

Ironie Cheers As Plymouth Win Easily

By "Chiltern" 69/70

LUTON TOWN 0, PLYMOUTH 2

A FREEZING cold wind combined with the fact that the Saturday before Christmas is notoriously poor for crowds kept down the gate at Kenilworth-road this afternoon when Plymouth Argyle were the visitors to its lowest proportions of the season.

Certainly the weather was such that only spartan followers could be interested in football.

Nor did the match promise to be unduly attractive, because the ground was bone hard and had been heavily sanded over most of its area. In fact, it resembled a sea-shore with the tide gone out.

With McKechnie still out of action, there was a recall to inside-left for Alwyn McGuffie, and there was a somewhat unexpected chance at centre-forward for the former schoolboy international, local-born Robin Chandler.

This meant the dropping of Lornie and the superseding of Bob Morton in order to revert to the most successful half-back line of this season with Pacey and Groves in the flank positions.

Another change was in goal where Jim Standen paid the penalty for letting in two simple goals at Preston last Saturday, and Ron Baynham was recalled for the first time since the end of September.

On the other hand, Plymouth, feeling happier about their recent results, fielded the team that beat Southampton 4-0 last Saturday.

Teams:

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Pacey, Cope, Groves; Walden, Ashworth, Chandler, McGuffie, Fleming.

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE: McLaren; Robertson, Fulton; Williams, Fincham, Newman; Anderson, Carter, Kirby, McAnearney, Maloy.

Referee: T. H. Carr, Redditch.

About 7,000 saw Cope win the toss and decide to defend the Oak-road end. Footholds were difficult, and the ball bounced at awkward angles.

WEAKNESS IN FINISHING

Twice in quick succession promising Town raids ended innocuously because of the weakness in finishing of each winger in turn.

First Fleming turned the ball straight to Robertson and then Walden, neatly sent away by McGuffie, landed the ball clean in McLaren's hands.

Walden did better just afterwards. When cleverly sent away by Ashworth he beat Fincham in a race for the ball, and McLaren did well to cut out his centre.

Chandler came into the picture for the first time when he chased a ball down the wing until a tackle by Fincham gave the Town a free kick midway in the Argyle half.

First positive shot from Plymouth came from McAnearney, whose effort, after some clever approach work by Kirby, went straight at Baynham.

With 11 minutes gone, the Town fell behind through what

can only be described as misjudgment by Baynham.

The ball came across from Williams, and CARTER beat Groves in a heading duel, so that the ball spiralled goalwards and deceived Baynham, who had made the mistake of advancing too far.

This goal came as a surprise because Plymouth had not looked dangerous. When the Town hit back Chandler was again fouled but the free-kick was wasted.

Then the young centre-forward threw himself full-length at a centre by Fleming, but the ball flew off his head wide of the net.

McGuffie was a bit unlucky not to get in a shot after a passing duel with Chandler, who was making a good impression by his dash. Plymouth were being helped by the inaccuracy of some of the Luton passing with Groves a culprit in this respect.

TOWN'S APPROACH IMPROVES

The Town's approach improved, and Walden and Ashworth made a splendid move, but it ended with Walden crossing the ball straight to a defender—which happens all too frequently with the Town wingers.

The Town were still having more of the play, and McLaren made a sensational one-handed save from a great shot by Pacey, who cut into the penalty area unexpectedly.

At this stage the Town pressure was intense, but at the same time Plymouth had a more dangerous look in front of goal.

In fact, Baynham would have been able to do nothing about a header from Kirby had it been on target, which, fortunately for the Town, it was not.

Things swung the other way, with Plymouth coming more into it again and it was Baynham's turn to make a desperate one-handed save from a cross by Maloy who had left McNally slithering after his attempted tackle.

The best chance that had fallen to the Town for sometime went astray when Ashworth just failed to run on to a canny pass by Chandler and, although Walden came in at speed he could not quite force the ball through.

Cope was lucky not to be the direct cause of another Plymouth goal twice in quick succession, first when he misjudged the bounce of the ball and then when he nearly lost the ball inside his penalty area.

Then Williams, showing an increasing liking for attack, made a shot which was so close to a

How The Goals Came

CARTER for Plymouth after 11 minutes.
McANEARNEY for Plymouth after 39 minutes.

post that Baynham, scampering across his goal, would have been too late if it had been accurate.

