

TOWN BOUNCED AHEAD FOR A LIVELY VICTORY

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 3, WREXHAM 1

THERE was a sparse crowd — on a perfect spring day — for what was as critical a match as the Town could have faced at Kenilworth-road this afternoon. Perhaps gardening or other outdoor activities took pride of place, but one would have thought that interest would have been greater than was shown.

The Town, who wore black armbands as a token of respect to Mr. Philip Wright, who died on Thursday, were without Graham Caleb, injured in training, and Dave Pacey went to centre-half with Bob Morton taking over his old right-half spot.

Mr. Wright, of course, was a director of the Club for many years and had much to do with the founding of the Bobbers Stand Club of which he was still President at the time of his death.

Wrexham, paying their first ever visit to Kenilworth-road, came with the knowledge that defeat would condemn them to another spell in the fourth division.

They made late changes in their forward line, because Peter Jones, the full-back who had been chosen to play at centre-forward, had serious family illness.

So the front line reverted to a more orthodox look with Phythian and Myerscough moving across and Bent retaining his place at outside-right.

DEFENCE CHANGES

In defence, the changes were that Ken Barnes, the player-manager, came in at right-half, and Robertson was at right-back for Jones.

The pitch had dried out but had been well rolled. The ball was certain to be lively and difficult to control.

With two minutes gone the Town suffered a set-back when McBain received a facial injury which necessitated him leaving the field, so that almost before the game was on the Town were reduced to ten men.

Morton dropped to right-back and Turner to right-half.

Despite the handicap the Town made progress, with Reid finding O'Rourke with an accurate pass, but Morrall stepped in to intercept.

NONE THE WORSE

Wrexham had a turn, and Bent smashed the ball across the face of the goal with no-one near enough to make contact. Then, after an absence of about three minutes, McBain returned, apparently none the worse for his mishap.

Next incident was a 25-yard shot by Barnes, with which Baynham coped without difficulty.

Chance for the Town came when a long centre by Whittaker reached Walden whose return was headed clear by McGill. Play remained in the Wrexham half for a time with Walden beating three opponents in a short space and then O'Rourke cleverly allowed his pass to run on but unfortunately it went too fast for Turner.

SCORING EFFORT

Best scoring effort in an undistinguished sort of start to this vital match came from Phythian who, given too much room, let fly from the edge of the penalty area and was no more than a foot wide with Baynham well beaten.

At the other end, there was an opportunity when Walden found O'Rourke who, however, pulled his shot badly so that it went well wide.

The Town got away with a case of handling by McBain just outside the penalty area and then broke away to suffer a slice of bad luck when O'Rourke pushed the ball through to Turner who, with only Fleet to beat from something like 15 yards, saw his shot strike the foot of the post and rebound into play.

In point of fact the inside-right pulled his shot a little too much but that was indicative of the state of the going and the liveliness of the ball.

NARROWLY MISSED

In the next minute, Turner narrowly missed connecting with a centre from Whittaker, falling full-length in his attempt to do so and grazing his elbow in the process.

There was a narrow escape for the Town, a product of them trying to work the offside trap which failed, and the ball came across sharply from Colbridge whose low centre was met by Myerscough and fortunately the ball went straight to Baynham. With play moving to the other end, Reid suddenly disappeared over the boundary wall into the crowd but returned none the worse for his mishap.

TAKE A GRIP

Gradually the Town began to take a grip and Morton coming right through looked a possible scorer but his final shot went just wide. Then, in the 25th minute, Wrexham paid the penalty of trying to gain an offside decision. The ball was pushed through, there were appeals against LOWNDS for offside, but the referee waved on play and the left-half went on calmly to dribble the ball past the oncoming Fleet, and side foot it into the back of the net to give the Town a deserved lead.

DEFENCE COVERING

Little was coming from Wrexham's quite methodical build-up in mid-field, which was a tribute to the way in which the Town defence was covering, and there was no doubt the Luton attack was the more dangerous. Whittaker eluded Robertson to put across a high centre, to which Turner went up, but was nudged as he did so, with the result that the ball went entirely in the wrong direction.

Fleet was in action again this time from Walden, who these days seems to be making something of a speciality of left-footed drives from outside the penalty area. He was bang on the target, but Fleet, a couple of yards out of his goal, was in the direct line



Lownds, who put Town ahead in the 25th minute.

of flight, and made a spectacular save.

