

# DEFENCE SUPREME AS WOLVES ARE TORN APART

IN A MATCH flowing with excitement and good football, the Town and Wolves proved on Saturday that they could both be good enough for the First Division. Both sides swept into a series of thrilling attacks with Wolves finally beaten because the centre of their defence caved in.

It all added up to a big treat for the large crowd, with the result turned by a dramatic 90-second spell in which the Town struck twice after Wolves had threatened to beat them out of sight in the first ten minutes.

That over-worked football cliché "character" was the word heard most often in the Kenilworth Suite and players' lounge after the game. The Town put out 11 men who had it in full measure, and Wolves didn't.

Yet the Wolves, leading scorers in the Football League, might have had the points half-won with their early blistering attacks.

They carved out five clear chances in the first six minutes—Daley headed wide, Milija Aleksic saved with his knees from Sunderland, Richards saw a header pushed round the post, Hibbitt shot wide from the edge of the box and Carr was also off target.

But from then on Paul

Futcher and John Faulkner took charge of the Wolves spearhead of Richards and Sunderland.

The Town fought their way back into it in mid-field, with Brian Chambers and Lil Fuccillo cancelling out the probing skills of Carr and Hibbitt, and Alan West breaking through to lend his weight to the Town's superiority.

Paul Price and Steve Buckley clamped down on the Wolves attempts to attack down the flanks, and behind the back four Aleksic turned out to be unbeatable with a series of superb saves.

I made Fuccillo the Town's man of the match for his strong running, clever ball control and lethal finishing. Twice Pierce had to bring off flying saves to keep out accurate drives, but the goalkeeper was let down badly when the Town broke the deadlock in the 35th minute.

John Aston and Jim Husband were unable to make much impression on full-backs Palmer and Parkin, but the Town's thrusts down the middle always looked dangerous.

The Town forwards sensibly switched positions regularly, and Munro and

McAlle spent most of the game wondering which striker they should be marking.

Neither could get near Ron Futcher when he rose to head on a free-kick by Steve Buckley, and from the edge of the penalty area Husband snapped up the chance expertly with a low shot into the corner of the net.

The Wolves were still trying to sort themselves out and recover from that blow 90 seconds later when Paul Futcher slung a through-pass down the Town's left flank.

Fuccillo collected it, shrugged off one tackle, and neatly floated the ball over Pierce's head for a goal that should have been impossible from such a narrow angle.

Wolves knew then that they were beaten, and the Town had much the better of things for the rest of the game.

The only drawback was that Ron Futcher, for all his new-found ability to lead the line and lay the ball off, failed to take the chances that came his way.

He should have been on the score-sheet before going off to make way for David Geddis 14 minutes from time.

He was robbed by a referee's mistake when Husband and West set up a chance a minute previously — Geoff Palmer threw himself full-length to stop Ron's shot, and the Town's claims for a penalty were dismissed. Palmer cheerfully admitted later that he had got away with a deliberate handball.

Against that, Wolves had a "goal" by Richards disallowed because Bobby Gould was offside, and both goalkeepers played well to keep the score down.

Brian Swain reports on the Town's push towards Division One

## WOLVES DETAILS

LUTON TOWN 2, WOLVES 0

Half-time: 2-0

BRIAN SWAIN'S VERDICT: ★ ★ ★ ★

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul Futcher; Chambers, West, Fuccillo; Husband, Ron Futcher (Geddis 76 mins), Aston.

WOLVES: Pierce; Palmer, Parkin, Munro, McAlle; Daley, Hibbitt, Patching (Gould, 68 mins); Carr, Richards, Sunderland.

THE GOALS: Jim Husband, 35 minutes, after Ron Futcher headed on a free-kick by Steve Buckley; Lil Fuccillo, 90 seconds later, brilliant angled lob.

REFEREE: Reg Lewis, Great Bookham, Surrey: as good as the match, which was very good.

