

In the closing stages, their attack showed further flourish which should have brought more goals because both Fleming and McKechnie missed simple chances.

One of the major factors in this display was the dominance achieved in midfield by Morton and Pacey, with the latter giving his most satisfactory first team display for a long time.

Cope showed measureable improvement, even though Conway emerged as the most dangerous forward and there were competent showings from McNally and Bramwell.

As for Standen, he made two spectacular saves and, in general, his handling and anticipation were most impressive.

So, there it was. A victory that was completely unexpected for the ease with which it was obtained. As to its value for the future, I would not like to commit myself because I am not all that sure whether Norwich played as well as they were allowed, or whether their form was just too bad to be true.

NORWICH CITY — Kennon; Thurlow, Ashman; McCrohan, Butler, Scott; Mannion, Allcock, Conway, Waites, Punton.

LUTON TOWN: Standen; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Cope, Pacey; Fleming, McKechnie, Ashworth, Groves, Legate.

Referee: K. R. Tuck, Chesterfield. Attendance: 18,845.