

TOWN'S DREADFUL RECORD WORSENS AT WALSTALL

ONLY ONE GOAL IN SEVEN AWAY GAMES

Will O'Rourke Be Given His Chance This Week?

By CHILTERN

EXASPERATING and disappointing. That is what the Town have become to their band of loyal supporters. I nearly said unpredictable as well, but that would have been a misnomer because they are completely predictable away from home where even the scoring of a single goal these days has become an event of extraordinary importance.

They have the amazing and shocking record of having failed to score in six of their last seven away League games and, in the other, they were limited to a single goal and that was at Bristol where they were beaten 5-1.

JUST why this state of affairs should exist is difficult to say, but it does seem to me that the team as a whole tends to accept defeat too easily and that there is not sufficient determination, especially after they go into arrears.

Saturday's match at Walsall was a classic example of how not to gain points away from home.

No-one could really pinpoint one department as being the weakness that led to a disaster that could have been greater had Walsall made much more use of their chances.

Home Goalkeeper Was Never Tested

TRUTH was that it was a team failure, and discussing the affair afterwards with Town officials, we easily came to a unanimous conclusion that the only Town player who was better than his Walsall counterpart was Baynham, though Reid was put down as dead heating with his opposite number, Hodgkisson.

Not that anyone had a real chance to judge the ability of White, the home goalkeeper, because he did not have a difficult shot to save during the match—evidence of the lacklustre, punchless nature of the Town attack.

Headache Recurs For The Manager

THIS was all the more disappointing after the Cup performance against Reading, which many people regarded as perhaps the turning point for the Town.

However, this performance took all the gilt off the display of the previous week and renewed the headache that has never been very far away from Manager Bill Harvey this season, or for that matter, since he has been here.

When I saw him immediately

better-than-average rating, the comparative newcomer, Reid.

Here, obviously, is a real craftsman, but he will need more help than was forthcoming on this occasion if he is to reach his true potential.

Several times he began a move, raced into the open space for a pass, only for it never to come. Such openings as were created came from him, but Smith, for whom he made two or three half-chances, had not the thrust to make full use of them.

Smith Shaped Well At Outside-left

AS I read the situation, Reid can be the long-awaited link in the middle of the field, but the need is for greater striking power in order to make the fullest use of his ability.

Turner, much in the grip of McPherson and often playing far deeper than was necessary, had an unproductive time and such sparkle as Smith showed was mostly on the surface.

With an hour gone, Smith was shaped to outside-left where he shaped well enough to cause thoughts that he could well be

afterwards he said, "That's the biggest roasting we have had this season. We were lucky to get away so lightly."

Gap Of Four Points Has Opened Up

HOW right he was, because with the Town defence yielding so easily, Walsall should have had more goals.

Now the position in the League table has taken a serious turn for the worse because not only have the Town dropped a place, but a gap of four points has opened up between them and the teams who are clear of the relegation zone at the moment.

That is a pretty considerable margin at this time of the season, especially when a team is as much out of form away from home as are the Town.

O'Rourke May Be Given His First-team Chance

WHAT will happen now so far as team selection is concerned. I do not pretend to know, but Mr. Harvey's ears pricked when I told him that the 18-years-old John O'Rourke had done the hat-trick for the Reserves.

Inexperienced this boy may be, but he obviously has a nose for goals, and the manager's first reaction on Saturday was that he will be in the senior side this week.

Whether that will turn out to be the case remains to be seen, but after Saturday's showing, things have come to such a pass that something designed to bring more goals must be tried and here would seem to be the solution at hand.

Craftsman Reid Will Need More Help

THERE was little discernible pattern in attack at Walsall, with the only one to earn a

used to advantage in this problem position.

McKechie Neglected On The Wing

NOBODY is any the wiser about whether McKechie can be an asset on the left wing after seeing him in this match, because he was grossly neglected, scarcely ever received a workable pass and there was no way of measuring whether he is fitted to the left wing.

Having been kept out of the game so long, he did not seem to be able to get into it when he switched inside, a move that did not bring real improvement.

Much of what passes reached their objective went to Fairchild, who, however, failed signally to make accurate use of the ball.

Home Wing-halves Were Able To Attack

PART of the reason for the failure of the attack can be traced to the monotonous way in which passes went astray and this is a basic principle of the game that needs urgent attention.

With so little threat coming from the Town forwards, the home wing-halves, Palin and

Wills, were able to give a good deal of support to the men in front of them and were continually coming through with the ball, something that did not improve matters for the tottering Town defence.

Town Had No Grip On Middle Of Field

CONVERSELY, Pacey and McGuffie failed to take anything approaching a grip on the middle of the field and a lot of the Town's trouble stemmed from this single factor.

Nor was Fincham in anything like his recent form, and gaps appeared all over the place.

In the circumstances, Morton and Bramwell were in real difficulties which they could not overcome, and there was always considerably more threat from the home wingers, particularly Meek, than was the case with those of the Town.

Baynham could be blamed for the third goal, but otherwise he had little chance, and the cover given him was rarely adequate.

Good Start Only Raised False Hopes

AT the start the Town, inspired by Reid, moved so well in midfield as to raise hopes which proved to be entirely false.

However, as the game went on it became obvious that Walsall were the faster, more direct team, and in fact should have taken the lead before they did, in the 20th minute.

This was through Wiggins after Pacey had failed to get his head to a centre from Hodgkisson, Mor-

ton had been unable to clear, and Baynham had got one hand to the ball without being able to stay its progress.

Town Protests At Award Of Second Goal

ALTOGETHER, a scrappy sort of goal, but nothing to the second, which came six minutes later when, after the ball had crossed and re-crossed the goal, Fincham turned it goalwards.

Baynham held the ball, but the referee ruled that it had crossed the line, a decision with which the Town disagreed forcibly.

In addition, I thought the ball had gone out of play before Fincham kicked it.

However, the Town could not grumble about being two down at half-time, and the third came after 56 minutes, when Wiggins headed in a centre Baynham had failed to cut out, and the scoring was completed 21 minutes from the end when Foster nipped in to head through a cross by Meek.

O'Rourke's Hat-trick For The Reserves

A HAT-TRICK by O'Rourke, who has now scored four goals in two games in the Town's colours since joining them from Chelsea, got the Town Reserves their second win of the season at Kenilworth-road on Saturday.

Apart from a spell midway through the first half, when Crystal Palace took a 2-1 lead, the Town, sounder in defence and with greater thrust on the wings, were well in control.

It was the through ball down the middle that caused all the

FOR THE RECORDS	
WALSALL	4
Wiggins (2), Fincham (own goal), Foster	
LUTON TOWN	0
WALSALL: White; Roper, Sharples; Palin, McPherson, Wills; Meek, Matthews, Wiggins, Hodgkisson; Foster.	
LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Morton, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, McGuffie; Fairchild, Smith, Turner.	
Reid, McKechie.	
Referee: A. W. Jones (Liverpool).	
Attendance: 3,863.	

confusion in the Palace lines, and it was from these that O'Rourke got his goals.

In all three cases he left the goalkeeper completely stranded, and for his first and third goals he dribbled round Jackson before turning the ball into an empty net.

O'Rourke's goals came in the eighth, 37th and 60th minutes, and Palace scored in the 15th and 31st minutes through Foster and Holsgrove.