

Whittaker the only one on the target

By Chiltern

65/66

LUTON TOWN 1, WREXHAM 0

MYSTERY of this match was why it did not produce an almost unprecedented crop of goals because both teams created innumerable chances, only to fail when it came to providing the finish.

Town manager George Martin's summing up was, "We should have won by 6-3," but that was perhaps an under-estimate and Wrexham could very well have had three goals in the first half.

However, the manager took comfort from the thought that the chances had at least been made and added, "We will not always miss them like that," and there is some logic in that.

In the end, the Town maintained their 100 per cent home record, but only just, and their hopes looked rather grim in the opening minutes when the speedy visiting wingers, Webber and Campbell caused a tremendous amount of trouble.

In the first minute Reid headed away off the goal-line from the outside-right and Rivers did likewise with a cross from the other wing.

Both teams showed a deal of enthusiasm and the Wrexham defence had their worries especially when Whittaker crossed the ball dangerously and Stark shot over when it came back.

For neither side, though, did things go right in front of goal and, in quick succession, a good opportunity was missed at either end, with Gibson slicing the ball wide and Harding missing his kick completely when sent clean away.

Then, in the 14th minute, the first of what seemed likely to be a number of goals arrived and a well-taken effort it was.

WHITTAKER MADE NO MISTAKE

Reid made a shrewd cross-field pass and WHITTAKER was on the spot to meet it on the volley and drive it firmly wide of Fleet.

However, the scoring spree was not to be fulfilled even though openings still cropped up and O'Rourke and Rioch each missed one, while Webber failed badly when left well placed following a free kick.

The general pattern continued in the second half when, however, the Town had more of a grip, particularly in defence and less was seen of the young, but lively Wrexham forwards.

Rioch was again off the mark following good work by O'Rourke who, in his turn, had a drive smothered by the oncoming Fleet.

For some unaccountable reason, Wrexham turned more markedly to the strictly negative tactics of the operation of the offside trap when their emphasis should have been on all-out attack.

Admittedly they caught the

Town forwards frequently, but it scarcely helped their cause.

Eighteen minutes from the end we had a substitution when Jones (H) received a facial injury in a collision with his own goalkeeper and Powell came on. There was something of a rally by Wrexham after that, but the easiest chance of all was missed by Stark from Whittaker's centre.

Slender though the Town's lead was, it did not seem to be in real danger, although in the last minute Tinsley had to grab the ball on the line from Webber.

Most impressive department of the Town team was the middle line where Reid plainly welcomed his return to a wing-half position and turned in his best performance of the season.

Not far behind was Rivers, who has gained remarkably in maturity, and Moore again did well, despite a tendency to run with the ball.

Both Thomson and Jardine had a worrying time in the first half, but settled down better afterwards, and Tinsley accomplished what there was to do competently.

All eyes, of course, were on O'Rourke, who did not make the spectacular return he was obviously hoping for though, with a bit of luck, he might have had a couple of goals and his quickness off the mark made him require close marking, which Mielczarek duly did.

Of the two transfer seeking forwards, Whittaker was the more successful and there was a better service from the left wing than in recent matches.

Making his home debut, Stark impressed with his hard and clever work in midfield, but was awry with his finishing, as was Rioch who had a rather disappointing sort of game and Gibson did not give a real indication that he can solve the right wing problem.

LUTON TOWN. — Tinsley; Thomson, Jardine; Reid, Rivers, Moore; Gibson, Stark, O'Rourke, Rioch, Whittaker.

WREXHAM. — Fleet; Jones (H) (Powell), Lucas; Holland, Mielczarek, Jones (E); Webber, Griffiths, Harding, Lambourne, Campbell.

Referee. — R. Tinkler, Boston. Attendance.—4,780.