NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN CUP-TIE

48/49

Last-Minute Equaliser In 10-Goals Thriller

By Chiltern

"Fantastic" is perhaps the only word which adequately describes the proceedings at Kenilworth-road on Saturday when we saw the sort of game which happens only once in a life-time.

Most people expected it to be a close struggle, but nobody expected a rush which brought goals with such regularity that there was sometimes a danger of losing count.

When the smoke of battle had cleared away, all Luton fans knew only too well that the Town had lost a gilt-edged chance of passing into the last eight when their goal fell for the fifth time with less than a minute of extra time remaining

THE watches were out and the seconds were being ticked away when Leicester gained that final, fatal corner which followed almost directly a free kick.

There was less than a minute remaining when Griffiths placed the ball to take the corner and with an effort kicked it not quite into the goalmouth.

It was not the sort of corner that the best coaches advocate, for it was short and rather low, but Jack Lee, the Leicester hero, moved to it quickly and somehow got his head to it to screw it into the net.

This Game Will Live In The Memory

BERNARD STRETEN'S gesture of disappointment conveyed adequately what 20,000 Luton fans were feeling, and instead of the Town snatching a thrilling victory which would have lived in the club's annals for ever more, they have to start all over again at Leicester next Saturday.

Even so, this game will live in the memories of all who saw it, for there has not been so much excitement at Kenilworth-road since the Town put the aristocratic Newcastle nose out of joint with a second-half rally which turned arrears of three goals into a 4—3 win.

Tremendous Fighting Spirit Of The Town

THE same sort of spirit was apparent in this match, for there were times when the Town seemed to be fighting a losing battle, and nothing looked more ominous for them than when Griffiths gave the City the lead in the fourth minute of extra time.

He was left with an almost ridiculously easy chance of which he took full toll, and there must have been heavy hearts among the Town fans.

Already, Luton had fought back to wipe out arrears twice, but it seemed scarcely feasible that they could lead again, for the first goal in the extra period is usually decisive.

Brilliant Goal From Charlie Watkins

THE downcast were soon uplifted, for showing tremendous powers of fighting back, the Town swept to the attack, and one of the best moves of the day enabled Kiernan to level the scores, and produce excitement even greater than that which had gone before. Brennan made the perfect opening, and Kiernan made no mistake.

The excitement was nothing to what happened three minutes later when Charlie Watkins gained possession of the ball on the left wing well over 20 yards from goal, and unhesitatingly drove in a terrific high shot which had McGraw beaten from the time it left the inside left's foot.

Into the top of the net the ball crashed, and then everybody went mad

Neither Team Deserved To Lose

"WHAT a goal with which to win a Cup-tie," must have been the general feeling, but it was not destined to be, and when one looks back over the game, it must be admitted that Leicester would have been undeserving losers

In fact, after that gruelling 120 minutes, it would have been a pity had either team lost.

At the same time, there will always be the feeling that the Town should not have lost their advantage with only those few seconds remaining.

After giving full marks to Lee for his splendid opportunism, there remains the suspicion that the covering of the defence for this last corner was not all it might have been.

Fine Opportunism Of Jack Lee

STILL, as the players were saying after the match, had the corner been an orthodox one, everything would have been all right, but the fact that it was short took them rather by surprise, and Lee's quick summing up of the situation did the rest.

This very fine centre-forward stamped his personality irrevocably on this game with a first half "hat-trick," and on this showing is an England prospect of the future.

Certainly, he is the most dangerous leader I have seen this season, but he received such fine support from his colleagues, that what gave us most ground for wonder was why the City are so low in the League table.

Town Are Still In With A Chance

ATTACK was the main strength, and for next Saturday's replay, the Town manager will obviously be giving much thought to discover a way to keep them comparatively quiet.

The Luton defence in fact both defences had a bad day. Whether there will be changes in either for the replay, we can only wait and see, but it is obvious that the Town defence will have to do better than this, if the club is to hold a chance of appearing in the sixth round.

Yet, I do not despair of their chances at Filbert-street, for any team with the ability to fight back after being three times in arrears will take some beating.

First Team To Score More Than One Here

SO, on the basis of while there's life, there's hope, I am not going to contribute to the feeling that the Town's Cup run is at an end.

Incidentally, the City gained distinction by becoming the first team to score more than one goal at Kenilworth-road this season, and they certainly made a thorough job of breaking that particular record.

Lee's first after six minutes gave them the great advantage of drawing first blood, but that was wiped out completely four minutes later with goals from Small and Brennan.

Small kept a cool head when a knee high ball came out to him, and he volleyed cleanly and accurately into the corner of the net.

Brennan's Pluck Brought A Goal

THAT was the equaliser, and a minute later, McCraw was picking the ball out of the net again after Brennan by sheer desperation and pluck had reached a high centre from Waugh and beaten both McCraw and Plummer to it. Brennan was knocked out for his pains, but it was a great goal, and put the Town on top.

They could never really dominate the play though, and when that Brennan was about two yards offside, but it was a bitter pill for the Town to swallow just at that juncture.

Then, on to extra time with four more goals, and an amazing finish of the sort which usually happens only in fiction.

The Game Had Everything

DISAPPOINTING though the final result was, this was a game that had everything. There was speed, deadly finishing, some football worthy of the highest grade, and a refusal to be beaten, which did credit to both teams.

