

TOWN SUFFER A BRUISING SHAKING

69/70

LUTON TOWN 2, SHREWSBURY 2

THERE was a distinct jolt for the Town this afternoon when they came within five minutes of losing an unbeaten home League record which has now spanned 29 matches.

With the shock from Orient which was disposed of in the end, and a distinct shaking from Halifax, the Town are learning fast the Division III facts of life.

Certainly they are discovering that some of the lesser regarded teams are not coming here merely for the ride, but are determined to sell themselves dearly in the cause of avoiding defeat.

Not that I would describe Shrewsbury's tactics, particularly in the first half, as conducive to football as we would like it to be.

Some of their tactics were dubious in the extreme, and in the whole 90 minutes they were penalised for fouls 22 times—against six by the Town.

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For the whole of the first 45 minutes it was mainly a story of complete frustration for the Town attack, who saw several efforts miss by inches, were prevented from scoring on other occasions by close marking, and generally speaking were over-anxious in front of goal.

Possibly this stemmed from the fact that they knew only too well that any attempt to control the ball would leave them open to a hard tackle.

Even so, with the pressure they exerted, the Town should have done better than arrive at the interval with the scores still level.

Suddenly the Town found themselves in arrears, when Slough inadvertently put into his own net, but the balance was adjusted immediately afterwards by Collins.

Shrewsbury in the second half played more skillfully than they had earlier, and might have taken the lead before they did 13 minutes from the end.

At that point the Town's record looked as good as scuppered but they showed great determination as they fought back and Slough saved the day with only five minutes left.

From the result point of view it was a disappointment and it is as well that the away form so far is proving an insurance against the occasional slip which must come at home.

Today, the strikers, MacDonald and Tees, did not quite come off, although both had some near misses and each suffered from the close marking.

There was quite a reasonable service from Collins and French on the wings, and again Allen was untiring in mid-field, where Keen's distribution was not always as accurate as it might have been.

In the back four, there were occasional spells when all did not look well, and doubtless manager Alec Stock is going to want to know how that gap was left when Roberts was allowed to score the second goal for Shrewsbury.

Other than that there was not a great deal to really worry about, but the Town must find the answer to teams like this who come determined in the first place to keep a point and then hope for what might come later.

And that means making the fullest use of the half chances that come early on, and that was not done today.

Attendance: 15,396.