

REID SHOCK TREATMENT

Athletic hit by bolt from blue

LACK of finishing power, coupled with a fine display by Luton goal-keeper Baynham, meant that Athletic were struggling at Boundary Park after a seventh-minute shock from Reid. The visitors' inside-left caught Bolland on the wrong foot with a speculative shot from 25 yards. He added a second after 81 minutes.

With Peter McCall and Alex Cameron both passing fitness tests, Athletic fielded the team that beat Peterborough on Tuesday.

Luton were at full strength for the first time since the opening game of the season. John O'Rourke was back at centre forward after being injured when scoring his club's first goal of the season.

Jimmy Hogan, the world-famous coach, now a scout for Aston Villa, was at the match, presumably to watch O'Rourke.

ATHLETIC: Bolland; Cameron, Martin; Frizzell, Williams, McCall; Ledger, Bowie, Harris, Colquhoun, Dearden.

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

Referee: Mr W M Holian (Chesterfield).

After a slow opening, Town made ground and winger Whittaker went through and put the ball to O'Rourke, but the centre forward's shot was cleared. When he tried again soon afterwards, he was wide of the target.

Athletic won a corner on the left, but Dearden's kick was effectively headed clear by McBain.

Cameron put an end to the Town raid by beating Whittaker and then passing to McCall, who in turn pin-pointed a pass to Colquhoun. The inside-left tried a shot from 25 yards, but Baynham saved.

Another nice move, in which McCall, Frizzell and Colquhoun combined, ended with a Ledger centre, but the confident Baynham came well out of his goal to punch clear.

Then in the seventh minute Luton surprisingly went ahead with a goal by inside-left REID. It was a real bolt in the blue, for Athletic had been equally in the attacking picture up to this point.

Opening wasted

O'Rourke went through and pushed the ball out to Reid on his right and the roving inside-man tried a speculative shot from about 25 yards and was as surprised as anyone to see it pass into the Athletic net, with Bolland going the wrong way.

Encouraged by this unexpected offering, Town pressed and O'Rourke missed a golden chance of putting them further ahead almost immediately when, with only Bolland to beat, he missed his kick.

Town tried again and this time it was winger Whittaker who cracked in a left-foot shot which brought a spectacular flying save from Bolland.

It seemed that Athletic, who had been doing plenty of attacking, were due for an equaliser when Ledger crossed the ball into the middle.

But Bowie, with only the goal-keeper to beat, took his time and the capable Baynham was able to deal



JOHNNY COLQUHOUN . . . brought Baynham to his knees with a rasping drive.

easily with his shot when it finally came.

Athletic piled on the pressure and Ledger won a corner on the right which was cleared, but the persistent winger gathered the clearance and cracked in a hard shot which Baynham punched over the bar.

A Town attack ended with a shot by O'Rourke, which ricocheted off the upright, but then play swung back to the other end, where Baynham had to pull out all the stops to save a fierce, close-range shot from Harris.

Both sides were shooting as often as possible, and Town's inside-right, McKechnie, tried a long shot which was only inches off the target.

The persistence of Ledger won Athletic another corner on the right from which McCall put in a long shot and Harris, in an off-side position, headed the ball over the bar.

Athletic were showing plenty of determination and some nice touches, but they were finding the Town defence tough. And the competent Baynham was also proving hard to beat.

Challenged

Town's next effort came from Reid. It was a long left-foot shot, but it was well over. Athletic were trying hard enough for the equaliser and although they were making spectacular progress towards goal they just could not find that final punch.

McCall raced up to put the ball into the goalmouth, but Harris, challenged by Fincham, missed his header. Dearden put a nice pass right to the left foot of the enter-

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prising McCall, who went close with a fierce drive.

Ledger sent Colquhoun away and the nippy inside-man beat Pacey and raced for goal, but Reid, who had fallen back, cleared the danger.

Half-time:

ATHLETIC 0
LUTON TOWN 1

Luton were the first to strike after a slow start, and their goal although they impressed in their mid-field work, could just not find the goal touch.

Athletic went on the attack right from the restart and the harrassed Town defence had some anxious moments.

A fine header from Harris was deflected over the bar for a corner. Frizzell and Dearden made ground on the left and a header from Ledger was somehow headed away by Bramwell.

From a Bowie pass Dearden, who had switched inside, put a long ball out to Colquhoun who raced through to bring Baynham to his knees with a rasping shot.

Menacing

Little had been seen of O'Rourke, who found himself well policed by the dominant Williams.

Still Athletic kept up the pressure. Williams in turn confidently beat O'Rourke and Whittaker and gave Bowie a chance, but the inside man's shot was headed away.

Ledger cracked in the rebound and the ball sailed menacingly across the front of the Luton goal.

When Colquhoun was brought down, McCall took the free-kick which went to Bowie, but the big Scot's shot was swept clear by the Town defence.

Williams again went foraging and beat a couple of men to send Frizzell away. The captain gave McCall a chance, but Pacey headed away for a corner. It was one-way traffic at this time but the equaliser was proving elusive.

Twice centre-forward Harris tried for an equaliser, first with a left-foot shot which tested Baynham and then with a long right-foot effort which Baynham saved brilliantly just under the bar.

Pacey conceded a free-kick about six yards outside the penalty area and Bowie pushed the ball to Harris, who tried a hard shot. But it cannoned off the human defensive wall.

Athletic kept pegging and in one amazing spell in front of the Luton goal it seemed that Harris must score, but Fincham threw himself at the ball and got a foot to it to divert it for a corner.

Easy goal

A big effort by Bowie on the left gained another corner but nothing came of it. In one break-away raid Town made ground on the right where Pleat forced Bolland to leap high to push the ball away to safety.

Then Town went up again and suddenly, as unexpectedly as in the first-half, they scored again. Pleat put a centre high into the middle.

Bolland failed to cut off and inside-left REID ran in for an easy goal.

This was the signal for many of the spectators to go home.

Final:

ATHLETIC 0
LUTON TOWN 2
Attendance 10,793.