ENTERTAINMENT: The best we have seen at Kenilworth Road since Chelsea were here—brilliant first-half and second-half nearly as good.

ATTENDANCE: 19,200—Best since Fulham's visit, and boosted by a large Wolves following which included the customary handful of yobs.

BOOKINGS: McAlle and Sunderland for kicking the ball away, Carr for dissent.

## Fuccillo starts and ends a killer goal

THE goal that killed Wolves was started and finished by Lil Fuccillo. Artist Paul Haynes explains it all with the diagram below.

It started with the Town winning a throw-in on their left flank, just inside the Wolves half. Fuccillo took it, throwing the

ball back to Steve Buckley.

Paul Futcher moved forward to take Buckley's short pass and then hit the ball towards the left corner flag.

The Wolves defence retreated, but had already been outwitted because Fuccillo had started his run forward immediately he had taken the throw-in.

Kenny Hibbitt was trying valiantly to get back, but the Wolves back four was already torn apart by the speed of the movement.

Munro and McAlle were both watching Ron Futcher, apparently assuming that the Town's only strategy at this point would be a cross into the centre.

Right-back Geoff Palmer had already been by-passed by Paul Futcher's accurate through-ball, but was trying to get back. He had no hope of getting between Fuccillo and the goal, although he was closing the gap fast.

Goalkeeper Gary Pierce seemed to be the only Wolves defender who realised the danger as Fuccillo moved in, and went racing out of goal in a forlorn bid to cut out the expected cross.

It was all in vain as Fuccillo lifted the ball carefully over the goalkeeper's head and into the net, leaving the Town to celebrate and Munro and McAlle arguing furiously with each other as to whose fault it all was.

"A silly goal to give away," was the verdict of Wolves boss Sammy Chung.

## MANAGER OF THE MONTH SAYS THANKS

TOWN BOSS Harry Haslam was named the Second Division's Manager of the Month a few hours before the game with Wolves, and his first reaction was to insist that his players had done as much to earn it as he had.

He confessed that they're doing so well he doesn't feel that he should have a go at them even when they make mistakes.

He explained: "Even against Wolves there were some things that weren't quite right. You make a mental note of them but then you think about how hard they've worked to put this run together and you can't complain can you? Being named as manager of the month is due recognition for what the whole club has done.

"It's a tribute to our team-work and our attitude to the game, and I thought we were well worth the victory over Wolves. I heard it said that only our goalkeeper kept us in it. Milija played well, but our front line looked a lot better than theirs.

"Elastic lived up to his name and had a great game, but so did other players. Wolves didn't make as many chances as we did, and with a little more luck and a little more steadiness in front of goal we could have had two or three more."

Wolves manager Sammy Chung made no excuses after seeing his team's 16-game unbeaten run smashed. "We knew it would be hard," he said. "When Luton beat us at Molineux they were well down the table, but I said then that they could be dark horses in the promotion fight. They've proved the point today.

"We missed some early chances and Luton made us pay and I have no complaints about the result — Luton deserved to win on the day."

## Cash gift helps search for talent

UNABLE TO pay large transfer fees for established star players, the Town are still concentrating their scouting resources on looking for promising youngsters. Schoolboys from all over the country are brought in by the hundred to be checked out.

The outstanding boy spotted at 15 or 16 can become a £100,000 asset in four or five years, but even so the Town's shoestring budget makes it difficult to pay the bills for trials. Nearly 90 boys attended the last session, and expenses of bringing them to Luton and feeding them while they were here came to nearly £500.

"If you only find one boy in a hun-

dred who can make the grade it's a good investment," said Manager Harry Haslam. "The trouble is that we can't always lay our hands on £500."

The Friends of Luton Town stepped in to pay the bill for that session, and on April 1 they hope to raise more cash for the club with a race night at the Hatters Club. Even losing punters will have the consolation of knowing that the only certain winners on the night will be Luton Town FC.

