

DRAMATIC WIN FOR BRAVE HILLINGDON

HILLINGDON 2 LUTON TOWN 1

THE TOWN found themselves on the receiving end of a first-rate sensation when they made their exit from the FA Cup at Hillingdon this afternoon, and in my opinion they got just about what they deserved.

There was tacit agreement on this from chairman Tony Hunt immediately the final whistle went, when he said, "Hillingdon deserved to win," and that was just about the measure of it.

Just what went wrong with the Town's tactical scheme is something which at this moment completely baffles me.

What they obviously went out for was an early goal, which duly came their way, and why on earth they did not concentrate on intensifying their efforts from the 9th minute, when Tees brilliantly headed them into the lead, is incomprehensible.

Obviously, Hillingdon were rattled at falling behind so quickly, but instead of crowding on the pressure the Town largely based their tactics on those which have become so familiar away from home.

Instead of trying to improve the vital advantage they held they were content to contain the home team in midfield.

That is always a chancy business, especially in a Cup-tie. Yet there was no real hint of disaster until two minutes from half-time when Hillingdon, who had been showing increasing confidence, suddenly struck.

EQUALISING GOAL

Ironically, a former Luton player, Mick Fairchild, had a hand in the equaliser, which arrived two minutes from half-time when right-half Reeve shot through a crowd of players.

Even then the danger signals were not really flying because they all believed that eventually the non-League opposition would be worn down.

But it was Hillingdon who came out the more strongly at the start of the second half, and the Town was shaken to the core when Townend who had come on as a substitute for Carter midway through the first half, headed them in front after a bad mistake by Davie, who did not have a happy game.

With half an hour left the Town produced what was supposed to be their trump card by throwing in Harrison, and bringing off MacDonald, who had been having a thin time. But Harrison could not work wonders, nor could French when switched to the other wing to face the veteran Langley.

In fact, French found himself closely marked throughout and was rarely given a clear run at goal. With MacDonald, and for most of the game Tees, shut out of the game, this meant that the Town attack was a very toothless affair indeed.

Whether the Town deserved a draw was another matter, and I give credit to Hillingdon for their courage in surviving a bad start, working themselves back into the game, and using the ball so well.

There may be some who feel that dismissal at this stage is no bad thing, in view of their promotion aspirations. This is a view to which I certainly do not subscribe, nor I fancy will any responsible member of the club.

Certainly it was a desperately disappointing performance by the Town, and one can only hope that this is not going to affect confidence in the immediate future. Estimated attendance : 9,000.