

TOWN GLAD TO HANG ON DID NOT CASH IN ON EARLY LEAD

O'Rourke On Mark Again, But Needs More Support

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 1, CARLISLE UNITED 1

LET us face it fairly and squarely. The Town were glad to hang on and settle for a point in the closing stages of this match at Kenilworth-road on Thursday night.

Carlisle could quite easily have snatched the winner during that period because McBain cleared off the goal-line from Evans when everything seemed lost and Baynham had extreme difficulty in preventing a shot from Johnstone crossing the line.

Yet this was another match which the Town had every chance of winning. They had the great advantage of a flying start with a goal in 30 seconds from O'ROURKE, who flashed the ball in from an acute angle after Neil had made a hash of his attempt to clear a low centre from McKechnie.

This was the sort of beginning to provide a solid foundation, but Carlisle were not dismayed, and there was a shock after three minutes when Large found a gap in the middle of the defence to beat Baynham, but had the goal disallowed for offside.

For much of the first half, Car-

lisle impressed as the more constructive side, and McIlmoyle had a definite chance of equalising but was foiled by Baynham coming out quickly to narrow the angle.

Attacks from the Town were spasmodic and such danger as there was mostly emanated from O'Rourke, who brought Ross, the former Town goalkeeper, full-length on three separate occasions.

McKechnie missed a good chance at close range, and O'Rourke, after having been fouled just outside the penalty area, flashed the ball just wide.

Towards the interval there was some promise that the Town would get the other goal they so

badly needed in order to make their position more tenable, and they were unlucky when O'Rourke clipped the top of the bar from a corner by Whittaker after appeals for a penalty for handling by Passmore had been turned down.

There was a more impressive build-up in midfield from Carlisle, however, with McConnell and Harland often having control and giving good service to their forwards.

McKECHNIE MISSED CHANCES

Yet, acceptable chances continued to crop up for the Town and McKechnie twice failed through the inaccuracy of his finishing at close quarters.

Carlisle appeared to be due to pay the penalty of insufficient thrust in front of goal until the 67th minute when Brayton left Bramwell groping, a fact that drew Fincham out of the middle and from his centre, LARGE jumped high to steer the ball with his head well wide of Baynham.

In the way this goal came, there was evidence of lack of cover in defence, but few of the 7,745 spectators felt disposed to carp at the success of the visitors who would have been unlucky to leave unrewarded.

Once again, the Town, O'Rourke apart, showed an inability to snap up the chances that mean the difference between decisive victory and partial failure.

O'ROURKE NEEDS MORE SUPPORT

At the moment, O'Rourke, playing now with more confidence and zest, is suffering from the fact that adequate support is not coming his way.

Badly he needs someone to take the weight off him which McKechnie, though he is covering a deal of ground, is not doing. Cast in the role of second thruster, McKechnie is not delivering the goods and is finding inordinate difficulty in coping with the lively ball.

Nor is Reid at his best at the moment, but it may be that he is being called upon to do too much work in a defensive role and not able to concentrate on his obvious job of link man.

In succeeding games, Pleat just is not being brought into it sufficiently and with McKechnie out of form, it might well have been valuable if Pleat had been switched inside, which is the position he is destined for when the Town have cover for the right wing berth.

Apart from the fact that he tends to hang on to the ball a fraction too long, Pleat has obvious match-winning qualities, and, on this occasion, Whittaker, too, could have used better support than came his way.

NO COMMAND IN MIDFIELD

Much of the Town's present trouble stems from their inability to take control of the middle of the field, and insufficient mastery is being shown by the wing-halves.

Possibly because of the hard, difficult going, Pacey is way below his best, and Knights, while an honest, hard workman, has not brought an increase of constructive ability on his introduction to the team.

At the same time it must be borne in mind that he bruised his back badly in a fall during the first half and played under much of a handicap afterwards.

Although he was drawn out of position on occasion, Fincham did a pretty fair job so that McIlmoyle rarely looked like ending his present goal famine.

Both McBain and Bramwell are having extra work thrust upon them, but it is a responsibility that they are shouldering gamely enough, and there could be no cause for real complaint about their displays.

On balance, Ross had more to do than Baynham, who, however, had ample opportunity of showing his ability to cut out high centres.

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

CARLISLE UNITED: Ross; Neil, Caldwell; McConnell, Passmore, Harland; Brayton, Evans, McIlmoyle, Large Johnstone.

Referee: J. R. Osborne, Ipswich.