

TOWN ATTACK STILL IN GOAL-SHY MOOD

Hard-Battling Defence Is Carrying A Heavy Burden

By CHILTERN

MANSFIELD TOWN 2, LUTON TOWN 0

THERE could have been a crop of goals in this match at Mansfield on Monday, mainly to the home team, but the Town, too, had the sort of chances that must be accepted if they are to end their arid spell without a victory.

In the event, Mansfield got home, deservedly let it be said, because of their greater power and mobility in attack, but with the aid of two goals which were in the dubious category to say the least.

First came in the 19th minute, when McBain appeared to have kept in successfully, a high ball which he breasted down. However, the linesman concerned decided that the ball had crossed the line, and it was from the throw-in that the danger accrued.

The ball went quickly to Scanlon, who swept it low across the face of the goal, and from almost on the goal-line, WAGSTAFF drove it in.

Mansfield had been looking the more dangerous, and there was a dramatic goal-line save from McBain after Wagstaff had met a corner, and then Baynham dived into the ruck of players to emerge with the ball. After this, Chapman was only inches wide with an effort from 25 yards.

Although they moved promisingly enough in midfield, there was not sufficient directness or thrust about the Town front line, who were without John O'Rourke.

McKechnie tried hard enough as his deputy, but seldom looked the part against the strong tackling of Gill.

REID'S BAD MISS

There were a few bright moments from the Town as when Jardine flashed the ball across the face of the goal, and there certainly should have been an equaliser when Riddick made an opening for Reid from Pleat's centre, but from nearly point blank range, the inside-left shot too hurriedly, and the ball went wide.

After that, there was more trouble for the Town with Tyrer crashing the ball against the face of their bar with Baynham helpless. Then the goalkeeper only just prevented a shot from Chapman going underneath him, and was also tested by Tyrer.

Towards half-time the Town attack was seen in a slightly better light, and after Riddick had brought Treharne into action, McKechnie beat him completely with an oblique drive that missed the far post by a foot.

There were mixed feelings among Luton officials at half-time because, while they realised that the position could have been worse, there was also the thought that more punch could have improved it considerably.

Thanks to the resiliency of the defence, and certain shortcomings of the home forwards in front of goal, the Town were always in the game with a chance until a quarter of an hour from the end, when there came another controversial goal against them.

Opinion varied about the actual scorer, but it turned out afterwards that the ball finally rolled into the net off BRAMWELL, as he tried to clear from Wagstaff.

But it was what led up to it that caused the comment, because the inside-right first obstructed Bramwell and then pushed the ball forward with his hand so blatantly that it seemed impossible to miss the fact.

WHAT HARRY STORER SAID

When it became clear that the referee had every intention of allowing the goal to count despite Town protests, Harry Storer, formerly Coventry City and Derby County manager who sat behind me, commented, "Surely, he is not going to allow that."

But allow it he did to the

amazement of even many of the home supporters.

That was virtually the end for the Town who, after some early escapes after the interval, principally from Chapman, Wagstaff and Scanlon had whipped up some spirit of defiance.

Driving forward hard, Lownds nearly caught Treharne napping with a high shot and Reid missed a chance which was quite as easy as the one that fell to him earlier.

With the arrears, two goals, McKechnie was switched to the wing, with Riddick going into the middle, but apart from a shot by Pleat that was pushed over, they did not look like rallying and Baynham twice saved somewhat fortunately from Scanlon and Morris.

DIFFICULT DAYS FOR DEFENCE

With so few goals coming from the front line, these are difficult days for the Town defence which continues to carry a heavy burden and they gained high marks for the quality of their resistance.

Fincham did a manful job in the middle, received good support from Lownds and Bramwell, who were both hard-working, and successful and little fault could be found with either McBain or Jardine.

Baynham, too, made some capable saves and generally speaking the defence is standing up to its heavy task well.

Forward, it was a different story, with Riddick head and shoulders above the rest with as effective a display as I have seen from him.

So far, there has been a lot of unfulfilled potential about him, but the confident, assured way in which he moved suggested that this is on the point of being realised.

Next most successful was the hard battling Whittaker, but Pleat was pretty effectively shut out and Reid, apart from his missed chances, was guilty of faulty distribution and lacked his usual drive.

MANSFIELD TOWN.—Treharne; Poynton, Hall (B); Hall (I), Gill, Morris; Tyrer, Wagstaff, Cooper, Chapman, Scanlon.

LUTON TOWN.—Baynham; McBain, Jardine; Lownds, Fincham, Bramwell; Pleat, Riddick, McKechnie, Reid, Whittaker.

Referee: J. E. Thacker, Scarborough. Attendance, 8,080.