

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

ONLY EXCITEMENT WAS CROWD SCENE

Sparked off by a coin thrown from the crowd By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 1, GRIMSBY TOWN 1

"This sort of form will not get Luton out of their deep relegation trouble, yet they had their chances of making certain of the other point in an untidy game. Such opportunities as Jimmy Gibson and Tommy McKechnie squandered must be accepted, because the number of openings being created are so painfully few." — "Sunday Express."

"Grimsby wing-half Ron Cockerill scored his side's only goal and later became the central figure in an incident which threatened a near-riot."

"Cockerill, who is six foot two inches, was struck by a coin and kicked in the pants by a spectator when he bent down to pick up the ball for a throw-in. A struggling fan was carried off by the police."

"Until the rumpus this had been a drab game with Grimsby after that quick goal by Cockerill having much the better of the first half." — "The People."

"The 1—1 draw was a disappointment for Luton who badly needed both points in their bid to hold off relegation. Ron Cockerill gave Grimsby the lead after only three minutes."

"John O'Rourke making his first home appearance after a long injury absence, equalised after 52 minutes." — "Sunday Mirror."

IT would be a mistake to say that this match had everything, because from the point of view of pure football ability, it was probably as shabby an affair as we have seen this season.

Were that all that the occasion produced, then the memory of it would not have out-lived Saturday night but, unfortunately, there were other incidents which will remain in the memory for much longer and which developed from a very small beginning.

Apart from a couple of fouls by Cockerill and the threat of a dust-up between Reid and Foster, there had been very little to stir the passions in this drab affair until near to the interval when some fool threw a coin which hit Cockerill on the head as he prepared to take a throw-in.

In my view, over-much was made of the incident because the quick posting of a policeman or a steward on the spot and a resumption of play, was all that was needed to eradicate the possibility of further trouble.

Instead, things developed quickly. Cockerill received what can most politely be described as a kick up the pants from a spectator and then followed a fracas in which the Grimsby manager, Jimmy McGuigan, was kicked, so it was said, in the back, after which Pennington, bent on retribution, disappeared into the crowd.

By this time, the best part of 20 policemen, plus stewards, were on the scene, Pennington was hauled out of the crowd and a spectator was carried away from the arena by six or seven policemen.

After which, quiet descended on the scene, as the Town set about repairing the damage caused when they left a gap down the middle of their defence in the third minute which Foster used to make a chance from which COCKERILL, running on to the ball quickly, exacted full toll.

With a stiff breeze behind them, Grimsby showed more constructive ability in midfield in the first half, mainly through Foster, who was always seeking to use the ball to advantage.

O'ROURKE'S EQUALISER

With the wind behind them, the Town attack, which had been under a cloud in the first half, showed up in a better light, and hopes of a much-needed victory rose when O'ROURKE put them level seven minutes after half-time with a lob from a pass from McKechnie.

It was after this that the Town could have taken control of the proceedings because Gibson, left with only Wainman to beat, shot a foot wide of the post and, later, McKechnie drove the ball wide, also from a good position.

When these chances went astray, the game seemed destined to be a draw, although Haydock missed a chance late on, which would have given Grimsby their first win since mid-December.

This match did not serve to make fans much happier about the attack because, apart from his goal which should increase his confidence, O'Rourke is obviously still feeling his way back to his best form.

Of the inside trio, I thought McKechnie made the most effective contribution, despite the fact that he again tended to be caught in possession, and Gibson looks as if he will need a settling-in period.

Whittaker's liking for holding on to the ball got him in trouble, as it did Harber to a more limited extent because he received less of the ball.

Once Fincham got over a shaky start, not a great deal of criticism could be levelled at the defence in which Reid and Bramwell both did a valuable job of covering, and neither McBain nor Jardine

allowed his opposing winger to take the upper hand.

Brought in for one of his rare appearances, Tinsley was not over-worked and generally speaking looked safe enough.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; McBain, Jardine; Reid, Fincham, Bramwell; Harber, Gibson, O'Rourke, McKechnie, Whittaker.

GRIMSBY TOWN: Wainman; Thompson, Taylor; Cockerill, Clifton, Jobling; Pennington, Haydock, Lancaster, Foster, Hill.

Referee: G. Martin, Whitechurch, Hants.

Attendance: 5,160.