

A MIXED HOLIDAY FOR THE TOWN

Best Display Of Three Ended In A Defeat

By CHILTERN

AFTER having hung on to two away points, purely through the soundness and fighting spirit of their defence, the Town produced their best form of the holidays at Kenilworth-road on Monday—and lost.

A crowd of 13,681, boosted by a large following from Leyton and the appearance of Ron Baynham at centre-forward, saw them go down gallantly to an Orient team who played it hard and tough in their endeavour to pick up two precious promotion points.

With the encouragement of a goal after nine minutes from MORTON who made a speculative shot from the edge of the penalty area that Robertson probably never saw, the Town were much the better team in the first half and could have been two goals ahead at half-time.

However, they scarcely had the run of the ball in front of goal and Robertson was distinctly fortunate to stop shots by McKechnie and Ashworth by means of using his foot.

Could the Town have increased their lead at this stage, tense Leyton might have disintegrated, but they fought hard and had a great chance of equalising in the 19th minute when Pacey handled in the penalty area.

However, Dunmore, who had a nightmare match, aimed to Standen's left, but the goalkeeper anticipated brilliantly to make a splendid save.

Despite their jitters, Orient proved themselves to be the far more capable when it came to accepting scoring chances and GIBBS put them level after half an hour when he volleyed the ball in from a centre by Lea.

After that, Baynham headed inches over and Ashworth was just wide with an overhead kick. Generally speaking, the Town's first half display was their best for some time, and with their forward line looking a far more potent force, though still lacking the midfield build-up so far as constructive ability was concerned.

LITTLE SUPPORT FOR BAYNHAM

Had there been more support, Baynham would have been seen in a better light, but very little in the way of through passes reached him and with the limited material he received, he caused quite a lot of consternation among the hard-tackling Orient defence.

The longer the game lasted, the more composed Orient became and 10 minutes after half-time, GIBBS, making only his second League appearance of the season, side-footed them into the lead from a centre by McDonald.

Two minutes later, Pacey appeared to have equalised with a great shot following a pass from a free kick by Morton, but as the ball streaked into the net, the referee's whistle went and the kick was ordered to be re-taken, apparently on the grounds that the free kick had been made too quickly.

That was really the end of the story for the Town because they never looked so dangerous as they had in the first half and the robust Orient defence was able to cope without a great deal of difficulty.

Fourteen minutes from the end, came the goal that enabled them to coast along for the remainder of the time and, for once, this strong Town defence blundered, so that LUCAS, unmarked at the edge of the penalty area was allowed a clear shot at goal and the diving Standen was just too late to save.

PLENTY OF EXCITEMENT

So far as excitement was concerned, this was the best game we have seen at Luton for some time and Orient were flattered by their margin.

Once again, Kelly and Bramwell stood out in a solid defence, so that expensive signings, Dunmore and Deeley achieved very little.

There was a fair amount of trouble from McDonald in the second-half when McNally lost his grip of the situation, but both Morton and Pacey did well in defence, without being quite so constructive as they might have been.

Had the goals they deserved come in the first half, there would have been a lot to be happy about so far as the forwards were concerned because both Ashworth and McKechnie showed a return to form.

What was needed, though, was something that has been lacking all season. An inside-forward with the ability to slow down the tempo and make use of the ball.

Had one been available, it could have been that Baynham would have done what everybody—Orient fans apart—wanted him to do and got among the goals.

Up to the point of finishing, Fleming had his most satisfactory game for a long time, but so much of his approach work went to waste. Clarke had a good first half, though he suffered from lack of support and became more in the grip of the robust Lewis after the interval.

TOWN STOLE A POINT

Just how the Town grabbed a point at Rotherham belongs almost to the realms of fantasy and, probably, they used up the share of luck at Millmoor they could have used on Monday.

Not that Rotherham had anything to complain about at the finish because they had sufficient chances to have scored half a dozen goals and Kirkman must have felt his ears burning from the remarks of the sparse crowd of 3,397.

At least three times, he failed when left with only Standen to beat, Weston and Houghton each missed acceptable chances and the mud-plastered Standen was the busiest man on the field.

Even he could not cope with it all and had to enlist the help

on three separate occasions of McNally to kick off the goal-line which Bramwell also did once.

Conditions in the thick mud were not conducive to good football and little came from the Town who were out of the picture almost completely as an attacking force.

So, it came as a surprise when TURNER eluded Madden for the first time in the 76th minute to bear Ironside with a well-placed shot from an oblique angle.

At that point, it looked as if the Town might steal two points, but Rotherham came back with renewed fury and KIRKMAN at last atoned in some measure for his previous misses when he rammed the ball into the net as Standen came out desperately.

Just how the Town survived those last ten minutes is difficult to say, but it was due to the determination of the defence in which McNally, Kelly and Bramwell formed an indomitable barrier.

Both Morton and Pacey did their full share and Standen emerged as a hero after having saved shots from all angles and ranges.

Forward, the least said the better. Turner and McGuffie were completely subdued, and Ashworth did a lot of running about without much effect.

Occasionally, Walden caused trouble to the home defence, but he was not supported adequately and Fleming's finishing was again the stumbling block so far as he was concerned.

DEFENCE WAS POWERFUL

If Leyton miss promotion, their fans will think back to a decision made by the referee seven minutes after half-time of a tense battle at Brisbane-road on Friday.

In an all-out raid, McDonald hooked the ball into the far corner of the net for what seemed to be a legitimate goal, but to the horror of the crowd of 21,292, the referee disallowed it on the ground of off-side against Dunmore, who was almost on the goal-line.

Once again, the Town defence carried a heavy burden, but Orient partly defeated themselves by their over-anxiety.

Their play was hall-marked by this fault, and although they had more of the play their lack of steadiness in front of goal let them down badly.

Even so, it required great saves by Standen to prevent McDonald and Graham from scoring, and Foster twice shot over when well positioned.

There was no weak link in the Town defence, with Kelly achieving a mastery in the middle and both McNally and Bramwell in command of the opposing wingers.

Pacey was always in the thick of it and Morton, who came in almost at the last minute for Groves, took his chance splendidly.

However, there was the same old story of lack of punch and constructive ability in the Town's front line, with the inside-forward trio being completely subdued.

If anyone were to cause any damage, it seemed most likely to be Fleming, who mostly had the measure of Charlton, but Clarke was provided with little workable material.