

TOWN HAD FIGHT, BUT NO PUNCH

McKechnie Injured, But

Forwards Disappointed

By CHILTERN

SCUNTHORPE UNITED 2, LUTON TOWN 0

EVEN had the Town not been so sorely handicapped as they were by the back injury to McKechnie which occurred in the fifth minute, I doubt if they would have had the forward power to break down this hard-tackling, uninhibited Scunthorpe defence.

Even so, this match did show that, whatever else the Town may lack, they are not short of fighting spirit, otherwise they would not have been able to pull out such a second half revival which might have rocked the promotion-chasing United right back on their heels, had there been more power up in front.

With the forwards unable to retain possession of the ball for long, the Town defence spent a busy, harassed first half, trying to repulse the fast-moving home forwards who, fortunately for them, had mislaid their accuracy in front of goal.

Even so, it required some top-class saves by Baynham and some brave, last-ditch tackling by the defence, to limit the arrears to two goals at the interval.

Time and time again, Scunthorpe hammered away at the Town defence, but it was not until the 32nd. minute that they took the lead.

Then McGUIGAN, recent capture from Newcastle, who has been more successful at Scunthorpe as a marksman than has Barry Thomas for Newcastle, jumped to head through a centre from Thorpe, just as Baynham was set to grab the ball out of the air.

Two minutes later, the Town's fate seemed to be sealed finally when KAYE, from just inside the penalty area, swung on to the ball and it sped past Baynham into the corner of the net.

Shortly before these distressing happenings from the Town point of view, McKechnie, obviously in considerable pain, had switched with Chandler, but this brought no immediate improvement and it was not until just before half time that the Town had their first real chance of the half when Turner pushed the ball through to Ashworth whose shot Jones dived to save.

Half time brought the decision to switch McKechnie to outside-left in order to allow Walden to operate on the right-wing and this, partly, had a good deal to do with the Town's improvement because Walden was continually dangerous.

Another factor was the brilliant support provided by Pacey, who did not spare himself in the slightest in his efforts to put his team back into the game.

Often he came storming through and the home defence could never afford to relax when he was around. Unfortunately, his two headers, both from corner kicks, flew too high.

Although the Town had more of the second-half play, the better chances fell to Scunthorpe, who squandered them in prodigal style.

Only rarely did the Town look like scoring, but Ashworth brought the best out of Jones with a rising drive, and then, shortly before the end, missed

perhaps the Town's best chance of the match.

Apart from the injury to McKechnie, the Town could have little cause for complaint about the result. Scunthorpe were stronger and their liking for going in to meet the ball paid off handsome dividends, especially in defence.

Forward, Turner was almost completely overshadowed by Neale; Ashworth, apart from his two shots, made a quiet return, and Chandler was very much out of touch when he was switched inside.

After a poor first half on the left wing, Walden was much nearer his known best form when he moved to the other flank, and a good deal of danger came from his work.

However, the man who earned most marks was Pacey, who covered a tremendous amount of ground, and it was unfortunate that his work to aid the attack did not meet with the success it deserved.

Cope fought hard without ever managing to dominate the middle, and Morton improved considerably after a rather struggling first half.

Of the full-backs, McNally had the more comfortable match, because Bramwell, palpably overworked, found the experienced Marriott elusive, but he was a game trier and no-one could fault the defence as a whole on that score.

Even so, things would have gone more badly for them had the Scunthorpe forwards been in better shooting form and if Baynham had not been at his best.

SCUNTHORPE UTD: Jones; John, Brownsword; Gibson, Neale, Howells; Marriott, Hodgson, Kaye, McGuigan, Thorpe.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Cope, Pacey; Chandler, Ashworth, Turner, McKechnie, Walden.

Referee: K. Walker, Blackpool. Attendance: 7,709.