

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

GALLANT DEFENCE WAS NOT ENOUGH

Last-minute chance of equaliser went astray

by Chiltern

BRISTOL CITY 1, LUTON TOWN 0

"Bristol, at Ashton Gate, yesterday retained an outside chance of promotion by winning for the seventh successive time. Yet it was a hollow victory. Only a penalty by Ford in the 75th minute decided the issue. Luton—struggling to avoid relegation—fought an all-out rearguard action, and Tinsley in goal played superbly.

"Generally Bristol enjoyed territorial advantage, but their shooting was on a par with Luton's League position." — "Sunday Telegraph."

"A mere three inches robbed Luton of a much-needed point. With the referee about to whistle for time the Hatters' inside-left Ted Phillips burst through in an effort to grab a late equaliser.

"His shot completely beat Bristol goalkeeper Dave Gibson—then rolled the wrong side of the post." — "Sunday Mirror."

"Luton lost this game because Ken Barton handled on the goal-line and City full-back Tony Ford scored from the spot, but had Bristol taken half their chances Luton would have been soundly trounced.

"Bristol's half-backs blotted Luton right out of the game so that keeper Gibson had little to do. In contrast Colin Tinsley, in the Luton goal, had a busy, but pleasing game." — "The People."

IF the Town lose their Third Division place by a single point and, as things are at the moment, that does not look an impossibility, then they will look back to the dying seconds of this match at Ashton Gate on Saturday.

Then, Phillips, sent through clear by a perfect pass by Gibson, drew the City's Gibson out of his goal, and glided the ball ever so tantalisingly inches wide of the post.

There was only just time made some remarkable saves, particularly in the second half. Compared with the mid-week debacle, there was a distinct tightening up in defence which stemmed from an improvement by the survivors and the re-introduction of Fincham and Barton.

In fact, although they were on the defensive for most of the game, the Town were unlucky losers because the City needed a disputed penalty kick 16 minutes from the end as the vehicle for their only goal.

Before that happened, the Town had dealt with the best the City had to offer. That was not impressive in front of goal and certainly not suggestive of a team with the promotion chance that they hold.

A corner on the left led to the vital incident. There was a rush for the ball which was headed goalwards, some said by Fincham, though others credited Bush with it.

At all events, Barton had stationed himself on the goal-line and the ball struck him on the arm.

There was considerable doubt in my mind whether a penalty was a just award, but the referee had none and pointed to the spot from which FORD scored easily.

Apart from appealing against the award, the Town also were of the opinion that they should have been awarded a free-kick before things developed that far because Tinsley had been impeded.

MAJOR DISASTER

As has happened so often away from home this season, the quality of the Town's forward play was such that one goal against seemed a major disaster and so it turned out, except that rescue in a big way should have come from Phillips.

There was no disputing the fact that the City deserved to win, but they would have had only themselves to blame had they not done so, because their finishing was so bad.

However, they could point to something of an alibi in that Tinsley was in such magnificent form and he

So far as the former was concerned, he was in quite commanding form in the middle, giving the dangerous Bush little scope and, with Gibson and Reid settling down much better, the middle line did a thoroughly efficient job.

Barton coped quite comfortably with Hooper who has not found his best form since he joined the City, and certainly staked a claim for a regular place, while Jardine improved considerably after a tentative sort of start.

While there could be satisfaction about the work of the defence, that was certainly not the case so far as the attack was concerned and there will have to be a decided increase in determination in this department if the Town are to extricate themselves from their present trouble.

MORE DETERMINATION IS THE NEED

Until he received a gash on the top of the head which necessitated stitching, ten minutes or so before half time and caused an absence of about a quarter of an hour, McKechnie was the most lively on the front line.

With Riddick standing down because of injury, O'Rourke was designated as link man and did a passable sort of job, though whether the Town could afford to be without his opportunism at close quarters is another matter.

Frankly, Phillips was a disappointment, even making allowances for the fact that the support to turn him into the goal-striker he is, was absent and, as things are at the moment, there must be a marked stepping up of his work in midfield.

Rioch did not shine in the problem left wing position, while Pleat had a quiet match and even taking into account the lack of material coming his way, he seems to have lost the sparkle he showed when he first joined the club.

BRISTOL CITY: Gibson; Ford, Briggs; Farr, Connor, Low; Savino, Atyeo, Bush, Clark, Hooper.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; Barton, Jardine; Gibson, Fincham, Reid; Pleat, McKechnie, O'Rourke, Phillips, Rioch.

Referee: — H. G. New, Havant. Attendance, 11,001.