O'Rourke headed rather tamely into Fleet's hands following a free-kick for a foul on Reid and then came a free-kick at the other end when Bramwell fouled McMillan and there was an uneasy situation when Baynham failed to get hold of the ball which however, was cleared in the nick of time.

Much of the play was scrappy and scrambling due in no small measure to the liveliness of the ball but in some ways, too, it reflected the positions of these two teams.

A quick break by the Town saw Walden left with a clear field and he put across his centre unerringly O'Rourke racing up at speed met the ball squarely with his head but Fleet made a fantastic diving save, holding on to the ball as he fell. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 1
WREXHAM 0

The scrappy play continued at the start of the second half with neither team being able to launch a decisive attack.

Twice Walden was pulled up for fouls through tackling from behind, but neither free kick availed Wrexham anything because their finishing was so poor.

QUICK RAID

In a quick raid at the other end, Whittaker was left with a chance of scoring his first goal for the Club, but Fleet, who was certainly limiting the Wrexham arrears, smothered his point-blank shot. Two corners followed and from the second, well placed by Walden, O'Rourke got up in brilliant style to connect squarely with his head and send the ball hurtling into the corner of the net for the Town's second goal after 55 minutes.

ALWAYS SUPERIOR

Although they were not at their best by any means, the Town were always superior and they became three up after 58 minutes through a penalty blasted in by TURNER after Fleet had brought down Lownds in unmistakable fashion.

Lownds had appeared to be certain to score his second goal of the match until Fleet intervened.

There was a quick response from Wrexham and a half clearance by Morton left Myerscough with a chance but he muffed it

How The Goals Came

LOWNDS for Luton after 25 minutes.

O'ROURKE for Luton after 55 minutes.

TURNER (penalty) for Luton after 58 minutes.

COLBRIDGE for Wrexham after 71 minutes.

by heading the ball too high with Baynham out of his goal.

There was just no punch about the Wrexham attack, and Baynham's most serious task was to deal with a tame long shot from McMillan.

With O'Rourke off the field having some boot trouble, the Town struck again, and Fleet pulled off another superb save from Turner as he fell.

IN NO TROUBLE

The bounce of the ball prevented O'Rourke getting another goal from a pass by Whittaker, and despondently he aimed a fist at it but missed anyway. Meanwhile the Town defence was in no sort of trouble against a poor forward line which was showing absolutely no thrust whatever.

There was a chance of Wrexham getting back into this game when for once a gap showed in the middle of the



A penalty blasted in by Turner put Town three up.

but were driven off, and O'Rourke sparked off a Town attack which brought them a free kick for a handling offence. Before the free kick was taken

Right.	LUTON TOWN				Left
63/64	Baynham				
	McBain		Bramwell		
	Morton		Pacey		Lownds
Walden	Turner	O'Rourke	Reid	Whittaker	
Referee:					
		D. A. Corbett (Wolverhampton)			
Colbridge	McMillan	Phythian	Myerscough	Bent	
	Johnson	Morrall	Barnes		
	McGill	Robertson			
		Fleet			
Left	WREXHAM				Right

Town defence, but Phythian racing in was too slow to connect.

UNLIKELY GOAL

With 71 minutes gone, Wrexham did what had seemed to be most unlikely — they scored. It was a goal which should have been prevented because a speculative centre by Bent went to Morton who tried to head the ball back to Baynham, but did not get sufficient force behind it. Upshot was that COLBRIDGE nipped in and easily beat Baynham from close range.

Turner received a clout on the head in a collision with Morrall and there was a hold up while both players received attention. Turner seemed to be the more serious of the two.

REDUCED TO TEN AGAIN

In the end, Turner was led off by trainer Frank King so once again the Town were reduced to 10 men.

Scenting their opportunity, Wrexham went on to the attack aided by a poor pass by Lownds

Turner returned and there was another spectacular save by Fleet, this time from Walden who headed in a header from O'Rourke.

IRONICAL CHEERS

There were ironical cheers when suddenly Whittaker was brought into the game from a through pass by O'Rourke, but unfortunately nothing came of it, and the game continued on its rather desultory path.

Walden gained a corner when he should have got the ball across more decisively in the first place, but this time there was no loophole left for O'Rourke, who was marked by two defenders, and it was left to Lownds to make the final shot, which troubled Fleet not at all. Another corner followed on the left, gained by Whittaker, and this time, McMillan headed behind for safety with no-one really challenging him.

With the game reaching its final phase the Town goal very nearly fell again when Phythian broke through to make a hard drive to which Baynham dived