

NO GOALS FOR THIRD TIME IN A ROW

By Chiltern

NEWPORT COUNTY 2, LUTON TOWN 0

THIS was the Town's sixth match without a victory, but what must be causing even more concern is the fact that it was the third consecutive game in which they had failed to score, something which points firmly enough to the source of the present trouble.

In an attempt to hold the young, forceful Newport side, the Town adopted a 4-2-4 policy which, if it had succeeded in earning a point, would have been applauded but, like everything else, it had to stand or fall on the result achieved.

Many teams these days are using these tactics with some success but, to me, it does smack of negative play and, even more important, in my view, it does have the effect of giving the opposition the initiative from the start and that, surely, cannot be beneficial.

Yet, had their luck really been in and, in fairness, I must say that they are having very little of this commodity at the moment, the Town might have hung on to the point they sought.

There were two instances when only inches deprived them of an equaliser to the goal Newport scored through FRASER after 27 minutes. This came when the Town defence and, Riddick in particular, seemed to be caught in two minds over the effectiveness of the offside trap and the inside-right nipped in quickly to head past Read.

RIOCH MISSED BY INCHES

First slice of ill-luck for the Town came just before half-time when Rioch made a cracking drive, meeting the ball on the half volley and missed the angle of the woodwork by no more than six inches, with Beswick completely beaten.

Then, in the second half when the Town had a good spell, partly because they went in to meet the ball, Whittaker crashed the ball against the face of the bar, with Beswick again hopelessly placed.

Had either of those shots counted, as they richly deserved to, then there might have been a different story because, perhaps more than anything else, the Town, at the present juncture, require a restoration of confidence in the shape of faith in themselves in front of goal.

To set against that misfortune was the fact that Smith, early on, had smacked the ball against a post, and there were several good saves by Read, principally from Smith and Fraser.

For 20 minutes of the second half, the Town gave quite as much as they received, but almost their last chance came when Rioch made a perfect centre from the dead line which Thear could not reach and neither could Pleat and he slid in an attempt to make contact.

GAP WAS PRESENTED

Then, a quarter of an hour from the end, came the second Newport goal when even the two centre-halves policy of the Town could not prevent a gap down the middle through which MORGAN streamed. Read came out, but it was always a forlorn hope and the

in the grip of Rathbone, who is rated among the best centre-halves in Division IV.

In the system, the middle two were Conboy and Slough, who did a fair enough job, with the former, obviously having pushed behind him his disappointing debut, now revealing the strength in the tackle and the distribution ability that Town officials noted when they saw him playing for Chelsea Reserves.

Slough, too, was rugged and hard-fighting, but the outstanding member of the defence was Moore, who came in with hard, uninhibited tackles time and again, to suggest that centre-half may well be his final position.

Riddick was not so forthright as the occasion demanded, but Thomson and Jardine did well enough, as did Read, and this was not a defensive failure by any means.

Rather did the fault lie up front where far too many passes of the short variety were made to achieve a limited amount of ground—sometimes no ground at all—and only Rioch consistently tried to get the ball forward.

More than that, too high a percentage of what shooting there was, came from the 25 yards range mark, most of which was doomed to failure and which, perhaps emphasised more than anything else that restoration of confidence, so far as goal-scoring is concerned, is the prime need.

NEWPORT COUNTY: Beswick; Williams, Bird; Woods, Rathbone, Rowland; Smith, Fraser, Jones, Hill, Morgan. Substitute: Hignett.

LUTON TOWN: Read; Thomson, Jardine; Conboy, Riddick, Moore; Pleat, Slough, Thear, Rioch, Whittaker.

Referee: P. R. Walters, Bridgewater.

Attendance: 3,451.