

REF GIVES A GOAL AWAY

And three are gifts by the Town defence

KENT REFEREE Michael Taylor won an instant nomination from Town Manager Harry Haslam as the villain of the piece at Charlton for giving a highly dubious penalty. But if the referee "scored" one goal for Charlton, the Town's defence gave them the other three.

The game provided rich entertainment for Charlton's fans, and for any neutral football followers who might have been at The Valley.

Derek Hales, the Kenilworth Road reject who became a scoring phenomenon after he went to Charlton for £10,000 nearly three years ago, headed a hat-trick.

But the moment that left the Town manager and every one of his players feeling very bitter about referee Taylor took up most of the Press inquest session after the game.

He gave Charlton a penalty in the 71st minute, just when the Town were showing every sign of coming back successfully. 3-2 down but playing the better football.

Charlton could scarcely believe their

Report by Brian Swain

Pictures:

Trevor Chynoweth

luck as the penalty gave them a 4-2 lead with less than 20 minutes to go. The Town still pulled another goal back, but the game ended too soon for them. I am convinced that they could have won if the match had lasted another five or ten minutes.

I think the referee deserved the harsh criticisms voiced about him after the game.

Hales was in possession of the ball, a couple of yards outside the penalty area, in the inside-left position.

Paul FUTCHER was covering, at the most five yards away, and doing the correct thing by keeping his body between the ball and the goal.

Hales shot for goal, the ball hit FUTCHER high on the arm and Mr Taylor decided that it was deliberate hands. But he didn't book FUTCHER for it.

My view was that it could not have been a deliberate offence by FUTCHER — he had no chance of getting out of the way.

Charlton manager Andy Nelson confessed later: "I would have been very disappointed if a penalty had



● Ron Futcher, looking sharper than before his spell in American soccer, hovers hopefully as Charlton goalkeeper Wood gathers the ball.

been given against us in those circumstances."

The Town manager put it bluntly: "The referee made a mistake. There's no way that was a penalty."

"But we lost because we made silly mistakes, and the penalty just rubbed it in."

And that summing-up covers the essential failing which led to the Town's defeat — slipshod work in defence. I don't think Paul FUTCHER has ever played as badly in a Town shirt.

With Alan West missing in midfield, and Ricky Hill below his best, the Town always looked suspect when Charlton went at them.

Yet the Town did more of the attacking, and always looked more dangerous up

to the edge of the penalty area.

They did all the early pressing, and deserved their lead when Dixie Deans headed the first goal in the 22nd minute. Hill and Steve Buckley did the early spade work, with John Aston supplying the final cross.

Four minutes later a weak header from defence by Paul FUTCHER, followed by Buckley losing possession, gave Hales the equaliser after Flanagan back-headed a centre from Young across the face of the goal.

FUTCHER produced a similar back-header in the 37th minute after a corner by Powell, and Hales helped himself to another simple goal, unmarked on the far post.

Aston always looked likely to carve open Charlton's defence, but Hales popped up once more in the 60th minute to find too much space to head in a 30-yard cross from midfield by Powell.

Hill made it 4-3 with four minutes to go after Ron FUTCHER's shot was parried by goalkeeper Wood.

Two minutes from time another crucial decision rubbed out a Deans effort that would have been worth a point.

Ron FUTCHER, who had improved the look of the Town's attack after replacing Husband, was standing offside on the right wing as the ball was booted down the other side of the pitch.

Deans raced after it, and scored from the inside left position, only to see it cancelled out for offside against FUTCHER, who had played no part in the action whatsoever.

Smaller wonder that some of the Town players were muttering nasty thoughts after the game about Charlton's No. 12, who was dressed all in black.

Match Details

CHARLTON 4, LUTON TOWN 3

Half-time: 2-1 76/77

TOWN: Barber; Price, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul FUTCHER; Ryan, Hill, Fuccillo; Husband (Ron FUTCHER 63 mins), Deans, Aston.

CHARLTON: Wood; Hammond, Warman, Giles, Curtis; Hunt, Young, Peacock; Powell, Hales, Flanagan. Sub: Merry, not used.

THE GOALS: Deans header from Aston cross, 22 mins; Derek Hales hat-trick of headers for Charlton — 26, 37 and 60 minutes; Aston, direct from a free-kick to make it 2-3, 62 minutes; Curtis, penalty, 71 minutes, crazy handball decision against Paul FUTCHER; Hill for the Town, 86 minutes.

REFEREE: Michael Taylor, Walmer, Kent: Coaches in tennis, squash, badminton, fencing and plays golf. On this performance it's a pity he dabbled in football as well.

ENTERTAINMENT: A flowing match with plenty of entertainment between some barmy goals, and the Town contributed to both features more than Charlton did.

ATTENDANCE: 9,191—Not bad for a wet Friday night.