

ENCOURAGING WIN BY LIVELY TOWN

Tactics Were Better Suited To Conditions

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, OLDHAM ATHLETIC 0

TO remove the threat of relegation, which is a little too close for comfort, the Town must win more home matches than they have been doing, and some encouragement could be taken from this performance because they were clearly the more dangerous team.

It was a clear-cut win which left just one discordant note — more goals should have come to them, but perhaps they would have done had there been more yield in the going and less difficulty in players' keeping their balance.

However, I am not disposed to carp when two points were so thoroughly earned and there were sure signs that the team had digested the lessons that had been pointed out to them on their previous matches on frozen hard, slippery going.

Instead of the diffident short-passing, mostly across the field style that they have been using, they were more inclined to thump the ball forward, something that is best calculated to induce mistakes by the opposing defence.

In this respect, they had the ideal driving force in Pacey who used his considerable experience to great effect and, really, emerged as the marksman of the match.

When a match is played in conditions like these, an accurate 20 yards drive stands a fair chance of success because of the difficulty goalkeepers have in changing direction quickly.

With real luck, PACEY would have had a first half hat-trick because he missed by inches on two occasions, but his luck was better in the 27th minute.

Then, from outside the penalty area, he unleashed a terrific, rising drive that beat Swan and hit the underpart of the bar before bouncing downwards.

There was no reaction from the referee, except to allow play to proceed, but the linesman nearest the spot kept his flag upraised and a goal was awarded after consultation by the two officials. Naturally, Oldham protested, but it was in vain.

McKECHNIE MADE NO MISTAKE

That really assured the Town of two points because McKECHNIE had given them the lead from the penalty spot in the ninth minute after he had been brought down heavily by Williams.

I thought the Town deserving of another penalty when Pleat was up-ended and again in the final stages when Jardine was brought down heavily but, generally speaking, there could not be much complaint about the handling of this match in which the advantage rule was applied intelligently.

Oldham had their chances, but their goalmouth work did not measure up in threat to the cleverness of their approach work and, in point of fact, the Town had not only the more, but the better opportunities.

That the defence kept a blank sheet was a matter for encouragement and there is no doubt that it is much more safe as a unit when Caleb is in the middle. On this occasion, he was completely steady and he kept a firm grip on Harris.

Pacey had a splendid match, while Reid completed a strong half-back line, but the man who must have taken the eye of supporters seeing him for the first time was Barton, who is just beginning a second month's trial.

Cool and collected under pressure and with a fine positional sense, he reminds me a lot of Billy Hughes who graced the Town team soon after the war and who went on to earn further kudos with Chelsea.

BAYNHAM'S SOUND JUDGMENT

For McBain, the first-half was a struggle because he was operating on the worst of the going and obviously appreciated the change of ends because he kept a firm grip on Bartley.

There was not a lot of difficult work for Baynham because of the ineffectiveness

of the visiting forwards' shooting, but he showed sound judgment in cutting out centres.

Forward, there was plenty of zest and endeavour, with McKechnie working unceasingly in the middle and although he missed a couple of good chances, he kept the Oldham defence on tenterhooks.

After quite a useful first-half, Pleat really came into his own afterwards when he tormented McGinn, but his partner, Riddick, on this occasion, was a mixture of the brilliant and mediocre.

As for Rioch, I still feel that too much is being asked of him because even though he uses the ball well at times, he is not in the game consistently.

For Jardine, the wheel turned full circle because he was back in his old outside-left spot where he gave an honest, straightforward display.

LUTON TN: Baynham; McBain, Barton; Pacey, Caleb, Reid; Pleat, Riddick, McKechnie, Rioch, Jardine.

OLDHAM ATH: Swan; Branagan, McGinn; Ledger, Williams, McCall; Colquhoun, Frizzel, Harris, Bowie, Bartley.

Referee: K. Stokes, Newark.

Attendance: 5,280.