

CHANGES ARE ENVISAGED AFTER A PUNCHLESS SHOW IN ATTACK

TOWN BOSS Harry Haslam was thinking yesterday of reshuffling his side again for Saturday's big match against Sunderland at Kenilworth Road.

For at Plymouth, after looking the better team, the Town were sunk without trace by a two-goal burst in the second half, and never did themselves justice.

Said the manager: It was disappointing, and I think we could have done better. But we have had a good run, and you can't expect to win them all.

"One or two players played badly, but we are not out of the promotion chase yet."

The Town won a lot of friends for their willingness to attack, and by providing some entertaining football.

And former Town coach, Jimmy Andrews, now manager of Cardiff, was among the watchers impressed by the performance of Andy King, and he said later that he would be talking to the Town about the youngster.

Financial considerations mean that if a bid is made King may have to go, but he would be badly missed on the field, because once more the lack of fire power in the attack became the difference between winning and losing.

There is no doubt that

By BRIAN SWAIN

Ron Futchler will be welcomed back by all his team mates for Saturday's confrontation with Sunderland.

The Town's neat and accurate football gave Plymouth plenty to worry about, particularly when John Aston had an inspired first 20 minutes on the left wing.

But the best wing service in the world is of no use without finishing ability, and King made a hash of a header that should have put the Town ahead.

First break

Instead Plymouth got the first break when Burrows burst down the centre before feeding Johnson on the Town's left flank. He crossed the ball towards the penalty spot and although Keith Barber made a lot of ground to punch clear, Colin Randell hit the ball first time straight back into the net.

The Town still gave as good as they got, but Alan West headed over another good chance from an Aston centre.

In defence John Faulkner's confidence had taken an early knock because he was booked after only 80 seconds for a tackle from behind on Bill Rafferty.

Great game

Rafferty and his twin striker Paul Mariner proved to be a handful, but Paul Futchler had another tremendous game at the centre of the defence.

Unhappily several players

were below par. Fuccillo was always looking to do the thoughtful and sensible thing, but King and Chambers were unable to make the right sort of impression, and Jimmy Husband could not get into scoring positions.

John Ryan produced one of the Town's best efforts with a 40 yard free kick which Furnell tipped over the bar.

But the 38-years-old grey-haired goalkeeper was rarely put under the sort of pressure that finally beat the Town.

Quick goals

Defensive hesitancy cost them two goals in a minute which finished the match. The first came when Barber tried to reach a near post centre by McAuley, but Rafferty got there first to power his header into the net.

Within 60 seconds in the 58th minute, the Town were caught out again. This time a long through ball sent Mariner on a chase towards goal.

Barber came out of his area to try to clear, and he and Paul Futchler fell down as they robbed Mariner. But the ball ran loose to Rafferty to give him a soft second goal.



● JOHN FAULKNER had his name taken in record time at Home Park when he went into the book of referee Peter Walters of Bridgwater after only 80 seconds of play.

His offence was a tackle from behind on Plymouth's Bill Rafferty.

Match Details

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE 3, LUTON TOWN 0

Half-time: 1-0

TOWN: Barber; John Ryan, Buckley, Faulkner (Pollock 75 minutes), Paul Futchler; Chambers, King, West; Fuccillo, Husband, Aston.

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE: Furnell; Horswill, Burrows, Sutton, Green; Delve, Randell, Johnson; Mariner, Rafferty (Foster 86 minutes), McAuley.

REFEREE: Peter Walters, Bridgwater (was no friend to the Town).

GOALS: Randall 14 minutes, after Barber punched out a cross; Rafferty 57 minutes, header; Rafferty 58 minutes, after Barber and Futchler made a mess of an attempted clearance.

ATTENDANCE: 13,927.

ENTERTAINMENT: The home fans loved it, and the Town contributed until the second goal killed them off.

BOOKING: John Faulkner, for tackling Rafferty from behind.

SHOP WINDOW DISPLAY

● THE TOWN'S young midfield star, Andy King, rose above two Plymouth defenders to head just over the bar as the Town enjoyed the better of the early stages at Home Park on Tuesday night.

King also rose in the opinion of former Town coach Jimmy Andrews who is now the boss of Cardiff City. If Jimmy comes in with a firm bid the Town will find it hard to resist with the need for cash taking priority at Kenilworth Road.