

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

HIT BY INJURIES, BUT TOWN WON WELL

Recall of Woods added stability to defence

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 4, HALIFAX 1

MORE goals to the Town, to bring their total to 17 in their last four home matches, assured them of two points, which came comfortably enough in the end.

That the performance was not quite so satisfying as some of the previous ones was due to a combination of circumstances.

Most important was an injury in the first 10 minutes to French, and one of less severity to Read, and a contributory factor to the fact that the Town did not sparkle quite so much was the adoption of spoiling tactics by Halifax.

Some of the tackling was fierce, to say the least, but the injury to French could not be attributed to this because it occurred in a collision with his team-mate, Thomson, as both were completely absorbed in their determination to get the ball.

After later spending five minutes off the field, French returned, but was not allowed to resume for the second half as he had concussion in addition to bruising of the arm and Rivers came on as substitute.

READ strained a knee ligament in a tackle which slowed him down afterwards, but he still remained mobile enough to head the Town's fourth goal after 78 minutes from a centre by Rivers.

Scoring was opened after 10 minutes by MOORE who certainly makes no mistake when he receives a clear shot for goal with his left foot near the edge of the penalty area.

BEAUTY FROM WHITTAKER

A header by O'ROURKE increased the lead after 26 minutes and the third goal was a beauty scored by WHITTAKER after 61 minutes with a rising shot from an angle which went in off the inside of the far post.

Allowed off the hook in the closing stages, Halifax might have scored before they finally did so through BALMER who rushed the ball through after Tinsley had stopped one-handed a drive from Fidler who, along with Taylor, was the visitors' danger man.

Despite the problems that confronted them, the Town were always the superior team and Halifax could not match their skill in their midfield build-up.

O'Rourke was always dangerous despite some close shadowing and Whittaker caused the Halifax right flank quite a lot of trouble.

There was some excellent work by Fry in the first half, but he tended to spoil the effect at times by being too deliberate, particularly in his passing which could have been more crisp. Once again, Read needed careful watching in front of goal and he continues to perform a very useful role.

WOODS BROUGHT STABILITY

Without doubt, the recall of Woods to centre-half brought more stability to the middle of the defence where his experience was welcome and, on this showing, he can become the dominating player the Town need in this position.

Reid and Moore never allowed the opposing inside-forwards to make much of a contribution and although Thomson and Jardine had some trouble at times in keeping tabs on the Halifax wingers, they came through

creditably and Tinsley was again in most impressive form.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; Thomson, Jardine; Reid, Woods, Moore; French (Rivers), Read, O'Rourke, Fry, Whittaker.

HALIFAX TOWN: Raynor; Russell, Brier; Smith, Pickering, Lee; Taylor, Atkins, Balmer, McMillan, Fidler.

Referee: H. J. New, Portsmouth. Attendance: 7,879.

"Halifax have taken only one away point and they scarcely looked like adding to their quota in a robust, spoiling game. Not that this was one of Luton's best performances. Their forwards didn't show the punch of recent home games.

"There was some excuse, however, for early on right-winger Graham French was shaken in a collision with his own right-back Thomson, and at half-time it was found he was suffering from concussion. Alan Rivers substituted." — "Sunday Mirror".

"Without ever reaching the brilliance of which they have shown themselves capable, Luton exposed the weaknesses of this moderate Halifax team and maintained their impressive home record.

"They did not sparkle so brightly because they were deprived of the services of French early on. He missed the whole of the second half. Rivers came on as a substitute, but the balance of the front line was badly affected." — "Sunday Telegraph".

"The steam-roller type of progress that Luton are making at home continued, but not in the same sparkling way as in some recent matches, mainly because of injuries.

"First Graham French collided with colleague Bobby Thomson and was ruled out at half-time with concussion. Alan Rivers, normally a centre-half came in at inside-right. Then Tony Read strained his knee ligaments and his effectiveness was curtailed for more than half the match." — "Sunday Express".

"Matt Woods proved that Luton manager George Martin was right to bring him back into League action after nine weeks. He gave a fine display against dashing Halifax leader Mike Balmer. Woods also marshalled the defence with great efficiency and seems to have solved one of Luton's most pressing problems.

"Luton still look good bets for promotion, but they must guard against this take-it-easy attitude in the closing stages." — "The People".
