

ASHWORTH SHOULD HAVE SAVED POINT

Obvious Shortcomings In Town Attack Again

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 1, NORWICH CITY 2

MAYBE the benevolently minded, and I fancy that there are not many such types left among the Town fans after the recent vastly disappointing performances, would be inclined to put down this latest defeat to the injury to Gordon Turner.

That, I feel, would be wrong, because such was the low standard of the Town's forward play that it is doubtful whether, had Turner remained 100 per cent fit for the whole of the game, the result would have been different.

There can be no shadow of doubt about the ineffectiveness of the Town attack which, after gaining a big measure of success in the early part of the season, is now playing completely without confidence and without the slightest suggestion of smoothness or cohesion.

Not only is there little coming of a constructive nature, but there is a lack of accuracy and decision with the limited number of scoring chances that are cropping up.

Emphasis was laid on this by the way in which Ashworth frittered away a chance of snatching a point which the Town would scarcely have deserved, in the dying seconds when, left with a clear shot at goal from Turner's shrewd pass, he failed to steady himself and stabbed the ball wide.

Seconds later the whistle went for the end, and Norwich, who gave the impression of being a tired team in the last 10 minutes, trooped off with relief showing in their faces.

That miss by Ashworth came almost immediately after McKECHNIE who, in the first place, had had a shot saved by Kennon, was on hand to slam the

return by Walden into the net to give the Town a slight ray of hope two minutes from the end.

At that stage, though, they were trailing 2-0 through goals by WAITES in the 23rd minute and ALLCOCK in the 53rd. Each was the product of the through pass and lax marking down the Town middle.

Especially was that the case when the second came, because there was no-one within yards of Allcock as he bent low to change the direction of a shot by Burton.

Turner's injury came after 35 minutes when he received the force of Burton's elbow on his nose and was carried off bleeding profusely.

Two stitches were inserted in the gash and he was able to return a minute after the start of the second half, going to outside-left, though he returned to the middle midway through the half.

By and large, Turner was the only forward with the ability to hold the ball effectively, but he is not in a very happy patch and the same applies to Ashworth, who had little to show for much running about.

Most challenge came from McKechnie, but the wingers were again a sharp disappointment.

Yet, Walden's footwork enabled him to have the better of the tussle with Ashman, but his finishing was almost unbelievably weak and there were times when he put the ball behind without being harassed.

Hopes that Jardine would solve the long-standing outside-left problem were not well-founded because he accomplished little against the experienced Thurlow and that so little came from the extreme wings was a sore handicap.

Nor did Cope add to his reputation because he was never in complete command of the middle of the field and there was often the necessity for Pacey to cover him which had the effect of depriving, to some extent, the support of the left-half who, even so, emerged as the most likely marksman.

There was no more than an ordinary performance by Morton, and Bramwell was often in trouble against Savino. By and large, McNally was as good a defender as the Town possessed and even the handling of Baynham was uncertain at times, though he had not much chance with either goal.

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

NORWICH CITY: Kennon; Thurlow, Ashman; Burton, Butler, Mullett; Savino, Waites, Allcock, Hill, Lythgoe.

Referee: L. Callaghan, Merthyr.

Attendance: 9,736.