

Football pays the penalty in these games

PARK LIFE

By Steve Brown

I'VE JUST been informed that our FA Cup saga continues next week at the Manor Ground, home of Oxford United.

With one of the most bizarre endings to a cup tie, I think everyone would prefer another 90 minutes of football.

How many times have we seen games lost on the infamous penalty shoot-out?

Shoot-outs are for the Wild West and not football matches.

We don't have to look back very far to remember the heart-ache we all felt, seeing our nation lose out to the German's on spot-kicks in 1996. Also the hurt and embarrassment felt at losing to another Ryman League side Basingstoke.

I know it's easy to say we all know the rules before the competition started, but football is the loser when games are decided like this.

Maybe in the not too distant future we shall return to the days when games were replayed, followed by extra time with another game being played until the game had a result.

Too many times we have, as a nation, stumbled at the dreaded stage of the penalty shoot-out that has not reflected how well we had played in various world tournaments.

If I'm correct we actually never lost a game in that Euro '96 tournament, and with it being that far into the competition, surely the better way of deciding it would have been to have a replay?

Going back a few years now, I remember staying up late to watch Midweek sports special, which was usually on a Wednesday night.

I always stayed up to watch it, as it always had goals from the games that were played that night.

One game that stuck in my memory was Derby County v Plymouth, Peter Shilton who was at Derby at the time was injured and his understudy was thrown in at the deep end. Derby ran out comfortable winners, beating Plymouth 6-2 with a very young Martin Taylor.

I remember some of the saves they showed. That was my first memory of Martin.

Last week at Oldham, Martin turned in a performance that surpassed my memory of that. It really was a complete all round display of goalkeeping.

HOW THEY STAND

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Notts Co	16	4	2	2	9	6	6	1	1	15	7	33
Wigan	15	6	1	0	15	3	2	6	0	15	10	31
Preston	16	5	1	2	11	9	3	5	0	13	8	30
Burnley	16	6	1	1	18	6	2	4	2	5	5	29
Bristol R	16	4	3	1	9	5	4	2	2	9	6	29
Stoke	16	4	2	2	11	7	4	2	2	12	8	28
Brentford	15	5	2	1	14	6	2	4	1	9	8	27
Luton	16	6	2	0	18	9	2	1	5	4	8	27
Gillingham	16	5	1	2	16	8	2	4	2	11	12	26
Millwall	14	3	3	1	9	8	3	2	2	11	9	23
Bury	16	4	3	1	17	12	1	4	3	8	8	22
Wycombe	16	3	3	2	12	10	2	4	2	9	10	22
Bour'm'th	15	5	2	1	13	5	1	2	4	6	13	22
Scunth'rpe	16	2	2	4	7	11	3	2	3	8	11	19
Wrexham	16	3	2	3	10	10	1	2	5	7	20	16
Oldham	15	2	1	4	8	9	2	2	4	8	11	15
Bristol C	15	2	6	0	11	6	1	0	6	4	14	15
Oxford	16	2	2	4	9	10	2	1	5	7	12	15
Reading	15	3	2	3	10	10	1	1	5	11	18	15
Cardiff	16	1	6	1	8	8	1	1	6	8	15	13
Blackpool	16	1	4	3	8	14	1	2	5	9	16	12
Camb Utd	16	2	3	3	15	15	0	2	6	8	15	11
Chesterfld	15	1	2	4	5	8	1	3	4	5	9	11
Colchester	15	1	3	3	10	14	1	2	5	7	20	11