

Town Showed They Have The Message

By Chiltern

OLDHAM ATHLETIC 0, LUTON TOWN 2

SO far as the art of collecting away points is concerned undoubtedly the Town have got the message. They have learned that fanciful, leisurely football, possible in some matches in the higher divisions, is no substitute for determination and fighting spirit.

More than that, they have learned that the key to success away lies in rearguard soundness and the ability to break quickly out of a defensive position.

Fundamentally these were the ingredients of this victory at Boundary Park on Saturday, but the early picture was very different, and there was a time when the Town threatened to build up a substantial lead.

This followed a goal in the seventh minute by REID, who fastened on to a pass by Whittaker, and made a drive from 25 yards. Bollands moved the wrong way, was deceived by the swerve on the ball, and was too late to recover.

Shortly afterwards O'Rourke missed the sort of chance that he would accept avidly nine times out of 10, and then came a drive by Whittaker, pushed on to a post by Bollands and another by O'Rourke that clipped the outside of the woodwork.

Had one or more of these efforts succeeded, Oldham would not have been in the position to make the fight they did in the latter part of the first half, and for much of the time after the interval.

It was then that the Town's know-how about defence in depth paid off, with Reid often becoming a fourth half-back, ready to plug any holes that might appear. As it happened there were precious few, because the Town defence as a whole was highly organised and well drilled.

Anxiety there was at times, but with Baynham in such brilliant form, an Oldham equaliser never seemed really imminent, despite the pressure.

REID'S SECOND A RELIEF

All the same, it came as something of a relief when REID obtained a second goal nine minutes from the end after Bollands had failed to collect a centre from Pleat.

That was the end of the matter, as the home fans only too plainly showed because they began to leave the terraces in droves.

Teamwork and fighting spirit were two powerful ingredients of this success, but mention must be made of the great display by Baynham, who was right back in the form that earned him England caps.

Mention, too, of the way in which Fincham curbed the dash of Harris, but the general pattern of defence was one in which

everyone fitted, and there was no sign of a weakness.

One disappointment was that O'Rourke showed little confidence in the ankle he damaged recently and was much in the grip of the strong Williams.

Once again there was power on the wings, with Whittaker the more dangerous on this occasion, and Reid's was a massive contribution because, apart from his goals, he did a tremendous amount of work.

McKechnie was not in the goal-striking form he can show, but was perhaps affected by the comparative ineffectiveness of the other spearhead, O'Rourke.

OLDHAM ATHLETIC: Bollands; Cameron, Martin; Frixzell, Williams, McCall; Ledger, Bowie, Harris, Colquhoun, Darden.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McBain, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, Lownds; Pleat, McKechnie, O'Rourke, Reid, Whittaker.

Referee: W. M. Holian, Chertfield.

Attendance: 10,793.