

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

MORE WORKMANLIKE TOWN GAIN POINTS

Harber looked answer to left-wing problem

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 2, QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS 0

CCHEERS at the end of this match at Kenilworth Road on Saturday probably sprang as much from relief as from admiration of the Town's display which, let it be said, was a marked improvement on recent showings.

Certainly, there was a more workmanlike approach, real sign of determination and a hint that, perhaps after all, the worst may not befall the club, who, however, must be looking at Walsall's progress with a somewhat jaundiced eye.

Conditions after hours of continuous rain were certainly not conducive to good football, but the Town managed to give some appearance of flowing in attack during the first half, especially on their right wing.

It was from this quarter that they gained the vital first goal after 10 minutes when Riddick sent away PLEAT with a most accurate pass and the winger swung in a cross that seemed to dip, deceived Springett and the ball went in off the inside of the far post.

Always, there seemed to be more purpose about the Town attack which was a pleasant change to say the least, and there should have been more goals before half-time.

However, the spearhead of O'Rourke and Phillips proved to be somewhat blunt, and they did not pose the danger that might have been expected.

Despite the fact that the lead was not increased, it always seemed, barring accidents, to be sufficient to ensure the Town of these vital points.

DEFENCE WAS IN COMMAND

There were some minor scares, as when Roger Morgan twice missed the far post by inches with speculative drives as Tinsley slithered across his goal but, in the main, the Town defence was pretty much in command.

As the pitch churned up

into a mudheap, the Town forwards found more difficulty in keeping the ball on the move and, as a result, tended to try to drag it through which meant that there was less mobility and had something of a bogging down effect.

However, the Town still looked the more dangerous and, sure enough, they made the issue safe two minutes from the end when Pleat forced a corner following a well-placed free-kick by Fincham and PHILLIPS headed past Springett.

While Riddick and Pleat stood out before the interval for their clever play, the undoubted star of the second half was Harber who had his best game in the first team.

DETERMINED HARBER

Showing the sort of eager determination which will be vitally necessary all the way round if the Town are to extricate themselves from their present trouble, he was a constant source of danger.

With Pleat in more progressive mood, there was considerably more threat from the wings, but O'Rourke, who is a long way from having regained full confidence, and Phillips were not very impressive.

On the other hand, there was soundness in defence that bodes well for the immediate future, with Fincham strong and assertive and giving McAdams no scope at all.

In fact, the Rangers inside-forwards achieved little against Gibson, whose distribution was patchy, and Reid, and the only real worry came occasionally from Roger Morgan, who caused Barton some anxiety, though the right-back was efficient enough.

From Jardine there was a hard, enthusiastic approach that enabled him to come through with colours flying, and Tinsley did everything that was required of him with complete confidence.

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

Q P R: Springett; P Brady, Taylor; Hazell, R Brady, Keen; I Morgan, Bedford, McAdams, Collins, R. Morgan. Referee: H. P. Hackney, Barnsley. Attendance 3,998.

"A glimmer of hope showed for Luton in this display of fighting football against a faded-looking Rangers. Said manager George Martin "I think we showed a lot more method and determination, but I am afraid we may run out of time."

"Maybe Rangers made their biggest tactical error when they decided to omit Stuart Leary from the six forwards named. In his Charlton past Luton have been sitting ducks for his subtlety, and a ball player of his ability might well have proved a match winner in the mudheap conditions."—"Sunday Express."

"If Luton continue to show the determination they did in this game then they can still escape the drop to Division IV. It was their first win since January 2, and ended a run of eight matches which had brought only one point."

"There was no doubting the justice of the result. Young Rangers could never get going."—"Sunday Mirror."

"Whether or not this belated Luton revival will enable them to retain their status may be doubtful, but at least on this showing they will not go down without a fight."

"In just over a month their new manager, George Martin, has brought some semblance of constructive ability and fighting spirit to a team that had seemed devoid of both qualities."—"Sunday Telegraph."

"Only the most optimistic Luton supporters will sleep any easier about Town's chances of staying in the Third Division—but while the team show this spirit there is still a hope."

"They were grateful for a gift when 'keepr Springett was baffled by Pleat's floated centre which dipped over his head. But they begged no favours, showing refreshing aggression on a sticky pitch."—"The People."