

EXCITEMENT CAME LATE IN GAME

62/63

Dramatic Town Equaliser In The Last Minute

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 3, PORTSMOUTH 3

MOST of the excitement from the Town point of view was packed into the last 20 minutes of this match at Kenilworth-road on Saturday because during that period, the Town who had looked shot-shy and punchless in front of goal, scored three times.

Previously, they had looked like going down to hollow defeat because Portsmouth built up a two-goal lead for themselves in the first half and largely had themselves to blame that they had to yield a point in the end.

Having put themselves in a position from which they could dictate the way things should go, Portsmouth surrendered the initiative in the second half by trying to concentrate on defence, with

the result that the Town came right back into the game.

However, it took them a long time to begin to wipe out their arrears, which were caused by SAUNDERS, in the 12th minute, and former team-mate, BROWN, after 37 minutes when he drove home a penalty given for hands by McNally.

Walden missed the Town's best chance before the interval, and Shearing made a fantastic save save from a full-blooded drive by Lornie, following a centre by Clapton.

The score stayed that way until the 70th minute, when Snowden was adjudged to have tripped Lornie, and WALDEN scored from the spot to give the Town a glimmer of hope.

That seemed to disappear two minutes later when Standen allowed a shot from SAUNDERS to slip through his hands, and Portsmouth were apparently comfortably placed at 3-1.

HINT OF A REPRIEVE

By the time the next hint of a reprieve came there were only 13 minutes left and Shearing dropped a centre by Walden to present LORNIE with a gift goal.

Even then it did not seem possible that the Town would salvage a point, but surely enough they did so in the last minute.

Again Shearing was at fault because he failed to cut out a corner from Fleming, and McKECHNIE was standing almost on the goal-line to head the ball through and round off a dramatic finish.

Until that late scoring burst, there had been no hint that the Town's forward problems have been solved because the finishing continued to be very much below standard, and there must still be worry about the situation.

McKechnie was the best on this occasion, showing a marked improvement on his previous showings and Lornie, while falling down through lack of ball control, at least livened things up in the closing stages through his dash.

Fleming fell down on the score of poor distribution, Walden could have been the match-winner had his finishing been better and Clapton certainly could have used more support.

For most of this season, the defence has been fairly adequate, but some tell-tale gaps appeared in the first half, mainly because neither McNally nor Bramwell was at his best and Pacey had to do a deal of covering.

Later, Bramwell improved and Pacey became quite commanding in the second half, while both Morton and McGuffie came through creditably.

Standen's display was marred by the mishandling that led to the third goal, though, generally speaking, he was safe enough.

LUTON TOWN: Standen; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Pacey, McGuffie; Clapton, Fleming, Lornie, McKechnie, Walden.

PORTSMOUTH: Shearing; Gunter, Wilson; Brown, Snowden, Dickinson; Barton, Gordon, Saunders, McCann, Dodson.

Referee: V. James, York.

Attendance: 8,156.