Swansea Grabbed A Point: United Easy Winners

By Chiltern

One point out of four was not the sort of start for which the Town hoped, but that there should have been another point to add is something with which every member of the 15,606 crowd watching the drawn match with Swansea Town on Saturday will agree.

As for Monday's hollow defeat at Sheffield, this was an entirely different matter, the Town giving largely an inept display and being most fortunate to escape so lightly.

To take a line from the Bramall-lane showing with a view to assessing the Town's chances this season would be a mistake, for they can play much better than this and certainly not much worse.

It remains to be seen, too, just what a power Sheffield United will be in the Second Division this season. On their two performances, so far, they are a most formidable combination, but these are early days and start-of-the-season promotion prospects often fade out after a sparkling beginning.

All that can be said now is that in the first half on Monday they looked good enough to carry anyone's money in the "promotion stakes."

When the interval arrived with the Town three goals down and the prospect of facing a stiff breeze in the second half, I thought there was every chance of the Town being concerned in a debacle.

The defence had not been able to cope with the fast-moving United forwards, with the maestro, Jimmy Hagan, appearing here, there and everywhere to prompt his colleagues.

EARLY BLOW TO TOWN

First goal which came from BROOK after seven minutes was a bad blow to the Town's chances, but it was after this setback that they had their best spell.

Quite easily, during this time, they might have levelled the scores, or even gone ahead, and they were dead out of luck when Stobbart chased a long ball down the middle, slipped it past the oncoming Burgin and sent it rolling towards an empty net.

With only a split second to spare, Cox raced across from the left to kick the ball away almost from the line—and United breathed again.

For 27 minutes the score remained 1—0, with the United by far the more dangerous, but with the Town by no means completely out of the picture.

However, as the interval neared the United attack clicked into top gear and, playing some brilliant first-time football, had the Town defence floundering.

Eleven minutes from the interval, HITCHEN secured the ball just outside the penalty area and beat Streten with a shot that found a billet in the top of the net just under the bar, and five minutes later, BROOK put on the third.

This was a splendid effort in which his feint to the right drew the defence the wrong way and opened up a gap through which he drove the ball home.

Fortune smiled on the Town early in the second half, when, unluckily for the United, Latham was injured, and this caused a reorganisation of the attack.

It drew out of it into the defence the chief marksman, Brook, who dropped back to left-half, but even the fact that they were up against 10 men and a virtual passenger did not improve the Town's lot.

United were still the more likely to score goals. Twice this half the Town woodwork was struck, twice the ball passed across the face of the goal with no one able to touch it and, on several occasions, Streten emerged with the ball out of tight corners.

SLUGGISH ATTACK

There were times when the Town pressed for a consolation goal but the attack moved sluggishly compared with the liveliness of the United forwards.

Both inside forwards, Taylor and Davie, tended to hold the ball too long and, as a result, ran into trouble. The open spaces were seldom found, the inside men made poor use of the ball, and the attack as a whole lacked crispness and quickness of movement.

Neither Davies nor Mitchell made the most of what was, admittedly, limited material, and the latter showed a marked liking for stopping to turn inside on his right foot when he could have made ground by carrying on.

Stobbart made quite a bright start and worried the United defence quite a lot, but gradually the lack of support meant that he had to fend for himself mostly, and he was slowly blotted out of the picture for this reason.

There was a lack of domination in the half-back play, particularly in the first half when Watkins found Hagan a regular will o' the wisp.

He was much below par, and Shanks, while getting through much work, did not reach a high standard.

Owen did not have a happy first-half, either, against Brook whom, too often, he allowed to gain control of the ball before tackling, but he came back to something like his best afterwards when, of course, there was not so much danger down the middle.

Both Cooke and Aherne faced difficult tasks, but struggled through gallantly and with a certain amount of success.

Streten should shoulder some blame for the second goal, but he saved many other serious situations and his splendid work, combined with some luck and the injury to Latham served to keep the score down to reasonable proportions.

Saturday's match was a different story altogether with the Town on top until the closing minutes and having sufficient scoring opportunities to have got off the mark with a substantial victory.

Easy chances were allowed to slip by and the Town paid the penalty for their profligacy in the last four minutes when Swansea scored twice to snatch out of the fire a match that seemed already won and lost.

Shortly before these happenings Streten had been knocked out and took a minute or two to recover. Previously, the Town were going on confidently with two points in their grasp and then, suddenly, Swansea launched a counter-offensive

Four minutes from the end Allchuch found himself with only Streten to beat, but the goal-keeper managed to get his body in the way of the ball which rebounded and Owen hooked it off the line.

It went straight to SCRINE who was racing goalwards and went into the net off his head. With the referee almost ready to blow for the finish, there came the second sensation.

From a throw-in for which there was bad covering by the Town, the ball was pushed to SCRINE, who spied a gap in defence, took the ball on and drove it past the oncoming Streten. An attempt by Owen to kick away failed.

FAILED TO CONSOLIDATE

These events were greeted in almost stunned silence, for before they happened, the Town had been very much in command of the situation

TAYLOR gave them the lead after 35 minutes and MITCHELL increased it 10 minutes after the interval. Then came the failure to consolidate the position with further goals when the chances cropped up which led the way to the dramatic and, from the Town viewpoint, most unfortunate ending.

There was promise in the way the Town attack moved, though the inside trio were not so dangerous as were the wingers Davies and Mitchell who were lively raiders.

Shanks was the better wing-half and Owen had much the better of the tussle with Turnbull, as did Aherne with O'Driscoll. Cooke was worried at times by Bellis, but, in the main, good approach work by Swansea did not lead to much danger in front of goal.

What came Streten's way was accomplished coolly and confidently, but he was not kept so busy as was King, who, at times, underwent a regular bombardment.

For The Records

LUTON TOWN 2
(Taylor, Mitchell).
SWANSEA TOWN 2
(Scrine 2).

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Cooke, Aherne; Watkins, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Taylor (J.), Moore, Davie, Mitchell.

SWANSEA TOWN: King; Elwell, Beech (G.); Lucas, Weston, Williams (D.); O'Driscoll, Scrine, Turnbull, Allchurch, Bellis.

SHEFFIELD UNITED .. 3
(Brook 2, Hitchen).
LUTON TOWN 0

SHEFFIELD UNITED: Burgin; Furniss, Cox; Hitchen, Latham, Shaw; Ringstead, Smith (F. A.), Brook, Hagan, