

RON FUTCHER HEADS LAST-GASP WINNER TO SHOCK IPSWICH

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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Ipswich 0, Luton 1

THERE IS, I suppose, no such thing as an easy match in the First Division these days, and if Ipswich had not realised it before, they discovered it at Portman Road yesterday.

Poles apart though Ipswich are from Luton in the League table, there was never more than a grubby bootlace between them on the field, and in the end the bottom-of-the-table side won by a goal in the last 30 seconds.

Both teams and everybody else had long since settled for a goal-less draw in what could very likely rate as the worst match of the day.

But with the last seconds ticking away, Aston crossed with his left foot from the right wing and Ron Fletcher climbed up to glance in the crucial header.

Slow handclapped

It was as neat and basic a move as had been made all afternoon, but the Ipswich supporters made no bones about what they thought of their team—and Luton's, too, for that matter.

Bursts of slow handclapping had broken out from time to time, but then as the teams filed from the field, a hail of cushions went skimming down on to the turf, accompanied by a chorus of whistles.

Luton produced what these days is called a "disciplined" performance—meaning, of course, a negative performance. Nothing ventured, nothing lost.

The fact that they also gained both points was more than they deserved. If football is passing back to your own goalkeeper all afternoon, there must have been a lot of people yesterday who decided to watch something else in future.

Buckley, Anderson and Faulkner all did what they were supposed to do, and the bitter truth so far as Ipswich are concerned is that they were not good enough to beat a poor team.

Sometimes that can be caused

by the run of the ball. But apart from a disallowed Johnson "goal," Ipswich did not even create a genuine chance.

The absence of Viljoen, their ideas man in midfield, emphasised their lack of strength in depth, and others, like Whymark, have lost their early-season form. Johnson also needs a decoy for his darting runs.

Happily, Beattie was back with an efficient performance. He was never particularly dominant—but he had an extra responsibility because of the absence of Hunter.

Luton's attack produced little to test Ipswich, but Aston provided the odd neat move and it was appropriate that he should make the only goal of the match.

Ipswich. — Sivell; Burley, Mills, Talbot, Peddelty, Beattie, Osborne, Hamilton, Johnson, Whymark, Lambert.

Luton.—Horne; John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, P. Fletcher, Jim Ryan, Husband, R. Fletcher, West, Aston.