

BREAKS

THE ICE

Reports by
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Easy, Easy, is the chant as Chelsea crumble

FEARS of plunging into the relegation zone after two consecutive defeats at Bolton and Orient were dispelled in dramatic and convincing style last night when the Town ran Chelsea off their feet.

The Second Division leaders were sent packing, sliding to their heaviest defeat of the season as the Town sparkled on a snow-covered pitch and ran in four goals. Chelsea rarely threatened to score one let alone four.

They were torn apart by an eager Town outfit determined to show that the two Christmas defeats were not a fair reflection of their abilities.

Stand-in goalkeeper John Phillips was given a nightmare on ice, and Micky Droy's height and weight became a disadvantage as the Town's smaller and more mobile attackers swarmed past him.

The match had been in doubt because

of the icy pitch, and Chelsea manager Eddie McCreadie thought it should not have been played. But he admitted later that it was the same for both teams and that the Town had won on merit.

They did it by going for goal as often as possible, bombarding the unfortunate Phillips from all ranges and angles, and Chelsea were on the slide from the Town's first real attack.

The game was only 71 seconds old when Lil Fuccillo opened the scoring after a swift build-up involving Paul Price, Jim Ryan and Jim Husband.

Chelsea's goal was put under siege, with the Town controlling everything in midfield, and it was no more than justice when Brian Chambers scored the second goal in the 13th minute after a raking move put together quickly and accurately by Steve Buckley, Ryan and Ron Futcher. Chambers ended it with a deliberate, almost casual volley.

The Londoners looked frightened out of their wits by the ease with which the Town skated over the surface and put together neat short-passing movements. Every single member of the Town side worked hard, and Milija Aleksic could scarcely have expected such a quiet home debut for the Town.

The defence blunted most of Chelsea's half-hearted attacking thrusts and Jim Husband turned and smacked in the killer goal after 58 minutes.

His shot whipped in before Phillips could move after slick approach work by West and Chambers. The Chelsea goalkeeper's night of misery was completed in the 88th minute when, after one of many mistakes, he tripped up Paul Price in a goalmouth scramble.

Buckley, who had missed from the spot at Orient, was given the chance to make amends, and did it by hammering his penalty low past Phillips. The goalkeeper had the good sense to keep well out of the way.



● The perfect end to a perfect match—the Futcher twins celebrate with Steve Buckley after the full-back had hit the Town's fourth goal from the penalty spot two minutes from time.

The crowd loved it and the chants of "Easy, easy, easy" drifted through the frosty air as Chelsea's shocked supporters poured out of the ground rather than stay to hear the final whistle.

It would be unfair to single out individuals after such a marvellous team performance. The Town had 11 men-of-the-match, while Chelsea seemed to have no more than a couple who wanted to earn that tag.

On the night they were very much second best. The surprising thing is that the Town had played very nearly as well as this in their two previous games and been unrewarded. Somebody was due for a hiding, and to dish it out to the league leaders made it all the more agreeable.

WE DESERVED IT, SAYS HAPPY HARRY

TOWN manager Harry Haslam saw last night's superb victory as the overdue reward for a lot of good work by his players in their holiday matches.

"We've played well for the last three games and the goals had to come," he said. "And I don't think Chelsea can blame the

pitch—they were well beaten because we were easily the better side."

Chelsea manager Eddie McCreadie agreed with that verdict and with Mr Has-

lam's nomination of the Town's midfield department as the crucial factor.

"They were marvellous," said Haslam, and the Chelsea boss admitted that his side had been outgunned in that department.

Before the game he had met at a meeting of the club with the Reflex photo-entitled "Photo-entitled a colour slide presented a camera club, of Mr Colin Reeves, of

CHELSEA DETAILS

LUTON TOWN 4, CHELSEA 0

Half-time: 2-0

76/77

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul Futcher; Chambers, West, Fuccillo, Ryan; Husband, Ron Futcher. Sub: Hill, not used.

CHELSEA: Phillips; Locke, Graham Wilkins, Droy, Hay; Stanley, Britton, Lewington; Ray Wilkins, Finnieston, Swain. Sub: Harris, not used.

REFEREE: Clive White, Harrow, kept a tight grip on everything.

THE GOALS: Lil Fuccillo, 71 seconds; Brian Chambers, 13 minutes; Jim Husband, 58 minutes; Steve Buckley, penalty, 88 minutes.

ENTERTAINMENT: Rousing and heart-warming on the snow-covered pitch.

ATTENDANCE: 17,102, second best this season.