

WINNER SNATCHED IN THE LAST TEN SECONDS

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By BRIAN SWAIN

A GOAL in three minutes, and looking woefully inept in the face of a stubborn blanket defence, the Town gave their supporters a lot of frustration before storming to a dramatic victory on Monday night with two goals in the last six minutes.

The late winner, scrambled home by Jim Husband for his tenth goal of the season, came with only ten seconds left to play.

The goal stunned Hull City, who had come close to their first away victory of the season, leaving their players arguing among themselves and assistant manager Andy Davidson being restrained by police and stewards when he offered to take off his coat and square up to jeering Town fans.

In fact his overworked defence had offered even more fight than he did. "I was just having a laugh," he said afterwards.

Hull had very nearly had the last laugh on the Town. George Lyall grabbed an opening goal in the third minute when the Town's midfield and defence were beaten by the energy and persistence of Nisbet and Daniel.

Lyall slotted home a smooth first-time shot from the edge of the penalty area, and Hull promptly rearranged their formation.

McIntosh, who had lined up as an attacker, was withdrawn to midfield, and with tall central defenders Croft and Haigh dominating their penalty area, the

Town could find no way through.

Hull fought every inch of the way in their own half, with no pretensions of opening the game up to look for another goal.

Hull's four men in midfield beat the Town's three, and although the Town mounted a series of attacks there was a sad lack of enterprise and invention.

Daniel held John Aston in check, but the Town should have had at least a couple of goals to show for their first-half pressure. Lil Fuccillo missed the best chance, heading wide from about five yards from a cross by Aston. Ron Fletcher hooked a half-chance wide, and Brian Chambers was thwarted by a diving save by Wealands.

Frustration crept into the Town's

play after the break, although Hull were still content to soak up the pressure — it took them 58 minutes to produce their second shot at goal.

Husband just missed making contact with a through-ball by John Faulkner, then hit the bar a split-second after being penalised for offside.

West shot over, Aston banged a free-kick against a defensive wall and Buckley slammed the rebound wide.

At that stage, the game had seven minutes to run, and the Town were looking bedraggled and beaten, unable to combat Hull's tenacious defence.

At times they had ten men in the penalty area, and they looked set to steal the points. It wasn't pretty, but it was effective.

But in the 84th minute, the crowd at last had something to cheer. Alan West beat Billy Bremner in midfield and hoisted a long ball into the penalty area.

Ron Fletcher, who had shown some neat touches throughout the game, deflected the ball towards the left wing, and Aston was the first of three or four men in the scramble to get to it. He shot first time, and you could feel the waves of relief around the ground as his shot thumped into the roof of the net.

After defending their slender lead for 81 minutes, Hull came in for a killing final assault. The Town's attacks still looked too frantic for success, but the spirit was there and the Hull could not stem the flow as the tide turned against them.

Aston "scored" with a header after 89 minutes, a second or two after Ron



● JIM HUSBAND, whose late, late winner against Hull was his tenth goal of the season, and his third in two games.

Fletcher had been penalised for a foul on the goalkeeper, and with the watch only ten seconds away from the final whistle, Fuccillo laid on the dramatic winner.

He fought through two attempted tackles to get to the by-line on the left flank, then cut inside and crossed low as two more defenders converged on him.

Wealands, left exposed for once, couldn't hold the ball at the near post, and Husband nipped in to give the Town a Yorkshire hat-trick, their third successive victory over Yorkshire clubs.

Hull City details

LUTON TOWN 2, HULL CITY 1
Half-time: 0-1

Brian Swain's Verdict: ★ ★

TOWN: Aleksie; Price, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul Fletcher; Chambers, West, Fuccillo; Husband, Ron Fletcher, Aston. Sub: Carr (not used).

HULL CITY: Wealands; Daniel, de Vries, Croft, Haigh; Bremner, Nisbet, Lyall, McIntosh; Sunley, Hickton. Sub: Stewart (not used).

THE GOALS: Lyall for Hull, three minutes, after Town's left flank was pulled apart; John Aston for the Town 84 minutes, from chance made by Alan West and Ron Fletcher; Jim Husband for the Town, ten seconds from time, from opening created by Lil Fuccillo.

ATTENDANCE: 8,455—subsistence level at Kenilworth Road.

REFEREE: John Hunting, Leicester; much more popular with Harry Haslam than last time he was here, to postpone this fixture.

ENTERTAINMENT: The grand finale helped to rub out memories of some of the rubbish that went before. The Town were looking very frustrated until the equaliser.

BOOKING: John Hickton for a foul on Paul Fletcher.

● WITH ten seconds to go, Jim Husband slams in the Town's winner on Monday night. Below: the scene a few seconds earlier as John Aston "scores" with a header which would have been the winner — except that Ron Fletcher is celebrating a little too early. He was penalised for a foul on the goalkeeper.
Pictures: RON PURVES.

