

PENALTY MISSED—SO LUTON ARE STILL TAIL-ENDERS

Walsall 1 Luton 1: by EDWARD OLDFIELD

LUTON missed a glorious chance of escaping from the bottom of the League table, but it would have been rough justice on Walsall if the visitors had got both points. A near-gale-force wind was not conducive to good football, even if either side had really been capable of it, but Walsall adopted the right tactics.

When they had the wind at their backs in the second half, they shot at every available opportunity from all angles presumably in the hope that the wind would take the ball out of goalkeeper Ron Baynham's reach. That they failed to beat him was due only to the fact that they invariably shot far too high.

There was a shock after only three minutes when Luton, with the wind in their favour, took the lead. Alan Clarke lifted a corner kick into the goalmouth and when a defender headed away, the ball curled to Bob Morton who took it on the volley and beat goalkeeper Alan Boswell with a shot that was helped on its way by the wind.

This should have been a pointer to Luton, but afterwards, instead of cashing in on the advantage of the strong wind, they tried instead to play the orthodox type of football one can expect when conditions are favourable.

Walsall battled away gamely with left-winger Gordon Wills, deputising for the injured Colin Taylor, showing up well.

In the 13th minute Walsall were awarded a penalty—seemingly a rather harsh decision—when a George Meek centre struck John Bramwell's hand, and Granville Paling got the equaliser from the spot kick.

Luton's big chance came in the 21st minute when Tony Eden up-ended Tommy McKechnie in the penalty area. But Gordon Turner took the kick far too casually and he was at least a yard wide. It was a miss which keeps Luton at the bottom of the table.

Walsall, with the wind in their favour, made no attempt to display football skill, relying entirely on shooting for goal at every opportunity.

Meek shot over the bar at least half a dozen times, mainly from long range and all the other forwards, with the exception of Wills, were equally off the target. The nearest to scoring was Jimmy Dudley whose 30-yard free kick swerved away from Baynham but struck the crossbar.

Walsall dominated the whole of the second half and despite the tough opposition of the Luton defenders—particularly centre-half Terry Kelly—they had enough chances to have got both points but were not capable of exploiting them.