

Best feet forward!

A LITTLE SLEIGHT of foot by David Preece led to the Town's first victory under Jim Ryan, and their first away win in the league for 14 months, after eight draws and 13 defeats.

Preece outwitted Wimbledon and the ref in the last minute by taking a free kick on the dribble to start the move which produced the decisive goal.

Preece was set up by Danny Wilson's splendid crossfield pass from right to left for a run to the by-line and a centre which Iain Dowie met at the far post with a diving header for the winner.

The most pleasing features for manager Ryan were the way the Town stuck at their game, always trying to play football, and their determination to keep trying for all three points after being pegged back with 16 minutes to go.

Preece just grinned about the free kick routine which was spotted by only a handful of fans on a cold wet night. The Plough Lane attendance was the lowest for any First Division match anywhere since the last war.

The first half was grim, with the Town the players against a team of battlers. They drew the sting out of Wimbledon with possession football without making it quick enough to cause much worry to Hans Segers.

After the break the Town played at a greater pace, and frustration was growing for home players and fans alike as the Town started to control things.

Danny Wilson, who had an excellent game, crossed from the right for Nogan to head his second goal in three appearances in the 51st minute.

Bobby Gould changed tactics, sending on two subs together in the 57th minute, one as an extra attacker. The old Wimbledon fire and passion surfaced, with the Town penned back by repeated attacks.

WIMBLEDON 1 LUTON 2

Two lucky breaks helped the Town — Wise had a 'goal' disallowed for a foul by one of his colleagues and Alan Cork beat Alec Chamberlain with a header which bounced off a post into Chamberlain's arms.

But in the 74th minute the intense pressure let in Wise for the equaliser, after Cork had for once got between the excellent partnership of John Dreyer and Julian James for a headed flick-on pass.

But the fire was damped down by a cool holding operation from midfield and defence, and in the final minute Preece engineered the goal for Dowie which sent a couple of hundred bedraggled Town fans into ecstasy.

THE MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Chamberlain; Breacker, James, Dreyer, Harvey; Wilson, Kennedy, Preece; Dowie, Nogan, Black (Elstrup 81 mins). Other sub: Johnson.

WIMBLEDON: Segers; Curle, Young, Scales, Phelan; Bennett (Ryan 57 mins), Kruszyński, Sanchez; Cork, Gayle (McGee 57 mins), Wise.

THE GOALS: Kurt Nogan header from right wing cross by Danny Wilson, 51st minute; Dennis Wise shot, 74th minute; Iain Dowie far post header from David Preece's left wing cross in the final minute.

OTHER STRIKES: Town three saved and two wide. Wimbledon three saved, one wide, one netted but disallowed and one hit a post. Corners: 7-1 to Wimbledon.

REFEREE: Keren Barratt, Coventry.

ATTENDANCE: 3,496 lowest ever at any Town match in the First Division.

ENTERTAINMENT: Lovely for Town supporters.

ODDSPOT: The pools panel 'experts' said it would be a home win on the day the match was postponed!