

WHEN a team is running for promotion, as the Town have been, and indeed still are, they are expected to dispose comfortably of the lowliest placed sides.

Yet, in meetings with three of those who seem doomed to relegation, they have managed just one point.

No wonder that manager Alec Stock, usually the

By ERIC PUGH

most equable of men, was absolutely fuming after this latest setback at Holker Street on Saturday.

Before then, Barrow had won exactly three League games out of 30, and Stock described the Town's display as "a disgrace to the club."

More than that, he said that changes in the present set-up were imperative, and speedily implemented his words into action by his choice of the reserve team for the match with Chelsea on Monday.

That could be looked upon as the blueprint for the senior side of the immediate future, and meant that the axe fell on Keen, Collins, Nicholl and Allen.

That three of these formed the middle three against Barrow left no doubt on which department Stock was laying the main blame.

To me, the lack of domination, pace, and an inability to accelerate, especially in the case of Keen, has been most marked recently.

Out of touch

Collins, too, has not been decisive enough, and Allen has inclined to be much out of touch since Christmas.

It was the failure of this trio to get to grips with Barrow in midfield that contributed to this defeat, while Nicholl appears to be on the point of paying the penalty for tending to merge into the background, rather than being completely assertive.

Yet, on the whole, I thought the back four showed more determination and were more rugged in their tackling than at Bristol, but this did not prevent the hard-running Barrow side from being dangerous.

It took three fine saves by Davie, who had a good match, to keep the Town in the position from which they could snatch a lead after 54 minutes.

Then MacDonald, who along with the closely marked Tees received few workable opportunities, found a way through, and Heyes, well out of his goal, made a point-blank save.

However, he could not hang on to the ball which rebounded to **FRENCH**, who coolly lobbed it over the goalkeeper's head and into the net.

Let off the hook

A really confident side with complete faith in itself would have used such a position as a spring-board. Instead, the Town let Barrow off the hook to the extent of their going ahead by scoring twice between the 68th and 71st minutes.

First **MULVANEY** just reached a through pass from Hartland before Davie, and then **MORRIN** ran on to a pulled-back ball from Mulvaney to send it whistling into the net through a crowd of players.

Although Branston was introduced for Allen nine minutes from the end as a last desperate measure, there was never much prospect that the Town would rescue anything from this wreck, and so it proved, because Barrow simply did not run out of steam or lose their speed and determination.

BARROW: Heyes; Dean, Cooper; Noble, Arrow-smith, Hartland; Garbett, Morrin, Ledger, Mulvaney, Ellison, Substitute: Knox.

LUTON TOWN: Davie; Ryan, Bannister, Keen, Nicholl, Slough; MacDonald, Collins, Tees, Allen (Branston), French.

Referee: V. James, York

Attendance: 3,843.