

City had to work hard for the points

The only adjective that describes Cambridge City's 2-0 home Southern League (Premier Division) win over Margate on Saturday is workmanlike, writes Peter Fearn.

Because the styles of the two clubs clashed, the game was a dull performance from the spectators' point of view and the City goals — one in each half — were just about all they had to shout about.

Every time City tried to make a constructive move then Margate would block it with obstructive methods. This happened so often that it all became very boring. The only problem really confronting City was how to get over these crude methods for, although they had a lot of the play, they were having most of their approach work cut off by a defence admirably marshalled by centre half Harrop.

Lackadaisical

In the early stages of the match the home-side seemed to sense that there was very little to be had and their play became almost lackadaisical instead of crisp. Too many passes found the opposition and too many shots were wide of the mark while at the other end the only danger was when Tommy Carroll had to clear off the line from Harrop.

After some good work by left winger Billy Wall, City took a 30th minute lead when Alan Gregory rose into the air to nod home a similar type of ball that he had missed hopelessly only minutes before.

This goal came as something of a relief to all except the Kent club, for it did not look then as though the Milton Road side could lose as Margate's finishing was so poor that it was obvious they would never find the net.

Undoubtedly City deserved their half-time lead, but it was disappointing that they did not have a bigger margin in hand. It was even worse to consider that the standards were not to be raised in the second period when there was plenty of kick and rush but few moves with design. The City kept trying but they could rarely produce a four man move, all too often the players being robbed in possession or the passes being intercepted or else they were simply knocked off the ball.

Great save

In defence Carroll and Brendan McNally kept the flag flying, while in attack the spearhead of Bailham and Gregory was working well, with Gerry Ward always a floating menace, as he kept trying to open up the game. Brian Caine brought off one great save as he collided with wing half Blackley, but this was the only time he was in any real danger.

It was left to Bailham to make the issue safe when he took a simple chance given to him on a plate by Gregory in the 78th minute. Afterwards it was pointed out in the home dressing room that the centre forward might have been slightly offside but no-one, including the Margate defence, appealed for such a decision on the field.

From then on it was just a case of playing out time for the last 12 minutes and this was accomplished in the same undistinguished vein.

Cambridge City: Caine; Carroll, Poole; Moyses, McGugan, McNally; Spears, Ward, Bailham, Gregory, Wall.

Alan Payne at his dazzling best

If Cambridge United colts owed Saturday's victory to any one player, it must have been to Alan Payne. The team captain was at inside forward for this Mercia League Cup match and it was his dazzling inspiration which coaxed



The Margate goalkeeper, Brian Hughes, lies on his back in the goalmouth, after Alan Gregory, the City inside forward, had headed home City's first half goal.

United have the skill but they are so frustrating

If Cambridge United could be guaranteed two goals in the first half hour of every game then they would be the best side in the Southern League, comments David Hallett.

Although it could be said that any side given a two goal start would be made to look a good one, there is sound reasoning behind my opening statement.

In so many games this season United have started like world beaters doing everything possible but score. The posts have been hit and defenders have cleared off the line but so often the ball has not finished in the back of the net.

On Saturday, in their Southern League game at Rugby, United started as if they were going to run up a mammoth total. The home defence was torn to shreds by the eager and skilful opponents and Gerry Baker and David Barrett had efforts cleared from the line with the goalkeeper beaten.

Penalty miss

Once again however the ball would not go between the posts and gradually the confidence displayed by the Cambridge players drained away and things started to go wrong. In their first real attack Rugby were awarded a penalty when the referee adjudged Walsh had been pushed. However a form of justice was done when the Rugby player-manager hit his spot kick wide of the right-hand post.

However this let off did not substitute for the failure of United's forwards to score themselves and after the restart Rugby swarmed to the attack and it was the turn of the United defence to look unsure. Rodney Slack made a superb diving save right from the restart before the home side took the lead through their wing-half Dick Bennett.

This goal obviously rocked the visitors and had the home for-

wards taken their chances they could have pulled even further away. With some dogged determination United hung on but once again the forwards failed in their efforts and it was left to Gerry Graham, a wing half to equalise with a glorious shot from 25 yards.

Felton shines

In United moments of glory in the first half, Graham Felton, the 16-year-old apprentice professional making his Southern League debut, had a storming game and looked the visitors' most dangerous forward.

Several times the youngster left his full back standing as he swept down the right touch line and twice Smethurst had to make flying saves to prevent the winger scoring with accurately placed centre-cum-shots.

It was Felton who provided the corner kick that Baker headed past Smethurst only to see the ball kicked off the line.

After the interval the player faded from the picture mainly through the lack of service from his colleagues, but when he did get the ball he showed that his

early runs were no flash in the pan and that he could repeat them still although the full back now knew what to expect.

Roy Kirk, the club manager, had plenty to be pleased about by Felton's performance even if he could not be so thrilled about the rest of the team.

Rugby: Smethurst; Bramwell, Lawton; Bennett, Walker, Wright; Morrow, Denial, Underwood, Walsh, Senior.

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