

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

FOOTBALLERS ARE WAITING FOR RAIN

Late "Own Goal" Saved The Town At Grimsby

By CHILTERN

GRIMSBY TOWN 2, LUTON TOWN 2

"Lucky Luton—they scraped a point from League leaders Grimsby with only two minutes to go. And even that was given them, for Grimsby right-half Cockerill put the ball into his own net.

"Grimsby, who shot to the top of Division III in mid-week, strode arrogantly through the first half, always well on top. But I imagine manager Tom Johnston had some unkind words to say about the slap-happiness that left them only one goal ahead at the interval." — "The People."

"Grimsby's defence broke the hearts of Luton's ball-playing attack—until an own goal gift gave them a share of the points.

"By contrast the Luton rear-guard shuffled and muddled through against the Division III leaders. Big Gordon Fincham and his men stuck out lucky feet, elbows and knees and the ball bounced off them." — "Sunday Mirror."

"Luton were the second side at Blundell Park during the week that seemed intent on pulling the Third Division leaders down the League ladder if they could and Grimsby were again at the receiving end, getting a series of free kicks which came to very little against the tough Luton defence.

"The Hatters had their moments of course, though they were limited to shots from Gordon Riddick and John O'Rourke that were well off the target." — "Sunday Express."

LIKE the gardeners who, for most of this brilliant summer, have been looking for signs of rainclouds, footballers all over the country would welcome a good, heavy downpour.

Reason is not hard to find because matches are being fought out on bone-hard, bumpy grounds on which the ball behaves in most unpredictable fashion and more than that, the going is producing an epidemic of niggling, minor injuries such as jarred muscles, abrasions, bruises and blistered feet.

Blundell Park was no different from any other ground on which the Town have been playing through their crowded opening programme, and so much difficulty did both teams find in mastering the conditions that the result was a scrambling, scrappy affair, that left the 8,555 fans in a state of dissatisfaction.

Perhaps the most satisfied of the customers were the three coachloads of the faithful from Luton who at least saw their team gain a point, albeit in fortunate fashion, in the dying stages of this somewhat dreary affair.

So much preoccupied are the football planners with schemes that sound more like mathematical progressions like 4-2-4 or 4-3-3, that it would be a glorious change to see two teams come out and play good, open, attacking football without such inhibitions.

However, the desperate need for points from succeeding games apparently makes the operation of these various plans, all designed to produce a somewhat negative attitude, necessary.

This was a match played with some relation to the aforemen-

tioned mathematics, but it was the liveliness of the ball that really won in the end.

Grimsby could have done so had they shown more of the killer instinct in front of goal and if COCKERILL could have avoided making the ultimate mistake of all when he put the ball into his own net two minutes from the end to rob his team of a point.

And to show how easily a game can be swung by one incident, Whittaker, whose shot had caused the downfall of the right-half, might very easily have snatched dramatic victory for the Town in the last minute because a swinging centre from him nearly eluded Wright.

After a start in which there was more promise than fulfilment, Grimsby took the lead after 19 minutes when FOSTER ran on to a shrewd pass from McLean to leave Baynham helpless.

Best chance for the Town fell to Reid who drove too high from less than ten yards and it was not until the 72nd minute when O'ROURKE scored for the third consecutive match that the Town's first hope of a point occurred.

In the way in which the chance occurred, the centre-forward was lucky enough to receive a second rebound from a defender and he made no mistake from close range.

JUBILATION SHORT-LIVED

Jubilation of the Town lasted only two minutes before YOUNG atoned for an earlier miss by racing through a gap in the middle to score with a shot that clipped the inside of a post.

That seemed to settle it in favour of the League leaders until there came that dramatic late mistake by Cockerill.

There was determination and fighting spirit by the Town, especially in defence, where Bramwell had an outstanding match and, with McBain, formed a splendid full-back partnership.

From a pretty searching test against McLean, Fincham came through very well, and both Pacey and Lownds were more successful in defence than they were in their distribution.

Baynham made one or two ill-advised excursions from his goal for which he did not have to pay the penalty and, generally speaking, he compared favourably with his Grimsby counterpart.

Forward, there was not really a measureable increase in thrust at close quarters, because O'Rourke was given very little scope by Clifton and the service given him was rather meagre.

Both Pleat and Whittaker threatened danger when the chance came their way, and Reid played a valuable role as a semi-defensive inside-forward.

Brought in for McKechnie, Riddick did some useful work, but was not really played in the role of second spearhead and it is in this position that more thrust is needed.

GRIMSBY TOWN: Wright; Thompson, Keeble; Cockerill, Clifton, Jobling; Pennington, Young, McLean, Foster, Hill.

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

Referee: F. M. Nicholson, Manchester. Attendance: 8,555.