

STIRRING STUFF!



MARK BRENNAN heads for goal, pursued by Breacker, North, Nicholas and Hill. He was foiled by the fine save by Luton 'keeper Sealey.



NIGEL GLEGHORN blasts Ipswich into a tenth minute lead, with Mal Donaghy's challenge coming too late to block his cracking shot.

IPSWICH Town saw the old year out with the type of performance that typifies the spirit in the club at the moment.

Without that spirit to overcome the two injuries they picked up during Saturday's stirring match, they would have been buried by a Luton side that contains a great deal of quality.

It was thrill-a-minute stuff, on a surface that was partly frozen, that the very good crowd of over 16,000 must have loved. It might not have been connoisseur stuff, but for sheer entertainment with plenty of goalmouth

IPSWICH TOWN 1, LUTON TOWN 1

incident, it could not have been better.

What the paying public do identify with is effort and commitment and Town could not be faulted for one moment in that direction. For long periods of the second-half it was backs-to-the-wall

By Neal Manning

stuff, but with Butcher celebrating his 27th birthday in inspirational style, it looked as though Town would hang on.

Although Butcher and McCall, of all people, failed to prevent Mark North for equalising eight minutes from the end, Luton more than deserved a share of the spoils.

Injuries have played such a big part in Town's season so far and the side that won at Coventry on Boxing Day and came so close to grabbing a second successive victory, is virtually homegrown.

Only two players on duty over the holiday period cost a fee — £150,000 for Wilson and £18,000 for Cooper 11 years ago.

Players like Gleghorn and Stockwell have had to be thrown in earlier than perhaps Bobby Ferguson would have liked, but he has had no alternative when he currently has a quartet of right sided players on the treatment table in Zondervan, Atkins, Putney and Parkin.

Just to make matters worse on Saturday, Yallop played more than threequarters of the game with a knee injury and Cranson, an influential figure alongside Butcher at

the heart of the defence missed the whole of the second-half because of concussion.

That meant further re-organisation with D'Avray dropping into defence, and doing a superb job at that, but Town missed his presence up front.

The real bonus as far as Town were concerned was the performance from Gleghorn, playing only his third full match. A full-time fireman until four months ago, Gleghorn has bridged the enormous gap there is between part-time football and the First Division.

It would not be an overstatement to say that he has got some of the touches of those never-to-be-forgotten Dutchmen Muhren and Thijssen. Obviously Gleghorn has still got a lot to learn, but he's quite a find for just £1,500.

Gleghorn scored his second senior goal for the club when he squeezed a low shot past Sealey after picking up a free-kick from Dozzell just outside the penalty area when Luton failed to mark him.

Town were definitely out of luck in the 37th minute when Gleghorn wormed his way long the by-line only to be clearly pulled back by the shirt by Breacker. It was a penalty by any stretch of the imagination.

A two-goal lead at that stage might have proved difficult even for Luton to pull back, but it was a day when the visitors certainly missed their chances, notably the impressive Stein.

Immediately before his move to the defence D'Avray was unfortunate not to score in the 47th minute when he cashed onto a mistake by Donaghy, beat Sealey only to see Stacey North clear off the line.

The ball went out to D'Avray who squared it for Wilson, but Town's leading scorer fired over the top from point blank range.

That was virtually Town's last chance with most of the remaining action at the other end as Butcher and company almost spilled blood to keep Luton out.

The incident involving Harford and Sunderland 12 minutes from the end threatened to bring this thrilling match to boiling point.

Certainly tempers became frayed as this match of high tension and drama roared to an exciting conclusion.

Mark North's equaliser was obviously of great disappointment to Town and their supporters as he fired home Preece's cross, but on the day, taking everything into account, a draw was perhaps the fairest result.

IPSWICH: Cooper; Yallop, McCall, Gleghorn, Cranson (sub. Sunderland 45 mins.), Butcher, Stockwell, Brennan, D'Avray, Wilson and Dozzell.

LUTON: Sealey; Breacker, Thomas, Nicholas, S. North, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Harford, M. North and Preece. S. Johnson.

● Dutch international midfielder Romeo Zondervan has the chance of returning to the Ipswich team for the New Year home match with Watford at Portman Road.

Printed and published by the Anglian Daily Times on behalf of the publishers, offices 30 Lower Wood Street, IP4 1AN, Ipswich, Suffolk. Telephone 0473 61111. A daily newspaper.