

THE TRAGEDY OF TWO PENALTY KICKS

TURNER'S MISS MAY PROVE EXPENSIVE Grim Defensive Work Kept A Point For The Town By CHILTERN

FOR the first time this season, all the results went wrong for the Town, so that they now find themselves three points behind in the race to avoid relegation, and that is a fair margin to make up, though, of course, they still hold the advantage of having seven home matches still to play.

If they can win them, and one cannot be optimistic about that in view of their present form, they can escape the drop, but it is obvious from last Saturday's results that they must rely on their own efforts and not on the failure of their companions in distress.

WHEN the final summing up comes, they may reflect bitterly on the penalty miss that cost them a point at Walsall on Saturday and also on the strange decision by the referee that caused a penalty to be awarded against them.

Even the home fans were firmly of the view that to penalise Bramwell for a handling offence was harsh in the extreme and the Town players were scarcely able to believe their eyes when they saw the referee pointing to the penalty spot.

Protest was unavailing and Palin carefully rolled the ball past Bayham to put Walsall level after 14 minutes.

Early Advantage Was Neutralised

THAT neutralised an advantage that the Town have enjoyed only rarely this season, of being a goal ahead in the opening minutes.

On this occasion, it was not a forward who succeeded, which perhaps was an apt commentary on what was to follow, but Morton, who scored with a first-time shot following a half-clearance after a corner by Clarke.

Next incident was the penalty miss by Turner after McKechnie, who came in for a good deal of rough usage had been brought down by Eden.

Turner made Boswell move the wrong way, but he pulled his shot so badly that the ball finished at least a yard wide of the post, S

something in which it was near impossible to achieve accuracy.

Morton's successful snap shot should have pointed the way, but the bald fact was that, during the whole of the first half, they scarcely produced another worthwhile effort.

Walsall Learned The Lesson

AT still level, it looked heavy odds against the Town hanging on to a point, but they did so as the result of some dour defensive work, although they had a few narrow escapes.

Obviously, Walsall had learned from the Town's mistakes before the interval because they blazed away at goal from all sorts of ranges and angles so that Bayham had some ticklish situations with which to cope.

All credit to him that he did so, though even allowing for the force of the wind, I felt that he should not have put so many clearance kicks out of touch as he did during the second half.

One Shot Crashed Against The Bar

THAT was the only blemish on an otherwise first-class display, but there was one shot which he could do nothing about and that was a free-kick by Dudley that was caught by the wind and the ball crashed against the bar.

Fortunately, most of Walsall's efforts, as they came from Meek, Hodgkisson and Dudley, rose too high, otherwise even the vigilance of Bayham might not have proved enough for his side to hold on to this badly needed point.

Groves Failed To Take His Chance

IN the conditions, good football was a near impossibility,

and neither team really had the skill to even overcome them partially.

Result was a scrappy, scrambling sort of game, and the home fans were so unimpressed that they started to leave the terraces in droves well before the end.

When conceding that it was not a day that favoured forwards in the slightest, the display of the Town attack can be described only as mass disappointment.

Latest attempt to solve the long-standing inside-left problem by recalling Groves there, was a complete failure.

McKechnie The Most Effective Forward

ONLY rarely did he achieve anything of a constructive nature and it looks as if the manager will have to think again when he comes to consider his team selection for the coming vital week-end.

Not that Groves was the only one not to find his form because Davies was almost entirely in the grip of Eden and Turner's contribution to the general effectiveness was only slight.

Which left the wingers, of whom McKechnie was the better and although he was playing out of position, he was easily the most effective attacker in the first half.

Only Meagre Support In Second Half

AFTERWARDS, only meagre support came his way, but it does seem that adversity has been the means of solving one problem. About the other wing I am not so sure, although Clarke did not waste much in the way of material but at the same time, he was not very ambitious and the Town badly needed the inspiration of the spark that Walden could have brought.

There was plenty of fighting spirit and hard endeavour in defence in which no-one did better than the old stalwarts, Morton and Kelly.

Kelly Proved To Be A Great Barrier

MORTON has come back into the team, showing much of his old form, while Kelly was a great

FOR THE RECORDS

WALSALL 1
Palin (pen.)
LUTON TOWN 1
Morton

WALSALL: Boswell, Palin, Sharples, Hill, Eden, Dudley; Meek, O'Neill, Wiggins, Hodgkisson, Wilts.

LUTON TOWN: Baynam; Daniel, Bramwell; Morton, Kelly; Pricey; Clarke; Turner, Davies, Groves, McKechnie.

Referee: L. J. Tirebuck. Hailfax. Attendance: 8,960.

barrier down the middle, so that the lively Wiggins had little or no opportunity.

With the defence in this mood, there must be hope for the Town, if only the forwards can regain their scoring touch.

Both Daniel and Bramwell did well against two dangerous wingers, Pricey had an adequate sort of game and the whole defence hung on grimly in the face of considerable difficulty in the second half, with Baynam most effective last line.

Good All-round Show By Reserves

A GOOD all-round display gave the Town Reserves a comfortable 3-1 victory over the table-toppers at Kenilworth-road on Saturday, and had it not been for a fine defensive display by Plymouth, centre-half, Fincham, the score could have been even greater.

Goalkeeping mistakes by McLaren gave the Town their first two goals. He went the wrong way for a shot by Scott after a timely pass by Chandler, and Goldie dribbled round him for the second. McGuffie scored Luton's third in the second half from a penalty that was ordered to be re-taken because the goalkeeper had moved.

Plymouth were presented with a gift goal, when a goal-kick by Ross went straight to Trebilcock, who lobbed it into the net. After checking with a linesman that the ball had passed outside the area, the referee awarded the goal.