Pacey made another determined effort to force a way through into the penalty area, but was forced back by weight of numbers, but his attempt did bring a shot from Chandler which missed the post by a narrow margin.

FINCHAM SAVES THE SITUATION

A bit more determination might have enabled Fleming to get in a shot, but instead Fincham was able to save the situation by giving away a corner, which McLaren came out and clutched safely.

There was no doubt that conditions were a grave handicap to both teams, because control was difficult and mistakes inevitable.

Even so, Plymouth were playing good football in midfield, and with 39 minutes gone they increased their lead through thrustfulness in the penalty area.

The move began with a pass from Kirby to Maloy who beat McNally quite comfortably. From his cross Carter had two point-blank shots beaten down, one by Baynham and one by McNally. When the ball came back from the second McANEARNEY was on the spot to go down low and head the ball in.

DEFENCE IS ILL AT EASE

Under pressure, the Town defence was ill at ease and prone to mistakes which could not all be attributed to the difficult conditions.

What little sparkle the Town forwards had shown earlier had now faded, and the Plymouth defence was looking much better under pressure. But I thought the Town unlucky not to be awarded a penalty when Chandler was sandwiched as he tried to break through. Half-time:

LUTON 0
PLYMOUTH 2

Plymouth again looked the more dangerous at the start of the second half, and after Baynham had saved from Kirby, Carter should have done better than to shoot yards wide.

But the Town were frankly disappointing, both in attack and defence.

DESPERATE EFFORT

Baynham was fortunate not to be beaten again by Carter, because the ball appeared to be going up over his head until, with a desperate effort, he clawed it down, and Kirby just failed to round off the movement.

Now the Town defence was being riddled by some very shrewd down-the-middle passes. However, they pulled themselves together to make a strong raid, which finished when McGuffie made a pass that was a model of inaccuracy.

The crowd were letting the players know what they thought of the Town's rather futile efforts by ironical cheering, and there was not much improvement until Ashworth forced McLaren to save at the foot of the post following a pass by Walden.

Pacey tried to drive things on by bringing the ball boldly into the Plymouth half but his final pass went well behind Fleming, and out of play.

NOT A SHRED OF CONFIDENCE

The Town were now playing without a shred of confidence and in the most haphazard manner imaginable and it was obvious they had not been able to adapt themselves to these conditions. Plymouth were moving the ball about much more readily and with far greater accuracy.

There was promise in a move begun by Pacey, who sent away Walden, but the winger's centre went straight to a defender. That had been far too often the story in this match.

Rapidly the game was losing its interest with no sign of a goal for the Town, who had already played three hours' football before this match without being able to score.

There was a narrow escape for the Town when a high ball from Anderson hovered about the goal for some seconds before it was pushed to safety.

Then there was further threat from Kirby and McAnearney, with the ball coming over finally from Kirby, but Baynham hung on to it safely.

WIDE OF A POST

In a desperate raid by the Town, Fleming pushed the ball just wide of the far post. Fleming was fouled, but Groves's bid to reach McNally with the free kick misfired because the ball went out of play before the full-back could get there.

Baynham saved a certain goal by diving at the feet of Maloy after Anderson had intercepted a clearance by Bramwell.

Just nothing was going right for the Town and Pacey, who was trying hard to bring about an improvement, ran the ball out of play.

Then Chandler did cause a scare at the Plymouth end when he raced after a long pass by Cope and turned the ball across the face of the goal but there was no Town player near enough to give it the touch it needed.

Nearest attempt to a goal for the Town came from McGuffie who should have scored because he collected a half-hit shot by Ashworth bang in front of goal, but McLaren was just able to deflect the ball wide of the post.

Ashworth was out of luck with a header that flashed past the far post with McLaren apparently beaten. While the Town were having plenty of the play, their finishing was not strong enough to worry the Plymouth defence consistently.

If the crowd had not been disillusioned by half-time they certainly were by now. There were continual mistakes and some idea of the way things were going could be gleaned from the fact that a shot by McGuffie, looking certain to score, struck Fleming and was deflected to safety.

Then McLaren threw himself at the feet of Chandler to make a daring save, but the Town still failed to find the final thrust to put themselves back in the game.

Many of the fans had long since abandoned hope, and the terraces thinned out considerably. Many, obviously, were seeking the comfort of the fireside rather than stay to watch the Town fumble.

Result:

LUTON 0
PLYMOUTH 2
Attendance: 8,400.