

"DIEHARDS" COULD NOT STAND IT

Town Must Show Much More Determination

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 0, MANSFIELD TOWN 2

WHEN season ticket holders of years standing and, therefore, diehard supporters feel that they can stand no more and are impelled to leave the ground some 25 minutes before the end, then one can estimate the measure of the Town's degradation in this particular match.

This, I am assured, was the reaction of at least two of the "regulars" and there may have been others who followed suit while a continuous procession from the terraces began about 10 minutes from the end.

What could have been a triumphant occasion because the supporters who were there, and probably hundreds more waiting to see the outcome, were receptive to success, but this game turned into a case of sour grapes.

No wonder Manager Bill Harvey dwelt at length afterwards on the subject of lack of fighting spirit and the inability to make an accurate pass of any length.

Determination was singularly lacking from the Town's play, and, if they are to get out of their present trouble, which now begins to look unlikely, there must be a much bigger injection of this quality.

No longer will spirits have to droop when faced with arrears of goal or two, as they did on Saturday, and there must be a sterner approach all the way round.

Pity of the whole thing is that this was a game that simply cried out to be won. For a long time Mansfield did not seem to have sufficient faith in their own ability to believe that they could collect two points.

On the other hand, the Town, having made the early running and put themselves into a position from which they could be expected to translate their superiority into goals, failed ignominiously.

PUNCH WAS NON-EXISTENT

Punch in front of goal was almost non-existent. There seemed no ordered pattern of attack, and the passing and general distribution of the ball was little short of hocking.

Admittedly, Mansfield showed depth and good covering in defence where Gill was strong and unrelenting, and this, combined with the continual failure of the Town to make their final pass count, meant that many openings of promise died a premature death.

When Mansfield scored through WAGSTAFF a minute from half-time, it seemed a mortal blow to the Town's hopes, but that advantage should have been wiped out seconds later, because Weir was left with a great chance from Morton's centre, but he missed the ball completely as he tried to connect with his head.

A fine shot by O'Rourke, brilliantly saved by Treharne, gave the Town a defiant look at the start of the second half, but it did not last, and after 59 minutes HALL put on a second goal, after Scanlon had hammered the ball low across the goal.

And that should have been an object lesson to the Town wingers, who continually chipped the ball into the goalmouth, where they found Treharne cutting off the ball with no trouble at all.

McKECHNIE'S LONE BATTLE

There were times when Walden looked as if he might be the man to save the day, but he was neglected by McKechnie, who seemed to be absorbed in fighting a lone battle against the combined strength of the Mansfield defence, and, naturally enough, reaped no success.

Theory that Weir would do well against his former colleagues was soon exploded because he accomplished little, was too easily dispossessed and missed the best scoring chances that came the way of the Town.

Occasionally, Reid looked in the five figure class, but not often enough to have a telling effect on the way this game went and he would have been better advised to have made more use of the through pass and given O'Rourke, who suffered badly from lack of support, a chance to use his speed and thrust.

Nor is the defence free from criticism because the half-backs did not gain the grip that they should and neither Morton nor Pacey played up to his best form, with the latter spraying forth a stream of inaccurate passes.

For Fincham, it was an unhappy match because a far too high a proportion of his passes went to opponents and he spent too much time on the ground after having resorted to a sliding tackle.

Nor could McBain be said to be assured against the experienced Scanlon and that left Bramwell, big-hearted and hard-fighting as usual, as one of the few Town players to enhance his reputation.

That is, of course, if one excepts Baynham whom no one could blame and who was presented with some ticklish problems by his own defenders.

LUTON TOWN.—Baynham; McBain, Bramwell; Morton, Fincham, Pacey; Walden, McKechnie, O'Rourke, Reid, Weir.

MANSFIELD TOWN.—Treharne; Jones, Humble; Chapman (S), Gill, Morris; Hall (B), Govan, Wagstaff, Chapman (R), Scanlon.

Referee: G. W. T. Davies.
Romford Attendance: 6,307.