

OPEN DERISION FROM THE TOWN FANS

61/62
LUTON TOWN 0, PLYMOUTH ARGYLE 2

TO say this was a shabby Town display with which to begin a festive season is putting it mildly and I cannot remember when such open derision was expressed by their supporters.

There was reason for it, too, because one is entitled to expect highly paid professional footballers to be versatile enough to cope with the varying conditions which the English football season brings.

In this particular case, the teams were faced with a hard, frozen pitch off which the ball admittedly bounced at awkward angles, but the attempts of some of the Town players to adapt themselves were futile in the extreme.

Their confidence was not helped by another in the long series of simple goals to be debited against them in the early stages and there is no doubt that Baynham was to blame when CARTER headed Plymouth into the lead in the 11th minute.

The ball came across from the right and Carter beat Groves to the ball which floated in as Baynham, badly positioned, made a desperate grab at it.

All through, Plymouth showed better ideas of controlling the lively ball and some of their mid-field play was first-class.

Even so, it did not enable them to hold the balance of play territorially because the Town had plenty of that, but their methods were slipshod and their finishing always lacked the decisiveness which Plymouth showed in front of goal.

TOWN HAD CHANCES

While the forwards fumbled, the defence floundered, and it was not altogether surprising when McANEARNEY increased the visitors' lead six minutes from half-time.

This was from another header after Carter, fastening on to a centre from Maloy, who seemed to be able to beat McNally at will, had had two shots beaten out.

Despite their parlous position, the Town still had the chances to get back into the game, but their finishing was woefully weak and they finished with their third consecutive blank sheet, which is an amazing thing after their free-scoring exploits of earlier in the season.

Credit marks are difficult to

award, but I would give some to Ashworth for his determination, and he had a certain amount of bad luck in his finishing.

It was Chandler's misfortune that he should come into the team for the first time in his rightful position on such an ill-starred occasion, but he looked as if he might be able to supply the missing thrust if only there had been someone to give him the sort of support he needed.

Certainly, he cannot be judged on this showing, and he at least showed the fighting spirit that was sadly lacking in other quarters.

Again, McGuffie was a sharp disappointment, and it seems a great pity that he cannot harness some of his great natural ability to his play at inside forward at a time when the Town are so badly off in this department.

Although Walden was the better by a considerable margin, the finishing of neither winger was as accurate as it should have been, and that of Fleming was often in the slipshod class.

Nor were the wing-halves ever completely in command because Groves had one of the poorest games I can remember from him, and although Pacey did his best to try to whip something out of the attack, he was inclined to leave gaps.

Cope fought hard enough, but always gave the appearance of struggling and, of the defence, Bramwell was probably the most consistent.

Baynham made some good saves in the second half, but they failed to wipe out the memory of two goals which he would certainly have prevented during his peak period.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Pacey, Cope, Groves; Walden, Ashworth, Chandler, McGuffie, Fleming.

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE: McLaren; Robertson, Fulton; Williams, Fincham, Newman; Anderson, Carter, Kirby, McAnearney, Maloy.

Referee: T. H. Carr, Redditch.
Attendance: 8,400.