

Town Drop A Point Must Sharpen Their Teeth

By Chiltern

64/65

LUTON TOWN 1, PORT VALE 1

BEFORE their biggest crowd of the season—11,449—the Town disappointingly, but unluckily, dropped a point to Port Vale at Kenilworth-road last night, and so missed the chance of taking over the leadership of the Third Division.

It was an action-packed game, mostly in the Vale penalty area, for Vale tried to concentrate on defence after surprising the Town by taking the lead in the 18th minute.

There were all manner of narrow escapes for Vale, but basically there was the need for more penetration and drive by Town in front of goal.

Credit, of course, must go to Vale for their sturdy defence, but they were most fortunate to get away with a point, and I thought Town should have had a penalty about ten minutes from the end.

There are no grounds for despair over this loss of a point, because the Town were most obviously the better footballing side.

There was disappointment again when just before kick-off time it

only at the second attempt when Reid tried a long-range shot.
Result:

LUTON TOWN	1
PORT VALE	1

How The Goals Came

POOLE for Port Vale after 18 minutes.

PLEAT for Luton after 70 minutes.

was decided that John O'Rourke's ankle had not recovered sufficiently to justify his inclusion in Town's team. Gordon Riddick led the attack. Otherwise the Town were back to their full-strength side.

Port Vale made two changes from the team beaten by the Town in the League Cup on Monday. Steele took over from Rawlings at right-half, and Andrews led the attack instead of Mitchell.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McBain, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, Lownds; Pleat, McKechnie, Riddick, Reid, Whitaker.

PORT VALE: Hancock; Alcock, Sproson; Steele, Nicholson, Miles; Rowland, Poole, Andrews, Porter, Smith.

Referee: E. D. Wallace, of Swindon.

Town were quickly dangerous, and it took a smart tackle by Nicholson to snuff out a chance which Reid had created for McKechnie.

Play was fast, perhaps too fast, because the light ball was travelling quickly on this hard surface, and misplaced passes were frequent.

Best shot so far came from Port Vale when Poole swung past Fincham and fired a high drive from 25 yards that Baynham did well to catch.

Poole was posing some danger to the Town, and Baynham had to make a point blank save from him after Rowland had beaten Bramwell.

In fact Port Vale, desperate for points, looked the more dangerous, and took the lead after 18 minutes through POOLE.

The goal came from nothing in the way of a build-up. The inside-right collected a loose ball and, instead of making ground as might have been expected, ballooned the ball from about 25 yards, and the flight completely beat Baynham.

TOWN FORWARDS TOO INACCURATE

Inaccuracy was a blot on the Town's forward display, and they could seldom reach close quarters.

There was some Town pressure, including a couple of corners, without Hancock being brought into serious action. In fact, in the first half-hour the goalkeeper had not had a dangerous shot to save.

Town gradually forced Vale back on to defence. Two or three times Pacey forced a way through so far and no further. The most commendable effort came from Reid from longish range, and he was a foot wide.

For some reason, difficult to fathom, nearly all Town's attacking play was down the Town's left wing, Pleat being neglected.

CLAIM FOR A PENALTY

Town were still lacking in penetration, though a good attempt to equalise came from Pacey, who cracked the ball from 20 yards only to see his shot rise too high.

Whittaker put in a high centre to which Hancock beat McKechnie, and then there were claims for a penalty when Riddick appeared to be pushed. The referee considered it a case of obstruction, however, and gave an indirect free kick. Reid took it and his lob into the goalmouth was pushed for a corner by Hancock. A terrific scramble developed in front of goal and the Vale defence was harassed and worried.

Just before half-time Riddick headed against the bar following a free kick taken by Lownds, and the ball was scrambled away. Again the woodwork saved Port Vale when Pacey shot against a post after Pleat had lifted the ball over Hancock's head. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 0

PORT VALE 1

The Town began the second half as they finished the first, with all-out pressure. Riddick tested Hancock and there were appeals for a penalty—ignored—when McKechnie went down.

The Vale defence was fighting tenaciously to hold off the eager Town forwards, and were packing their penalty area with marked success.

The ball was hooked away almost on the goal-line from McKechnie's feet, and then Pleat went very close with a drive.

Then somehow Hancock pushed out a point-blank drive from Pleat that looked booked for an overdue equaliser.

Despite the way in which they were packing their rearguard, Vale continued to have narrow escapes.

PLEAT GETS THE EQUALISER

Town's pressure continued undiminished, and then came the long-awaited goal after 70 minutes. The scorer was PLEAT, and it was his first for the Town.

The ball was headed out, and Pleat, from the edge of the penalty area, hit it first time with his left foot and sent it soaring into the roof of the net for a glorious goal.

The Vale looked dangerous when Porter sent a cross shot whistling just wide of the far post.

Vale also brought an uneasy moment as a drive by Poole rose just too high, and at the other end Riddick headed just over the bar following a free kick.

The referee ignored Town appeals for a penalty when once again McKechnie appeared to have been brought down.

Then Hancock collected the ball