

Town surprise after making a black beginning to Easter

By CHILTERN

AFTER an Easter which began in the blackest possible style with two home defeats and rounded off by an unexpected victory at Walsall on Monday, the Town stand on the brink of the Fourth Division and it will need a miracle to save them now.

Only a super-optimist would believe in such an eventuality, and if the Town have not conceded defeat yet, the majority of their fans have.

Ironically, after winning here on Good Friday, Walsall lost both their following matches, so that the hoped for home win would have kept the Town well in touch with the situation. Meanwhile, Oldham picked up four points which was rather more than was expected.

Luton Town 1, Walsall 3

Troubles of the Town began in the second minute of their home game with Walsall, when their defence was split by a great pass by Sissons, and Taylor was allowed to pick his spot for his centre.

Waiting for it was the unmarked CLARKE, and he had the easiest task in the world to give the Saddlers a morale boosting first goal.

Even so, the Town managed to get off the hook because five minutes later PHILLIPS headed them level from a free kick by Barton, and, for a short period they looked as if that goal had settled them.

However, it did not last, chiefly because there was not the forward power to upset Walsall's well-drilled defence, and prospects of another goal did not look particularly bright.

With Hodgkisson in a deep-lying role and Clarke acting as the spearhead, Walsall's attack was altogether the more dangerous, and there was not a great deal of surprise when CLARKE put them back into the lead in the 26th minute.

DID NOT MEET THE BALL

Too often the Town's defence was guilty of hesitation, and there was also too much backing away when the situation was crying out for players to go in to meet the ball.

There was a period when tempers became frayed, but the referee was firm and things calmed down after McMorran had had his name taken.

When the second half began there was some preliminary skirmishing by the Town, but Carling's only serious task was to save full length from Harber.

Other than that, there just was not the promise of goals in a Town attack that lacked cohesion and accuracy in approach.

Long before Walsall's third goal came 14 minutes from the end from TAYLOR, the home fans had become resigned to disastrous defeat.

That there should be such a lack of determination in certain departments on an all important occasion such as this was a major surprise, and it was a pretty shabby display to put on before over 9,000 people, the biggest League gate since mid-September.

Never could the defence be said to be in command because Fincham could never hold Clarke who beat him consistently, even in the air and the dangerous Taylor was too much for Barton.

Nor was Gibson in much better form, and that left Jardine as the one nearest his best, though there was some useful work by Reid, and Tinsley certainly could not be blamed for the goals.

Forward, it was a story of indecision and lack of the basic build-up of attacks primarily because neither O'Rourke nor Riddick made much impression on the game.

Much the same could be said of Pleat, and Harber carried far more potential threat while the fact that Phillip spent so much time among his half-backs was a matter for wonderment in the circumstances.

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

WALSALL: Carling, Gregg, Harris, Sissons, Bennett, Atthey, Satchwell, Clarke, Hodgkinson, McMorran, Taylor.

Referee: R. Tinkler, Boston
Attendance: 9,353.