

Tigers topple league leaders

Hyde Utd.....3

Leek Town.....1

by **DAVID JONES**

REPUTATIONS counted for nothing on Saturday when Hyde, whom some had written off as title contenders, made the UniBond leaders look ordinary.

Yet Mike McKenzie faced horrendous problems at the start when Dave Nolan and Martin Jones arrived late having thought the game was to be played in Staffordshire.

Nolan, who had not missed a Tigers game for three seasons, was named as a substitute. The goalkeeper's jersey was given to Arthur Williams, who made his first appearance since undergoing surgery during the summer. He lasted just four minutes.

But the late arrivals were quickly forgotten as Hyde, firing on all cylinders, cut Leek to ribbons.

It took the Tigers 20 minutes to take the lead, but the goal was worth waiting for. Ged Kimmins surged into the box to clip in a cross, and Vinnie Brockie supplied a thigh-high shot which left Tony Bullock grabbing air.

Four minutes later, Bullock was in trouble again. Val Owen looped over a cross, and Jason Donnelly drilled home at the far post.

With Lutel James weaving his magic more goals looked on, and the promised strike came deep into first-half injury time, when Paul Cox lashed in a low ball which took a deflection to beat Bullock.

However, Town picked themselves up after the break, and it was no surprise when Martin Filson rose unchallenged to head home a Gary Bauress free kick on 54 minutes.

Filson went close to netting another, moments later, but this time his close-range shot crashed against the crossbar.

Then, Paul Heginbotham brought a great save from Jones.

But the fightback was shortlived, and Hyde had the chance to bury Town when John Diskin fouled James, and the referee pointed to the spot.

Unfortunately, with penalty ace Nolan still on the bench, it was left to Brockie to take the kick, but his shot was too weak, and Bullock gathered the ball with ease.

Hyde weren't worried, but Leek became more and more disheartened as time went on and, to compound their woes, Heginbotham was sent off for dissent just before the end of the game.

Hyde: Williams, Gallagher 7, Cox 7, Wilson 8, Reid 7, Brockie 7, Kimmins 7, Owen 7, James 7, Carroll 7, Donnelly 7. Subs: Jones 7 for Williams (4), Nolan 7 for Donnelly (80), Henshaw for Owen (89).

Leek: Bullock, Locke, Bates, Ogley, Diskin, Evans, Leicester, Ellis, Heginbotham, Filson, Bauress. Subs: Carter (for Ellis 22), Batho for Leicester (68), Beeby for Evans (46).

Ref: David Pugh (Bebington).