

MATCH-WINNERS ON EXTREME WINGS

Town Carried Too Much Punch For Walsall

By CHILTERN

62/63

LUTON TOWN 4, WALSALL 3

WHILE this result was not really the touch and go affair the score-line would indicate, since Walsall's third goal, in the 89th minute was too late to give them a real chance to salvage a point, it did demonstrate to the Town that a match cannot be regarded as won, even when a team builds up a three-goals lead.

And that was the happy position in which they found themselves shortly after half-time and it was one from which they should have taken a stranglehold on the Saddlers and never relaxed it.

Instead, they did not really make the most of their advantage, but allowed Walsall to make a partial rally which could have had serious consequences had that third goal come a little earlier.

At the same time, it was a notable performance by the Town because this counted as their first home win since August 29 and was also the first time this season that they had scored as many as four goals.

Chief credit for the success must go to Walden and Jardine, two successful raiding wingers, and to Davies, who looked an altogether more formidable proposition in the middle than he has at inside-right, and celebrated the switch with a couple of goals, his first for his new club.

But for the vigilance of Baynham, Walsall could have taken an early lead and they had some good chances before the Town went off on their scoring spree.

Intelligent positioning by the goalkeeper prevented good shots by Meek, Newton and Taylor from counting, and then WALDEN struck the first decisive blow after 29 minutes.

Taking a through-pass in his stride, he took the Walsall defence by surprise by making straight for goal and blasting the ball into the net as Christie came out despairingly.

Not that the Town had long in which to contemplate their lead because, four minutes later, Walsall equalised through MEEK, who took advantage of a slip by Pacey, following a long free-kick, and Baynham had no chance.

DAVIES STRUCK BACK QUICKLY

Nor was Walsall's joy long-lived because, a minute after that, DAVIES applied the finishing touch to a low cross by Jardine and followed up this a minute before half-time by moving smartly on to another centre from the left-winger.

When a smoke-screen provided by a fire in a nearby chimney had cleared at the start of the second half, the Town got down to business again, with Davies returning the compliment to JARDINE, who went on to score a splendid goal.

There was still plenty of determination about the Walsall play, but the Town did not seem to be in any imminent danger until the

65th minute, when Richards beat Pacey to a ball in the air, and MEEK raced through to reduce their arrears.

After that Walsall got on top for a time, but the Town attack came again and there might have been other goals had the ball run a little more kindly.

Never did Walsall give up the fight, but it was always something of a forlorn hope, though TAYLOR took advantage of another defensive slip, this time by Morton, to put on their third goal with only seconds remaining.

WINGERS A REVELATION

Display by the wingers was something of a revelation, as was the leadership of Davies, and it would appear that the Town have at last found a combination that can get among the goals.

Unfortunately, the two inside-forwards were not up to the same standard, because McKechnie did not really have a lot to show for much hard work, and only some cleanly hit passes by McGuffie relieved an otherwise ordinary display.

That the defence should concede as many as three goals was a sharp disappointment and it was a coincidence that the main threat to them should come down the wings. Bramwell never fathomed a way of stopping Meek and it took McNally some time to gain the measure of Taylor.

Groves was anything but assured on his return to the team before the home crowd, so that Morton was the more consistent wing-half, and Pacey battled through quite successfully, despite the fact that he had more gaps to plug than should have been the case.

There was not a great deal that Baynham could have done about the shots that beat him and his work early on laid the foundation for these two invaluable points.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Pacey, Groves; Walden McKechnie, Davies, McGuffie, Jardine.

WALSALL: Christie; Gregg, Sharples; Hill, McPherson, Dudley; Meek, Hodgkisson, Richards, Newton, Taylor.

Referee: H. Webb, Leeds.
Attendance: 5,479.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"This was the match in which Luton signalled that they are all set to zoom out of the Second Division's cellar. They made one mistake—they eased up towards the end. And gave Walsall the chance to claw their way from 4-1 to 4-3.

"Tricky right-winger Harry Walden and goal-ace Ron Davies were two big reasons for Luton joy. Walden with a dazzling display which had poor Walsall full-back John Sharples in a daze . . . new signing Davies with two goals in the 34th and 44th minutes." — "Sunday Pictorial."

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"This lively Luton win in an enthusiastic game took the chill off the atmosphere, made mockery of their League position and, they will hope, augured better for the future.

"Luton won because in Walden and Jardine they had a pair of old-fashioned fast, direct-raiding wingers who gave Sharples and Gregg a most unhappy time. But they also had the intelligent leadership of Davies, switched to centre-forward for the first time since his recent £10,000 signing from Chester as an inside man. It could be a move to cure Luton's goal-shy ills" — "Sunday Telegraph."

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"Luton gained two valuable points from this game which could go a long way towards keeping them in the Second Division.

"A welcome sign was the display of wingers Harry Walden and Freddie Jardine. Walden was much too tricky for John Sharp and had several near misses before scoring the first goal in the 29th minute." — "News of the World."

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"Luton almost let Walsall off a particularly uncomfortable hook because when they had built up a 4-1 lead seven minutes after the interval, they appeared to think they had done enough.

"How wrong they were! Whatever else Walsall lack it is not fighting spirit. Never did they give up, and had they secured their third goal which finally came a minute from the end, 10 minutes earlier, it could have been a different story altogether." — "Sunday Express."