

GALE-FORCE WIND WAS ONLY WINNER

All-Square Result Did Not Suit Either Team

By CHILTERN

WALSALL 1, LUTON TOWN 1

ALMOST inevitably, the only winner of this desperately important match was the wind of near gale force that defeated any attempt by either of these moderate teams to play constructive football.

So, we had a result that really suited neither team because, bearing in mind the way in which the other strugglers succeeded on Saturday, this stalemate served only to increase the anxiety of both clubs about their future status.

Although, maybe, it would have been rough justice on Walsall on the run of the play, the Town should have won this match, but, apart from a missed penalty, they failed signally to take full advantage of winning the toss which gave them the wind behind their backs in the first half.

Obvious tactics on this blustery day were to shoot at every opportunity and although the Town were given a clear pointer by MORTON in the fourth minute, they failed to benefit from it.

Then, the right-half, from just outside the penalty area, met the ball first time as it was half cleared from a corner by Clarke, and sent it sailing into the net just inside the post and over the head of Palin.

That was a great start, but the Town's joy was decreased considerably ten minutes later when the referee judged that Bramwell had handled in stopping a centre by Meek just inside the 18-yard line.

ASTONISHING DECISION

It was an astonishing decision because Bramwell had no time in which to get out of the way of the ball, let alone make an intentional attempt at handling.

When the enormity of it penetrated, the Town protested vigorously, but to no avail, and PALIN, with a carefully placed shot, left Baynham high and dry.

A pity that Turner had not gained similar success with a shot from the spot when the balance was adjusted after 22 minutes when Eden pulled down McKechnie.

Unfortunately, Turner, with Boswell going the wrong way, pulled the ball wide of the post when a straight shot must have scored and brought the Town the other decisive point.

For the rest of the half, although they had more of the play, the Town managed scarcely a worth-while shot, and the boot was on the other foot after the interval when Walsall tried to make the most of the advantage of having the wind behind them.

The nearest they came to snatching victory was when a free-kick by Dudley struck the

face of the bar, but several other shots rose only fractionally too high.

GOOD COVERING

It was mainly long range efforts that caused the Town most concern, but Baynham dealt with them with fine judgment. Otherwise, Walsall found the utmost difficulty in reaching close quarters because of the good covering of the Town defence.

In this, Morton and Kelly were outstanding, but Daniel and Bramwell made solid contributions, too, and Pacey did well enough without being dominating.

Forward, it was a different story, with little coming from the inside trio and Groves giving absolutely no hint that he can be the answer to the long-standing inside-left problem.

Best of the front line was McKechnie, although he was playing in a position strange to him, and Clarke, without attempting too much, did not waste much in the way of material.

WALSALL: Boswell; Palin, Sharples; Hill, Eden, Dudley; Meek, O'Neill, Wiggan, Hodgkinson, Wills.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Daniel, Bramwell; Morton, Kelly, Pacey; Clarke, Turner, Davies, Groves, McKechnie.

Referee: L. J. Tirebuck, Halifax. Attendance: 8,960.