

Cold comfort at Plough Lane

A BRIGHT LEAGUE debut by 20-year-old midfielder Mark Pembroke was the only ray of light for the Town on a cold, wet and windy afternoon as they saw in the New Year at Plough Lane.

It was 12 months to the day after Wimbledon manager Ray Harford had concluded his Luton Town career with a defeat at Everton.

IMPROVEMENT

He suggested that the Town today are a better away side than when he was in charge. It was, of course, a team he had built.

But there was a noticeable lack of friendship towards the new Luton

WIMBLEDON 2 LUTON TOWN 0

regime — a formal handshake and no pleasantries was sad to see.

PROBLEM

With the gale and rain a problem for the Town defence in the first half and Wimbledon's after the break, good football was at a premium.

The Town showed occasional flashes and had a fair amount of possession, without looking killers in front of goal. Pembroke, deputising for Steve Williams, was a success, and looked much more confident and capable than he had done when he played in the Zenith Cup game against West Ham.

Questions were asked about John Dreyer and Alec Chamberlain when the Town's good work for 44 minutes was undone by Wimbledon's first goal.

A swirling corner towards the near post became a gift for John Fashanu, with no real challenge as he almost lazily headed home. In defence of the slack marking, the corner kick had moved a lot — it started off towards the penalty spot and then curved in, borne by the wind.

In the second half the Town again flattered to deceive and one of the best passing moves of the match ended the contest, sub Alan Cork firing home to end the Town's forlorn chase for an equaliser.

THE MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Chamberlain, Johnson (James mins), Dreyer, McDonough, Harford (Beaumont, 45 mins); Rees (Dowle 74 mins); Black, Farrell, Dore, Pembroke, Preece; Segers; Joseph, Bolewell, Curle, Phelan; Barton, Krucinski, McGee, Scales; Fashanu (Cork 68 mins); Gibson.

THE GOALS: Fashanu header, 64 mins. Cork curled drive, 84 mins.

OTHER STRIKES: Town three saved and seven wide; Wimbledon four saved and seven wide. Corners: 7-7.

ATTENDANCE: 4,521, lowest for Division gate anywhere this season — but 1,000 better than for the Town's relegation season.

REFEREE: Keren Barratt. Controlled it nicely.

ENTERTAINMENT: Rather poor — cold gale-lashed rain made it difficult for either side to play football.