

Town value for draw at Aldershot

By ONLOOKER

ALDERSHOT 2, LUTON TOWN 2

TOWN'S League Cup tie at Aldershot on Wednesday night may at times have been lacking in footballing skills, but there was no shortage of drama for a rather meagre crowd of 3,677.

They saw Aldershot take the lead in the first minute, a remarkable goal by Whittaker to level matters two minutes before half-time, and a dramatic last 15 minutes in which Jardine and Rafferty scored, and Thear hit the angle of the woodwork.

The sum total of all this is that the Town now get ground advantage for the replay which will take place at Kenilworth Road on Monday evening with a 7.30 p.m. start.

Hero of the hour for them was goalkeeper Tony Read who pulled off some daring saves in the last 15 minutes when everything but the kitchen-sink was being hurled at the Town's packed defence by Aldershot.

He received a painful kick on the back in saving at the feet of Maloy who was clean through, midway through the second half.

There was little doubt to my mind that the Town shaped as the better footballing side throughout, and it was unfortunate that lapses in defence should present Aldershot with two goals of the simplest variety.

It was a tragic start for them when straight from the kick off Aldershot swept down the field for McAnearney to centre across the face of the goal.

The cross caught the Town defence off guard, and RAFFERTY headed past Read from close range, for a first minute goal.

ALDERSHOT FUDDLED BY TOWN PLAN

Before the Town could recover Aldershot were back on the attack again with Davies sending through Howarth dangerously, but the inside-forward was beaten by Read.

Then as the Town got over their shock we saw them move on to the attack for the first time when Pleat on the left centred to Thear who positioned himself well but failed to connect properly with his head and Godfrey was glad to save.

Misjudgement by Howarth cost Aldershot the chance of increasing their lead when he capitalised on a weak back-pass by Rivers, but instead of shooting, elected to pull the ball back to Howfield and the defence were able to cover up and concede a corner.

The Town were awaiting their chances, and one came when there was a mistake by Davies which let Thear through, but his shot over the goalkeeper's head was not hard enough, and Godfrey managed to parry it.

Thear, making his debut for for the Town, was always

worrying Aldershot's rear-guard with his eagerness, and he clashed with Godfrey again in chasing a centre by Whittaker, but the goalkeeper's fist got there first.

Aldershot did not quite know what to make of the Town tactics and they were again careless in allowing Pleat to come through and make a shot which beat Godfrey only for Walker to clear, and Jardine, backing up, sent just wide.

LINK-MEN DID LOT OF WORK

As the half progressed, the Town defence settled comfortably into command, and the midfield link-men, Riddick, Rioch and Whittaker, came into their own with some useful prompting.

More Aldershot indecision gave the Town a corner, taken by Pleat, and from it Rioch was beaten by numbers as he tried to force a way through.

Although the Town were now attacking more, they were



not having the best of luck in their finishing. This was again the case when King won a corner which Rivers came up to meet with his head, and Aldershot were a little fortunate to be able to scramble the ball away.

Rafferty squandered a great opportunity for Aldershot at the other end, when indecision by Slough let him through with only Read to beat. But like Howfield before him, he preferred a pass instead of a shot and the chance was lost.

THE CHEEKIEST OF GOALS

The Town's equaliser in the 43rd minute, was one of the cheekiest, and best executed goals, I have seen in a long time. It came when Whittaker came up to take a free kick just outside the area on the right of the field.

There was a pause while he waved frantically to Jardine to move up by the far post, and then with goalkeeper Godfrey and the whole of the defence standing positioned for danger from Jardine on the left, WHITTAKER calmly placed the ball directly into the unguarded top corner of the net.

The goal was greeted with complete silence from a stunned crowd, and the only movement for a couple of seconds was the joyous celebrations of the Town players.

In the second half it was again a case of Aldershot doing most of the pressing, with the Town content to cover up and bide their time.

Read came into the picture to push away a header from Rafferty from a long cross by McAnearney, and then Dodson came into the centre to make a shot which was just over the top.

TOWN TAKE THE LEAD

Another free kick by Whittaker saw the Town on the offensive again with Riddick winning a corner. Godfrey saved King's corner, but could only push it out to Rioch who raced in to send one of his old screaming left-foot drives just over the top.

As the game went into the last 30 minutes, the Town's pressure increased. Pleat worked his way through cleverly and centred for Rioch who met it first time, but was off target, then King

presented the energetic taker with a chance of a ground shot which through the defence curved wide of a post.

Slough headed away from Howfield during some concerted Aldershot pressure the expense of a corner. Read touched out the corner. Dodson and then pulled another good save from winger's shot.

At the other end Godfrey drew applause for a spectacular save from a free kick taken by Pleat. However, was soon the turn of Read to come into violent action again, this time in saving shot from Rafferty at point blank range.

An injury to Dawes led to the Town taking the lead in the 79th minute. After receiving attention, Dawes went to be replaced by substitute Campbell. Before Campbell could get into position on the field, Slough had taken the free kick quickly just inside the Aldershot half, and swung it across the goalmouth where Riddick missed it by inches.

It ran on to JARDINE who had moved up anticipating the cross, and he crashed it firm and true past a helpless Godfrey.

RAFFERTY RESCUED ALDERSHOT

It looked as if this would be sufficient to carry the Town safely into the next round, but Aldershot hurled themselves into furious last-minute action, and in the 83rd minute were on terms again when RAFFERTY pushed in the ball from point-blank range from a short centre by Howarth.

Jardine should have cut out the original centre from the right, but the ball bounced awkwardly for him and he was left stranded.

There was a hectic last few minutes for the Town after this with Read making a great save from McAnearney. Then Howfield split the Town defence with a through ball to Howarth, who brought it under control inside the penalty area but shot straight at Read.

Even then all was not over because the Town almost snatched a winner when King sent Thear racing through. He appeared to be nudged off the ball as he shot, and his great drive hit the angle of the woodwork.

ALDERSHOT: Godfrey, Davies, Renwick; McAnearney, Walker, Dawes (Campbell), Dodson, Howarth, Rafferty, Howfield, Maloy.

LUTON TOWN: Read, Slough, Jardine; Riddick, Rivers, Moore; Pleat, King, Thear, Rioch, Whittaker, Substitute: Grieve.

Referee: A. R. C. Wells (Bromley).

Attendance: 3,677.