

LIMITED OBJECTIVE IS HARD ON FANS

A GOALLESS draw against the bottom team in the Second Division left a very mixed set of reactions around Turf Moor on Saturday night. Two managers were pleased—both had got what they wanted.

A lot of Burnley supporters were delighted—their team's form has been so bad they don't expect to see them win after failing to do so in the 28 previous attempts.

And many of the Town's faithful followers came home grateful for the point simply because Burnley might well have grabbed both.

The Town's performance did nothing to make a spectacle of the occasion, although conditions were appalling, with cold winds carrying icy rain down from the grey moors.

Possession football, particularly towards the end of a drab match, brought jeers and catcalls from the home fans, and seemed to me a cynical and negative approach unworthy of a team with its eye on the Second Division championship.

Against that, I went to Burnley with a sense of foreboding. The home side's long record of failure had to end some time, and with youngsters being thrown into the team to fight for survival the scene was set for a form upset.

I wouldn't have been surprised to see the Town lose. But I was surprised by the way they went about preventing it.

The defence was magnificent, the midfield battle was narrowly won by Burnley, and both attacks were below standard.

DOMINATION

In the first half the only memorable features were Jake Findlay's domination of his area as Burnley tried long balls forward in the hope that Paul Fletcher might reach one with his head.

Mike Saxby beat him every time when the ball went near him, and when it didn't Findlay was in total control.

Mal Donaghy and Paul Price made few mistakes, and the covering was particularly good when Burnley's best player, Leighton



	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Luton Town	16	8	6	2	28	14	22
QPR	16	9	3	4	30	15	21
Chelsea	16	10	1	5	26	18	21
Newcastle	16	8	5	3	20	13	21
Leicester	16	7	6	3	29	21	20
Birmingham	16	8	4	4	20	15	20

By BRIAN SWAIN

Sports Editor

James, subjected Kirk Stephens to intense pressure.

Stephens had to fight harder than most to come through, and did very well, but was rarely able to push forward, and the midfield men also found that a lot of their time had to be spent on stopping Burnley rather than hitting their rearguard.

The best moments came when the Town did put together their normal game in attacks on the break.

But they were not so fluent as usual, and the best first-half moves ended with Brian Stein narrowly failing to reach a fast low centre by Bib Hatton, and then being tripped and denied a penalty when he tried a solo run.

On the balance of play Burnley might well have won because Findlay was the busier goalkeeper. He tipped a 30-yard drive by James over the bar and later produced an even better save to flick a shot by Martin Dobson into the terracing.

SAVED

Between those two incidents Tony Grealish came nearest to scoring for the Town with a diving header from David Moss's centre. Alan Stevenson did well to push the ball round the post with an instinctive save.

That was about the sum total of the real danger to either goal, and the Town played the last 15 minutes or so mostly in their own half back-passing, or rolling the ball square in defence.

I found that hard to accept. Burnley had tried hard and failed to get the breakthrough, and I thought if the Town had been positive there was every chance of taking both points.

Certainly spectators deserve better, and they were the day's losers.

Manager David Pleat dis-



● ONE THAT GOT AWAY: Brian Stein, left, tries to make contact with a low centre from Bob Hatton which left the Burnley rearguard wide open — goalkeeper Alan Stevenson is the man on the ground.

agreed. "It was what you lot would call professional," he told Pressmen whose questions implied criticism of his team's tactics.

"We are pleased with a point, and when we kept possession the onus was on Burnley to pinch the ball off us. And if you talk about us being negative, don't forget that we were very, very positive here last season . . . and we lost 2-1.

"You win leagues by not losing too many games."

I suppose that is one way of looking at soccer. But I

prefer to see teams trying to win, not trying to avoid defeat.

Burnley boss Brian Miller, whose task at Turf Moor looks impossible, was much encouraged with a point against the league leaders.

NO QUIBBLE

"They were hanging on for the last 20 minutes," he said. "You could see they were glad to get a point. On the run of play we deserved both, but I'm glad to get one."

And he refused to join

in the criticisms about the Town's late tactics. "Possession football is all part of the game," he said. "I don't blame them for that."

I suppose if I were Burnley's manager I, too, would accept the need to concentrate on not losing. As a Luton Town supporter, it's an idea I prefer to leave to football's strugglers I don't think a 0-0 draw against the bottom club is the true hallmark of a team with the Town's potential to play adventurous and entertaining soccer.

Match Details

BURNLEY 0, LUTON TOWN 0

BURNLEY: Stevenson; Arins, Brennan, Vince Overson, Dixon; Richard Overson (Burke 72 mins), Dobson, Young, Tate; James, Fletcher.

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Donaghy, Saxby, Price; Grealish, Hill, West; Stein, Hatton, Moss. Sub: Turner, not used.

GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town four saved, two off target; Burnley five saved and two off target.

ENTERTAINMENT: Rubbish by the high standards we have come to expect from the Town, but conditions were dreadful and both sides were happy with the draw.

REFEREE: Malcolm Heath, Stoke—not a lot better than the general standard of the match. Both bookings were for fouls which most refs would accept as part of the game.

BOOKINGS: Richard Overson for tripping Tony Grealish; Alan West for colliding with Leighton James—and even the Burnley player made it plain he disagreed with the yellow card for West.

ATTENDANCE: 7,055—and every one a hero on a day of cold wind and driving rain, especially the big following from Luton.