

2,874 See The Town Throw Away A Point

LUTON TOWN 1, MANSFIELD TOWN 1
By CHILTERN

THE lowest-ever attendance, in at least the last 30 years of Luton football—2,874—saw the Town fail to get back on the victory path against Mansfield at Kenilworth-road last night.

This was Town's 12th match without a win, and they had no-one but themselves to blame.

Chances galore came their way, particularly in the first half, but they just frittered them away.

There had been a commendable return to an attacking flair, with the forwards doing just about everything up to the point of getting the ball into the net.

Riddick, who otherwise led the front line with plenty of ability, was the chief offender, and should have had a crop of goals.

The introduction of Caleb at centre-half brought new-found soundness to the defence.

Town, however, showed a tendency to fall back on the defensive once they had put themselves in front, and so quite needlessly yet another point was thrown away.

The surprise was that after all McBain reported fit enough to play, whereas four hours before kick-off time he had told Manager Bill Harvey that his ankle was so swollen that he was unfit.

Fincham had been alerted to fill the centre-half position again, with Caleb moving to right back, but this was not necessary after all.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McBain, Jardine; Pacey, Caleb, Bramwell; McKechnie, Pleat, Riddick, Reid, Whittaker.

MANSFIELD TOWN: Treharne; Jones, Toon; Hall (L), Gill, Morris; Anderson, Wagstaff, Cooper, Hollett, Hall (B.).

Referee: E. T. Jennings, Stourbridge.

There was some quite bright play by the Town forwards in the opening stages, without the requisite finishing being produced. Pleat shot wide from a good position, then dived full-length to turn the ball straight at Treharne. There were also a couple of good efforts from Riddick, and generally Mansfield were being contained without much trouble.

JARDINE COMES THROUGH

A powerful Town raid down the left wing, in which Riddick and Whittaker shone, ended with Jardine coming right through to make a shot that I thought was possibly going wide, but Treharne took no chances and dived to the near post to give away a corner, which he cleared.

The rain had ruined any chance of there being a near-average gate, already lowered by the poor display on Saturday. It also made the pitch greasy, and the ball was shooting off it at a quite alarming rate at times.

Town claimed a penalty when Riddick—who was leading the attack in lively style—ran on to a through pass, sidestepped Gill, and was shaping to put the ball into the net when he went down. The referee would have none of it, however. In the end the ball came across menacingly from McKechnie, but unfortunately it sailed too high for the oncoming Whittaker.

INCREDIBLE MISS BY RIDDICK

The best shot so far came from Bramwell, a rising effort which Treharne pulled down from under the bar. Town were much improved, and continued to be superior.

There was an incredible miss by Riddick, who, after starting a movement with a brilliant pass to McKechnie, ran in as the winger centred low. Treharne could not hold the ball, and it broke away from him. From no more than two yards, somehow or another, Riddick got the ball over the bar with the goal at his mercy.

Baynham's first serious test came immediately afterwards when Wagstaffe let loose a pile-driver which the goalkeeper caught over his head.

But the persistent danger was coming from the Town, who,

How The Goals Came

PLEAT for Luton after 50 minutes.

ANDERSON for Mansfield after 66 minutes.

however, still could not find that final thrust.

Riddick was proving a handful for Gill. The centre-forward beat him again, and squared the ball across the goal, but there was no-one there to make contact.

Town continued to threaten goals, and from a centre by Whittaker, McKechnie, from point-blank range, saw his shot deflected for a corner.

Pleat was pulled down, and drove the free kick well over from just outside the penalty area.

REID NEEDS ATTENTION

Meanwhile, Reid had come to the trainer's bench for attention to what looked like a pulled muscle in his left thigh. It was strapped up, and he resumed immediately, though he went to outside-right, with McKechnie taking over the inside-left spot.

Reid was by no means a passenger, however. With brilliant footwork he left Toon groping, and followed up with a centre that Treharne pushed out with some difficulty. In fact, the Mansfield goalkeeper was being kept busy, and the only wonder was that the Town's undoubted superiority had not been translated into goals.

In a sudden Mansfield break-away just before half-time Baynham made a near-suicidal save by throwing himself at Cooper's feet.

Half-time:

LUTON	0
MANSFIELD	0

The Town began the second half as they finished the first, on the attack, and Riddick, who was having a most unfortunate time with his finishing, missed another gilt-edged chance from a corner by Whittaker.

At last, after 50 minutes, the Town took the lead through PLEAT.

It was a simple effort, with a header of no great pace from a centre by Reid, who was still at outside-right, but it seemed to deceive Treharne.

This seemed to whet the Town's appetite, and Pleat, with a full-blooded drive, brought the best out of the visitors' goalkeeper.

Riddick was then injured, but recovered in time to miss another cross from the left wing, which was most unfortunate, because his general play had been good.

Baynham went up to a high centre from the right and managed only to get his finger tips to the ball, which fell between Hollett and Hall (B.), and Pleat, back in defence, made a timely clearance.

In another Mansfield attack, Baynham made a brave save by throwing himself at Cooper's feet after the centre-forward had been neatly sent through by the dangerous Wagstaff.

MANSFIELD DRAW LEVEL

Town's jubilation was cut short in the 66th minute when Mansfield broke away for ANDERSON to equalise with a shot that I thought Baynham should have saved. He went down to the ball, but seemed to misjudge its pace, and it went into the net just inside the post.

Town had fallen away, and Mansfield were being allowed to come more into the game. Some inaccurate passing by the Town was helping them, and it seemed that much of Town's first-half rhythm had gone.

TOWN PUT ON PRESSURE

Whittaker sought to find a way through the inside-right position, but was fouled by Morris, which gave the Town a free kick some 30 yards out. Pleat took it, and Riddick, running in from the left, just failed to make contact with his head.

Mansfield were right in the game now, and there was another shock at the Town end when Baynham misjudged the flight of a high centre from Anderson, but fortunately for them the covering was adequate.

With about six minutes left, Riddick broke clear of Gill. He shot as Treharne came out, beat the goalkeeper, and then saw the ball pass just wide of the far post.

Whittaker next went close, and Town were looking very frustrated by their failure to apply the finishing touch to so many chances.

Result:	
LUTON	1
MANSFIELD	1