How they maintained the pace on this heavy ground was a puzzle, but they kept at it to the end, and it must have been a gruelling experience.

Perhaps the biggest surprise to the Town was the way in which the defence was pulled to pieces, and they have never before been quite so unhappy this season.

Is This A Pointer For The Replay?

HALL was led a rare dance by Lee, who sold him the dummy time and again, and worried him into making what were for him most unusual mistakes.

I doubt whether Lee will do as well against him again, and Hall's task was made harder by the fact that he was often called across to tackle the lively Adam.

In extra time Hall settled down to something like his usual self, and this may be a pointer for the replay.

Wilson was always struggling against Adam, whose speed took him through time and again, and Morton, too, found the fast-moving Chisholm a great trial.

There was a definite weakness down the right flank, and neither Wilson nor Morton was able to get on top of the left-wing pair.

Streten Played His Part Well

GARDINER, too, although never sparing himself in defence, often found Revie just that half yard in front of him, and the man who perhaps came out best of all was Cooke, who while he could never claim complete ascendancy over Griffiths managed to keep him reasonably quiet.

Five goals against makes the goalkeeper's part look rather bad, but Streten could not be blamed for all these set backs, though I did think he was rather too far out of his goal when Lee scored the first.

However, Streten pulled off some sensational saves when all looked lost, and but for the good work of both him and McGraw, the score might have been even greater.

City's Defence Was No More Successful

FOR all that the Town defence had a sticky day, they must get full marks for all-out trying. They never gave up the fight, and this was a quality, which covered shortcomings in other directions.

In addition, the going was all in favour of forwards, and the City's defence fared no better against the smooth-moving Town attack which is a considerable consolation in view of next Saturday's match.

The forwards undoubtedly took the honours, and they played some grand all-along-the-carpet football with Brennan again filling the bill in grand style at centre-forward.

He led the line with courage and ability and was ever ready to fasten on to the slimmest looking chance.

Attractive Football From The Forwards

SMALL was faced by the more capable of the City backs, but contrived to put himself very much in the picture, and is certainly playing well enough to qualify for a regular place in the team.

He and Kiernan have a better understanding now, and the inside man, apart from his two goals which emphasise his value in front of goal, played some attractive football in midfield and made some judicious passes.

One is apt to miss some of Watkins's best work for the simple reason that he does it all so quietly, but no one could miss the rocket-like quality of his goal.

With Waugh he combined well though in the first half, there were times when they kept the ball rather closer than circumstances demanded. Waugh had his bright moments, when he showed Frame a clean pair of heels and could claim to have had a very useful game.

Reserves Lose Their Unbeaten Record

THE Reserves' unbeaten record in the Combination Cup went by the board at Norwich on Saturday where they lost by a margin of one goal for the second time this season.

Former colleague, Alan Driver laid the foundation of defeat with an early goal for the City and although Bill Burtenshaw equalised, Ashman and Dolding scored for Norwich to give them a 3-1 lead by half-time.

The score remained at that until three minutes from the end when Bill Burtenshaw obtained his second success of the match, but it came too late to raise hopes of a point-saving rally, especially as Bill Gripton was then limping at outside left. Yesterday his ankle injury was X-rayed.

For The Records

LUTON TOWN 5
Small, Brennan, Kiernan (2), Watkins.

LEICESTER CITY 5
Lee (4), Griffiths.

LUTON TOWN.—Streten; Wilson, Cooke; Morton, Hall, Gardiner; Small, Kiernan, Brennan, Watkins, Waugh.

LEICESTER CITY. — McGraw; Frame, Scott; Harrison (W.), Plummer, King; Griffiths, Revie, Lee, Chisholm, Adam.

Referee, H. Jackson, Leeds.

Attendance, 26,280.

Town Chairman Got His Man

The Town chairman, Mr. Charles Jeyes, got his man on Saturday, despite considerable opposition in the shape of firm offers from Middlesbrough and Blackburn Rovers.

He signed 21-years-old John E. Taylor, inside-left of Stockton, the North-Eastern League club, for a fee verging on £1,000. Taylor arrives in Luton to-morrow, and may have his first outing in the Reserves on Saturday.

Taylor shows such promise that he has brought the scouts regularly to Stockton, and the Town feel they have brought off a smart stroke of business.

LUTON TOWN F.C.

F.A. Cup—5th Round Replay

Saturday, February 19

LEICESTER CITY

v.

LUTON TOWN

Kick-off 2.45 p.m.

ALL TICKETS WILL BE ON SALE AT THE KENILWORTH ROAD OFFICE FROM 10 a.m. TO-MORROW (Wed.)

PERSONAL APPLICATIONS ONLY, INCLUDING SEASON TICKET HOLDERS.

Reserved Seats at 7/6 Centre Stand; Reserved Seats at 5/- Stand Wings.

Seats in Double-Decker Stand, Unreserved, 4/-.

P. COLEY (Secretary).

"EVERYMAN'S DOG BOOK." Harley Cranfield. No Ex- owner should be without it. Price for (by post 1/4) Obtainable from etc. Author, "Link House," 282a, Hin for rd, Luton ock: NOTICE to Trade We have nce quantities of goods which do carry Purchase Tax, Shopkeepers therefore deal with us, knowing no losses will be made should Pur Tax be lessened in the next Bu Phone or call, MacLaren's Whol Warehouse, 21/23, Chapel-st, E Luton 1945.