

NOW TOWN KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

BOLTON WANDERERS 4, LUTON TOWN 2

WHEN a team steps up a division, almost inevitably there has to be a settling down period, especially when new players are involved, and I fancy that at Burnden Park on Saturday the Town met with a very fair sample of what they can expect in away matches this season.

While Bolton do not have the appearance of being a team to set things alight at the top of the table, and appearances can be deceptive, they certainly proved to be hard and resolute, though, in the end, they were maybe a little flattered by the margin in their favour.

From the Town point of view, there was much to commend in the quality of their play during the first

which Starling probably saw late but, in any case, he was tardy in making his dive.

So, at half-time, the Town were undeservedly a goal down and, in fact, there was a body of opinion that justice would have been served had the score been the other way around.

Prospered

For the first few minutes after the interval, the Town again prospered, but then Bolton, possibly because of greater strength in midfield and, certainly, because they were better served on the wings, began to get on top.

Fortune smiled upon the Town when Byrom hit the

and the need for trainers on the field was minimal.

Afterwards, Manager Alec Stock and coach Jimmy Andrews were to be seen in solemn conclave outside the dressing room and neither was very responsive to questions.

"I didn't feel very good about that one. We gave away goals and I am not quite sure at this moment where it went wrong," said Stock.

Andrews described the concession of some of the goals as "scandalous" but he added, "Things often turn out to be a bit difficult at first when you have new players in the side."

Early days

These are early days in which to talk about changes, but I doubt very much whether the line-up we saw on this occasion will turn out to be the regular one.

One thing that struck me was that the Town were too liberally provided with front-runners and insufficient strength in midfield to meet the challenge in a hard away match.

The arrangement worked well enough at the start, but

tomed left-wing position, never seemed to get into the game.

On the other wing, Jimmy Ryan suggested that with adequate service, he could be a menace but, unfortunately, he did not get it. To a large extent, MacDonald was left waging a lone battle down the middle and the bulk of the scoring efforts came from him.

Hunt tamed

Player most near to his best form was Keen who did a tremendous amount of work in the middle, where Hoy also covered a lot of ground.

While Branston never gave the appearance of being assured or in command, there was the salient fact that Roger Hunt never posed the slightest threat and that must go to the credit of the centre-half. There was some rugged determination by Moore who, however, was kept at full stretch and had as much as he could do.

As for the rest of the defensive arrangement, I must confess that the reasoning behind the playing of Slough on the right and John Ryan on the opposite flank, rather baffles me. All last season, Ryan was consistent at right-back while Slough is well used to the right flank.

At all events, the upshot was that each was kept much on tenderhooks by two lively wingers, Wharton and Taylor, who was the more dangerous of the two.

And, in the fact that they were taunted to such an extent by orthodox wing play, may hold a lesson for the Town.

Starling, I feel, was not blameless for the defeat, and he does seem vulnerable when the ball comes down the middle and there is a split second decision to make.

BOLTON WANDERERS — Clarke; Ritson, Farrimond; Williams, Hulme, Rimmer; Wharton, Byrom, Hunt, Greaves, Taylor. Substitute: Jones.

LUTON TOWN — Starling; Slough, Ryan (John); Hoy, Branston, Moore; Ryan (Jimmy), Givens, MacDonald, Keen, Busby. Substitute: Bannister.

Referee: J. H. Yates, Redditch. Attendance: 11,350.

By ERIC PUGH

half, and there is no doubt that they suffered a shocking piece of luck in the 18th minute when a penalty was awarded against Slough for hands.

Nothing will persuade me that he had the slightest chance of getting out of the way of the ball hit hard from close to him, and there was certainly no intention to handle.

Despite protests, referee Yates, a late substitute for Clive Thomas, of Treorchy, who had to stand down because of a leg injury, pointed to the spot and WHARTON did the rest in expert fashion.

Sad blow

For a team desperately anxious to create a good impression, this was a sad blow, but the Town fought back and MacDonald who had earlier brought Clarke full length, again tested the goalkeeper, this time from close in.

However, justice was served after 26 minutes when KEEN from outside the penalty area, shot through a crowd of players and the ball went in just inside the post with Clarke probably unsighted.

A similar set of circumstances prevailed when Bolton went ahead again eight minutes from half-time. From what must have been verging on 30 yards, GREAVES made a low shot

inside of the far post and the ball rebounded straight into the hands of Starling.

Soon afterwards however, some slack marking let in WHARTON whose cross shot went in just inside the far post.

That was an unpromising position for the Town, but they hit back, and after MacDonald had sent a header wide, Keen very nearly repeated his scoring feat of the first half but, this time, Clarke saw the ball early.

With 12 minutes left, the Town's faint, remaining hope disappeared when Starling and Branston got in a mix-up in a challenge by Byrom and the the home forward had his shirt pulled by Branston. A penalty it was, and this time WHARTON'S shot went just under the bar.

Expertise

A measure of respectability was brought to the score-line in the last minute when Jimmy Ryan was crudely brought down by Farrimond and MacDonald was given the chance to demonstrate again his expertise from the penalty spot.

Apart from penalties, a player on each side was booked, John Ryan and Ritson, but, although the tackling was hard and often relentless, there was nothing very vicious about the play



MIKE KEEN

tended to become overstretched when the pressure was on and, on this evidence, there is a case for an extra midfield player.

Givens began as if he would be the match-winner, but was tamed thoroughly, while Busby in the unaccus-