

Now the goals begin to flow

AND TOWN NOTCH FIRST WIN



LUTON TOWN 3,
MIDDLESBROUGH 2

AFTER the extraordinary difficulty they experienced in finding the net in their early games, goals are beginning to flow for the Town, and they removed that ominous blank from their "win" column after a hard tussle with Middlesbrough on Saturday.

That all their three strikers should score is perhaps significant, and it was all the more satisfying that two of them, Halom and Wainwright, opened their accounts for the club.

By ERIC
PUGH

For Wainwright, it has been a longish, patient struggle to gain recognition, and it was expected that, when it came, it would be in the midfield position, and not as a front-runner.

However, circumstances have dictated otherwise, and Wainwright really came into his own during the second half, when he was deployed on the right wing. There, he found more room and scope than when he was more or less anchored to the middle striking role.

Proof of the pudding is in the eating, and not only did WAINWRIGHT score the vital second goal, a simple enough affair, it must be admitted, but he laid on a brilliant through pass for ANDERSON to more or less clinch it.

Taken coolly

Anderson took the opportunity coolly, and although Whigham's dive enabled him to touch the ball with his finger tips, he could not divert it sufficiently.

That came six minutes from the end to make the score 3-1, and Wainwright had struck nine minutes after the interval, when he squeezed the ball inside the near post after the defence had blundered in trying to clear a cross from Anderson.

Wainwright's success really turned the game upside down, because Middlesbrough, off to a good start with a goal in eleven minutes, gave an impressive first half showing.

That goal was really one of several "gifts" which the game produced, because Shanks, under some pressure, elected to pass back to Read, but found Downing intercepting and HICKTON did the rest from a rebound.

A shout ?

This action by Shanks was so out of character because, as I have noted before, he believes in safety first tactics when danger threatens, and the inference must be that someone shouted to him to make the back pass. Another defensive mistake

initially by Boam and then by Whigham, saw a centre by Slough reach HALOM, who somehow got the ball in from what could be fairly described as an impossible angle.

That was after 17 minutes and, five minutes later, Stiles, who had not been expected to play, limped off with a leg injury, the legacy of an earlier clash with Anderson.

LINE-UP

LUTON TOWN: Read; John Ryan, Shanks; Slough, Nicholl, Moore; Wainwright, Keen, Halom, Givens, Anderson. Sub.: Jimmy Ryan.

MIDDLESBROUGH: Whigham; Craggs, Jones; Stiles (Laidlaw), Boam, Gales; Downing, McMordie, Maddren, Hickton, Vincent. Referee: M. Washer, Bristol. Attendance: 13,001.

A free-kick was given against the England player, against the award of which he protested vehemently, but not sufficiently strongly in the estimation of the referee for his name to go into the book.

Retribution

However, retribution was not far away, because in the 25th minute, Slough and McMordie were booked after tangling, and things which had been hotting up, quietened down perceptibly.

Neither team was disposed to close up its ranks, with the result that chances occurred at either end, and both Anderson and Hickton were distinctly unlucky.

Looking more composed, the Town began the second half with some confidence, and Anderson might have headed them in the lead from Wainwright's copy-book centre, before Wainwright hit the jackpot after 54 minutes.

There might have been a different ending to the story had Downing not shot wide of an open goal when Read made a hash of a goal kick. Basically, Read is having a good season, but does

seem prone to unexpected aberrations, which can be costly.

Despite the fact that there was a short spell when the Town were seemingly content to kick upfield without noticeable attempt or hope at construction, Middlesbrough did not get on top again and Anderson's goal looked like the killer.

However, the visitors came back and MADDREN flicked on a free-kick from Jones to obtain their second with only two minutes left.

So, the Town broke the ice, mainly because they showed the greater capacity for accepting their chances and that is certainly a step in the right direction.

Once again, it was plain just how much improved is the fast, aggressive Anderson, who is certainly benefiting from the way in which Halom is taking the weight.

Having suffered a slightly pulled muscle in training, Halom was not quite so mobile as he might have been but, even so, should not have been caught in an offside position so often as he was in the second half.

For all that, he always demanded a great deal of attention, and that is providing space for the others.

Outstanding

Without any doubt, the outstanding Town player was Nicholl, completely commanding in defence and closely supported by Moore.

Shanks did not allow his early mistake to shake his confidence, and had another good game, while Ryan, detached to a rather unfamiliar role, to cut out Hickton, came through well.

In midfield, Slough, particularly after the interval, was more of a driving force than he has been, though he was sometimes tardy in coming back, and Givens gave his usual 100 per cent display.

That there is some criticism of Keen, I am well aware but on the whole, he does a pretty useful job of linking up in midfield, even though he is inclined to be one-paced.