

Early promise turns to despair in North Wales

THE VERDICT by Wrexham manager Bryan Flynn that the Town were the best side he had seen this season was no consolation to supporters, or Lennie Lawrence, after bright promise turned into depressing despair and the second consecutive defeat.

The Town looked good in the first half on their first visit to the Racecourse Ground for 16 years, except inside the penalty areas. Steve Davis headed a cracking goal from a 22nd-minute free kick by Ceri Hughes,

Wrexham 2 Luton Town 1

who had an outstanding game. But within a minute Marvin Johnson allowed Martyn Chalk to get goal-side of him in pursuit of a pass down the inside right channel, and brought him down.

Gary Bennett converted the penalty, but the Town fought back and would have been ahead at the break but for a mixture of poor finishing and adequate

goalkeeping. Andy Marriott's best saves were from Davis and Darren Patterson, which said something about the Town's performance – defenders the best attackers, and each time from set pieces, corners by the industrious Graham Alexander.

Desperate to rub out bitter memories of an FA Cup quarter-final disappointment at Chesterfield a few days previously, Wrexham turned it into a dogfight in the second half, and Bennett forced in the winner in the 56th minute.

After that the Town pressed with more desperation than invention, and rarely looked like saving a point.

Speaks volumes

"Very disappointing" was the Town boss's verdict. "It's hard to believe that a side that makes as many chances as we did in the first half should come in at 1-1.

"Bennett is a genuine goalscorer, and it would be nice to see us get one like his winner, at the third attempt and through sheer determination.

"It's an incredible statistic that we have taken the lead on ten occasions but not won, and that speaks volumes about the lack of concentration and ability to cope."

Midweek match details

LUTON TOWN: Feuer; Patterson, Davis, Johnson, James; Alexander, Hughes, Waddock (McLaren 69 mins), Showler; Oldfield (Grant 59 mins), Thorpe (Marshall 59 mins).

WREXHAM: Marriott; McGregor, Humes, Carey, Brace (Jones 49 mins); Chalk, Owen, Phillips, Russell; Watkin, Bennett. Unused subs Skinner and Connolly.

GOALS: 0-1 22 minutes: Steve Davis header from diagonal free kick by Ceri Hughes; 1-1 23 minutes: Gary Bennett penalty after Marvin Johnson brought down Martyn Chalk; 2-1 56 minutes: Bennett again, at the third attempt after two shots by team-mates had been blocked.

OTHER STRIKES: Town seven saved and six wide; Wrexham three saved and seven wide. Corners: 6-6.

FOULS: 14 by the Town, 15 by Wrexham. Offside: Wrexham nine times, Town not at all.

BOOKED: Gary Waddock and Julian James, and Wrexham's Steve Watkin and Martyn Chalk, all for fouls.

REFEREE: Eddie Lomas, Manchester. Kept the game under control and free-flowing.

ATTENDANCE: 3,342.

ENTERTAINMENT: End to end made for some excitement, but Town fans had the pleasure wrecked by the team's inability to build on a good first half, when they should have scored more goals.