

DETERMINED TOWN SHOOK WALSALL

WALSALL 0, LUTON T. 1

THIS saved the Town from a completely blank holiday and it was scant reward for the great fight they put up for them to hear minutes after the finish that Oldham had secured the point that will almost certainly push the Town into the Fourth Division.

Conditions were dreadful, with a strong wind, against which Walsall chose to kick, strangely enough, on winning the toss and blinding snow and hailstorms for most of the match.

From the start, the Town set about their job in workmanlike style and might have had an early lead because a low cross by Bramwell just eluded Riddick.

Play tended to be rough at times and there were several free kicks for fouls against the Town, following which, Harber and Atthey were spoken to by the referee.

With 32 minutes gone, the Town, who had been finding difficulty in judging the pace of their passes in the wind, suddenly broke away to take the lead.

Carling had to push for a corner a header by Harber and, from the kick, the ball fell loose to PHILLIPS who hit it into the net off the inside of the post.

There was more heavy tackling after this and Bramwell, after a late challenge that floored Satchwell, had his name taken.

Towards half-time, there was some Walsall pressure but, helped by some good saves by Tinsley, the Town retained their lead.

Curiously, when the second half began, the wind changed direction, but there was pressure by Walsall that gave Tinsley plenty of opportunity to show his considerable prowess.

Then the Town took up the running and Riddick, who had been having a most unproductive time against Bennett, had two scoring attempts cleared off the goal-line by Gregg, with Carling beaten.

As time went on, the Town withdrew to defensive positions but, apart from Taylor who forced Tinsley to make two great saves, their forwards did not look dangerous.

GIBSON THE BEST CENTRE-HALF

Gibson was the third player to occupy the centre-half position during the weekend and was the most successful because he cut down most effectively the danger from Clarke, who caused such damage at Luton and even matched this tall youngster in the air.

But the defence as a whole, put up a splendid resistance with McBain sticking to the difficult task of keeping tabs on the lively Taylor and Bramwell coming along with another display reminiscent of the days when he was an automatic choice.

Lownds, too, was strong and assertive and Reid, tackling hard and marshalling his defensive forces, had a splendid game.

Apart from the period during which he might have had two or three goals, Riddick was nearly always beaten to the ball by Bennett and McKechnie had a poor sort of match, too.

Phillips again tended to lie deep, but this paid off in the second half when he made some timely clearances but, as a general rule, it seems obvious that his role is up front.

There was plenty of effort from Harber and Whittaker which was mainly confined to chasing because they did not have the opportunity for a clear run very often.

WALSALL: Carling; Gregg, Harris; Sissons, Bennett, Atthey; Satchwell, Clarke, Hodgkisson, Ford, Taylor.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; McBain, Bramwell; Lownds, Gibson, Reid; Harber, Phillips, Riddick, McKechnie, Whittaker.

Referee: J Mitchell, Prescott.
Attendance: 7,482.