

BLACK MARKS FOR MR HAYES

A FOUNDRY foreman from Doncaster whose interests include cricket, swimming and motoring almost upset a hugely enjoyable game of football at Luton on Saturday. You probably saw him. He wore a black suit and ran about blowing a whistle.

Both Luton and Rangers, I understand, are giving the referee a thumbs down for his performance. And that's bad. You usually get one point for turning up.

Many of Mr Les Hayes's decisions angered both players and spectators. I found a lot of them quite baffling. But he was right when it came to deciding the match's most crucial issue — the Bowles penalty.

It was given for a trip on Thomas by John Faulkner. Bowles put the ball past Barber as another ball was lobbed into the goalmouth from the crowd.

Bowles, a young gentleman who spoils his talents by the over-use of rude gestures to everyone in sight, scored at the second attempt after thumping the ground in a tantrum.

Later Luton manager Harry Haslam castigated both referee and player. "He should have sent Bowles off for giving V signs at the crowd," he said. "He was inciting a riot."

Sympathetic

"We'd have been in real trouble if the insulted section of the crowd had gone over the top to get him. We'd have had the ground closed and all sorts of things. Bowles was asking for it and the referee should have sent him packing."

"I've seen some referees in my time — but my God. . . ."

Mr Haslam has invited Rangers manager Gordon Jago to Kenilworth Road to look at a video recording of the match before the two decide what to do about the matter.

Mr Jago was sympathetic with Mr Hayes's decision to make Bowles retake their first-half penalty. "It was an unusual situation," he said. "But he had no option. You can't have two balls in play at once. If Stanley had missed the second kick I would have been upset, bloody upset. But I would have had to accept it."

What happened was that some twerp, who had hung on to one of the kick-in balls, tossed it over the Luton crossbar as Bowles scored from the penalty. This is a new one. One answer would be to fence off the area behind the goal. It's happened at other places. One can only hope that it's not a new craze.

The penalty gave the Londoners a point. John Ryan had blasted Luton ahead in the seventh minute and Luton, playing some delightful flowing, intelligent football, looked certs to tick up their first win in the First Division.

Newcover Adrian Alston endeared himself to the Luton fans with a great display of speed, aggression and skill. Still only 24 and costing only £12,500, Luton have got themselves a real bargain in this lad, who has played 40 times for Australia.

Apart from the histrionics

By ROGER DUCKWORTH
Luton Town 1 QPR 1

of Mr Bowles, one black pot on the game was the booking of John Faulkner — his second in two matches.

"What sort of a booking was that?" stormed Mr Haslam afterwards. "It was no more than a good hard tackle. I'll fight it all the way to the top. He's not getting away with that."

Faulkner, who gave another big-hearted performance in the Luton defence, started the season with a two-match suspension. If Luton's appeal fails he needs just one more booking for another enforced holiday.

Booked

Bowles was also booked for an innocuous-looking tussle with Alston and this obviously made the lad even more angry.

But those were just the low points of a fine match. It was a joy to see two sides playing such entertaining football with obvious enjoyment.

Along with Alston, Jimmy Husband was outstanding in Luton's attack. And they had bags of support from an energetic Barry Butlin, who was unfortunate not to score on two occasions.

Alan West had another

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Barber; Shanks, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, John Ryan, Hindson, Husband, Butlin, West, Alston. Sub: Chambers.

QPR: Parkes; Busby, Gillard, Venables, Mancini, Webb, Thomas, Francis, Beck, Bowles, Givens. Sub: Leach.

REFEREE: Mr L. Hayes (Doncaster).

JOHN RYAN (Luton) in 7 minutes.

BOWLES (QPR) in 34 minutes. Pen.

ATTENDANCE: 18,535

superb match in midfield. He is looking a most polished player in the First Division. After his efforts he must have been desperately disappointed to have come off without a win bonus.

Gordon Hindson had perhaps his best match of the season. His probing running and skill on the turn was the start of many a Luton attack. And there was fight in the middle of the field from Peter Anderson.

Don Shanks is at the peak of his form both in defence and when going forward, and Bobby Thomson gave another ageless display at left-back.

John Ryan seems to be enjoying playing in the middle of the back four and, in spite of a couple of misdirected passes, he had a good match.

I felt he was lucky to escape trouble from Mr Hayes after a foul on Bowles, who was not allowed treatment on the pitch. But the referee gave a throw-in.

To my way of thinking it was more of a foul than the tackle by Faulkner on Bowles which earned the booking.

In goal Keith Barber looked in good shape. After ten months in the stiff he is obviously grasping his opportunity with both gloves.

So Luton still have to chase their first win. If they continue to play like this it will not be far away. They will have won a lot of friends with this performance.