

Tigers lose the plot

Hyde Utd.....3

Leigh.....3

HYDE went from kings to clowns in eight crazy minutes on Saturday, allowing an apparently well-beaten Leigh to come back from 3-0 down (David Jones writes).

The Tigers were looking good until the 73rd minutes, when Vinnie Brockie was brought on for Val Owen. Five minutes later, the brilliant Lutel James was replaced by Paul Varden ... and then it started go wrong.

Angry fans claimed the double substitution affected the shape of the team, but it would be wrong to blame this shambles on manager Mike McKenzie.

The defence were like lemmings hell-bent on destruction. They were feeble and flat footed, with as much idea of cover as a stripper.

With eight minutes left Leigh, my choice for the poorest Unibond League side to visit Ewen Fields all season, were waiting to be put out of their misery.

Instead, generous Hyde gave them a point, and it might have been more.

Home fans said a Rostron shot that seemed to hit the bar, actually crashed off a stanchion, 18 inches over the line.

We should have known things would be tough when Paul Snape had a rising shot brilliantly kept out by Dave Felgate, then fired right at the keeper.

The Tigers created all the first-half pressure, but failed to stamp their authority. However, it was different after the break.

Sixty seconds into the half, the ball ran loose from a corner and Snape scrambled it over the line. Two minutes later, Owen beat two defenders in a run into the box, and shot into the bottom corner.

Hyde overwhelmed Leigh and, after 53 minutes, James lashed home the ball after Felgate had dropped a tame Snape header.

When Lee Cryer waltzed past a slow defender to shoot past Jon Scargill, on 82 minutes, we thought it would be a token goal.

However, six minutes later, Keith Evans - alone on the edge of the box - pumped a shot in the top corner.

Suddenly, it was panic stations; and, with time almost up and defenders racing around like headless chickens, Cryer latched on to a ball that bounced around the goal area to get Leigh's leveller.

Hyde: Scargill 6, Finley 7, Annan 6, Wilson 6, Garton 6, Lambert 6, Kimmins 6, Owen 8, James 9, Snape 6, Nolan 7. Subs: Brockie 6 for Owen (73), Varden 6 for James (80), Switzer.

Leigh: Felgate, Keary, Lockie, Hill, Schofield, Kay, Smyth, Ridings, Shaw, Evans, Rostron. Subs: Cryer for Schofield (25), James for Keary (52), Brady.

Ref: David Naylor (Stutton in Ashfield).