

MUCH-NEEDED SHOT IN ARM FOR TOWN

McGuffie And Groves Behind Town Success

BY CHILTERN

MIDDLESBROUGH 0, LUTON TOWN 2

A BADLY needed shot in the arm for the Town came on Saturday at Ayresome Park where they repeated their victory of last season and, generally, looked a better, more methodical team than has been the case for many weeks.

In fact, this brought to an end a run of nine League matches without a win and the improvement, undoubtedly, sprang from the switching of McGuffie to inside-left, and the introduction of Groves at left-half.

McGuffie provided the mid-field link that has been missing for so long, purveying a succession of pin-pointed passes, while Groves brought more soundness to the middle line, and the two changes were of immense benefit to the side as a whole.

Not only did the defence look more substantial, but the forwards played with a preconceived plan, with the ball being used more intelligently. Gone was the old fault of running with it in midfield, so that the front line was crowded out.

Instead, the ball was pushed through into the open space, and there appeared to be altogether more thought and precision about the way in which the attack moved.

Without doubt, this was McGUFFIE's best game in the forward line, and he set the tempo in the 11th minute when rightly, in view of the strong wind behind him, he let go a tremendous drive from 30 yards.

Even without a fortunate flick off the head of Nurse, the drive might have beaten Lightning, but the deflection made the task of the goalkeeper absolutely hopeless.

Then, after exactly half an hour, McGuffie picked up a pass from Fleming, who had received it direct from Baynham and pushed the ball shrewdly into the space for TURNER to run on to.

LEFT LIGHTENING GROPING

Turner took the ball in his stride and, from the edge of the penalty area, left Lightning groping with a shot that was reminiscent of his most successful, goal-grabbing days.

That really was the end for Middlesbrough even though, generally speaking, they had more of the play.

However, even though they had England centre-forward, Peacock, leading their expensive attack, they did not impress at close quarters in the face of some capable covering and hard tackling by the Town defence.

Even when they had the strong wind behind them in the second half, they carved out few easy chances, and when they did there was Baynham, in top form, to thwart them.

In fact, the most confident Baynham was another player who had much to do with the Town's first away victory of the season.

With defenders going into the tackle hard, there was no weak link in this department. McNally and Bramwell did an important job in cutting down the danger from the home wingers, and Pacey, after a somewhat tentative start, put the tabs on Peacock and commanded the middle of the field.

WILL GROVES STAY NOW ?

Without any doubt at all, there must be a place for Groves in the middle line and, having regained it, it is hoped that he will now change his mind about wanting to leave the club.

Apart from his strength in the tackle and the way in which he uses the ball, his height was of great help, and Morton gave an efficient display on the other flank.

Success of McGuffie tended to overshadow the remaining members of the front line, but Davies made a highly satisfactory debut in Second Division football, showing good ball control and the ability to distribute it in telling style.

That the Welsh International, Nurse, had such an uncomfortable time was a tribute to the display of Turner, who, with the better support that is coming his way, seems to be on the way back to top form.

In their finishing, Walden and Fleming were a disappointment, but they did their part by the way in which they came back to fight and challenge, especially in the second half when the heat was turned on to the defence.

MIDDLESBROUGH: Lightning; Chapman, Jones; Yeoman, Nurse, Neal; Kaye, Gibson, Peacock, Orritt, Hume.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Pacey, Groves; Walden, Davies, Turner, McGuffie, Fleming.

Referee: L. J. Hamer, Horwich.
Attendance: 13,523.