

BAYNHAM'S MISTAKES HELPED WATFORD

Insufficient Thrust In The Town Front Line

By CHILTERN

WATFORD 2, LUTON TOWN 0

A BLANK Christmas for the Town was completed at icy, misty Vicarage-road on Monday evening when the cold weather kept down the crowd to a meagre 6,886, probably less than half than would have watched this local derby in normal circumstances.

So hard was the pitch that at one time during the afternoon, there seemed some doubt about whether the match would be played, but the referee decided that it should go on, after having made an early inspection.

However, conditions were such that good football was an impossibility and it was obvious that the Town have not yet become acclimatised to them because, once again, they made the mistake of trying to play too close.

Much of their work was too square, too, and Watford again showed a better appreciation of what was needed because they kept the ball moving forward and hoped for mistakes to occur.

Occur they did, and unfortunately, Baynham made two of them which resulted in the two Watford goals. The first came after 28 minutes had produced almost not a single worth-while shot from either team.

A goal kick by the goalkeeper went to a Watford player and, in the end, WELBOURNE shot from over 30 yards and the ball went in just inside the post, with Baynham seeming to attempt to stop it by sticking out a leg.

One of the features of the early play was the inaccurate passing of the Town who played into the hands of the Watford defence which showed good covering and positional play.

However, they did come more into it and there was one tense moment in the home goalmouth following a centre by Pleat, who also forced Goy to save.

LITTLE THRUST IN ATTACK

Generally speaking, though, there was not sufficient thrust about the attack and, with McKechnie well held again by Chung and lacking support, anyway, most of what danger there was came from the right wing.

Of the front line, Pleat had more shots than anyone but was not on the target consistently, though he once forced Goy to go full length and, on another occasion, McKechnie drew Goy out of goal, but Watford covered up and Riddick's shot was kicked away.

For the Town there was a good share of the second-half play, but although the margin against them was so slight, they did not really threaten to draw level, although Riddick headed just over.

It looked as if the single goal would suffice when Watford suddenly sealed it five minutes from the end. A long through ball caught Baynham unprepared because he came out too late and it was pushed to Owen.

The winger's centre was reached by the goalkeeper, but not collected, and SAUNDERS made no mistake about snapping up the chance.

Because of injuries to Jardine and Whittaker, a reshuffle of the whole left flank was necessary and although the result of it was largely disappointing, it did produce one thing of value.

That is that in Barton, who is just completing a month's trial, the Town have a left-back of real ability and polish. While others were struggling to control the lively ball, he did so comfortably and always there was some real purpose about the way in which he made his clearances.

Always cool and collected, Barton can use either foot and, on this showing, is a distinct asset to the team.

McBain marked Harris more closely than he did on the first occasion, but is still below his early season form.

Apart from Barton, main defensive honours went to Caleb, who made a most successful return after his brief absence from the side and there was certainly a considerable tightening up in the middle.

There was some strong defensive work from Pacey and Lownds and, generally speaking, the defence had a more water-tight look.

Reid did not settle down after having been moved to inside-left again and it is obvious that his future lies in the middle line.

Out of the hurly-burly of the middle of the field, Rioch filled in quite well on the left-wing, but most of what threat there was came from the other flank where Riddick showed neat footwork and better control than most.

WATFORD:—Goy; Burgess, Furphy; Welbourne, Chung, Houghton; Owen, McAnearney, Saunders, Anderson, Harris.

LUTON TOWN—Baynham; McBain, Barton; Pacey, Caleb, Lownds; Pleat, Riddick, McKechnie, Reid, Rioch.

Referee: W. G. Handley, Cannock.