

# WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

# DISPUTED PENALTY JOLT FOR THE TOWN

## Tipped Scales Decisively In Exeter's Favour

By CHILTERN

EXETER CITY 5, LUTON TOWN 1

"Exeter ran up their highest score of the season before their smallest crowd—4,686—while Luton finished the match with goalkeeper Ron Baynham wrapped in a plastic macintosh watching the game from the trainer's hut.

"Baynham was one of Luton's two star men—inside-right Gordon Riddick was the other. Baynham had saved Luton from Exeter's goal-hungry forwards countless times, and he even got his hands to a penalty, but just failed to stop it."—"Sunday Express."

"In spite of the size of the score, Luton had their chances to save the game. Exeter were two up in 16 minutes, but McKechnie made it 2—1 before half-time.

"Until well in the second half Luton were only prevented from getting right back into the game by the brilliance of Harvey."—"Sunday Telegraph."

"Luton lost goalkeeper Ron Baynham, carried off with a pulled muscle, 17 minutes from the end. But they can't hold that as an excuse for this execution by super-fit Exeter, who have been put through intensive training during the past week.

"Exeter wingers Eric Welsh and Adrian Thorne raced Luton's defenders almost to a standstill. Barton had an unhappy time trying to keep up with the flying Welsh."—"The People."

"Luton crashed to fellow strugglers Exeter and now they face a tough battle to avoid dropping into the Fourth Division. To make the outlook even blacker goalkeeper Ron Baynham, veteran of nearly 400 first team matches, pulled a hamstring and may be out of action for four weeks.

"This could spell tragedy for Luton, for they lean heavily on the brilliance of Baynham. His injury, however, cannot be used as an excuse for this defeat."—"Sunday Mirror."

ON paper this looks to have been a frightful drubbing, but the plain fact is that the Town could have been very much closer to taking the point they so badly needed had they been able to make better use of the half chances that cropped up for them at a time when the game was evenly balanced.

However, they had not the decision in front of goal to do so and their hopes were finally dashed in a spell of four minutes midway through the second half.

Then, with the score at 2-1, and the Town having been threatening to draw level, Exeter were awarded a hotly-disputed penalty kick when Reid went in to clear from Curtis, who fell headlong. Town defenders were adamant that Reid merely kicked the ball, but the referee was equally emphatic in pointing to the spot.

Even then, HARVEY, entrusted with the kick, was lucky to score because Baynham guessed the direction of his shot correctly, went full length, and then had the mortification of seeing the ball skid off his fists into the corner of the net.

That happened after 64 minutes and, three minutes later, Exeter were put in an impregnable position when WELSH got so much in-swing on a corner, perhaps aided by the wind, that Baynham, who had come out to deal with it, was left stranded high and dry.

What happened after that was of secondary importance so far as the result was concerned, but of great concern to the Town was the fact that, with 20 minutes left, they lost Baynham with a badly pulled hamstring muscle after he had come out to challenge Banks.

For the rest of the match, McKechnie took over the green jersey to which he is not a complete stranger, and he was beaten only once, six minutes from the end, after the goal had had two remarkable escapes and MITCHELL, who had been left as the spare man, made no mistake from close in.

### MISTAKEN TACTICS IN MUD

In view of all the circumstances, the Town did not deserve such a heavy defeat, but they must carry much of the blame because of their mistaken tactics in the mud.

From the start, Exeter showed the better appreciation of what was necessary on a pitch that had been badly waterlogged in the morning, by making use of their wingers and by continually pushing the ball forward.

In 15 minutes they were two up, each as the result of a header from a centre, first from CURTIS and then from BANKS.

Meanwhile, the Town were creating all sorts of trouble for themselves by their persistence in keeping the ball close in midfield and the fact that their use of it was most inaccurate.

Yet they fought back pluckily enough and after Chandler had missed a chance, he headed on a centre from Pleat for McKECHNIE to reduce the arrears after 33 minutes.

At that stage, the Exeter lead hung by a slender thread and nearly disappeared completely just before half-time when Chandler missed by inches.

In the early part of the second half, the Town also had the chances to draw level, but both McKechnie and Riddick failed at close quarters and then came the penalty decision which undoubtedly changed the whole course of the game.

Underlying necessity of the Town is still to find some more punch in attack and until they do so, they cannot expect the sort of consistent run that is needed now.

Recalled, Chandler did no better, nor any worse, than on his previous appearances in the side and he does need to quicken up in front of goal which, indeed, was true also of Riddick, who was apt to make trouble for himself by his liking for keeping the ball too close.

### RELUCTANT TO USE WINGERS

Most dangerous of the three was McKechnie and even he missed the odd chance, but there was a curious reluctance to make the utmost use of the wingers, who were operating on the better going.

There were times when Pleat looked as if he could be a match-winner, but was scarcely brought into it sufficiently and there were spells

when Jardine was largely neglected.

With some justification, the forwards could point to inadequate service from behind, especially as Pacey's passes showed a tendency to go astray and the support from Reid was cut down through the necessity to use him in a defensive role against the speedy Welsh.

This was adopted after the early stages when Barton could not match the winger's speed and he spent the remainder of the game technically in the left-half position.

Always Caleb was difficult to pass, but he does need to improve his heading of the ball, which is his weak point.

Without giving the impression that he was completely in command, McBain battled his way through, but there was no disguising the fact that this result came as a sharp disappointment, coming hard on the heels of the highly encouraging display against Sunderland.

EXETER CITY: Shearing; Smyth, MacDonald; Mitchell, Harvey, Anderson; Welsh, Banks, Curtis, Hancock, Thorne.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McBain, Barton; Pacey, Caleb, Reid; Pleat, Riddick, Chandler, McKechnie, Jardine. Referee: P G Brandwood, Walsall.

Attendance: 4,686.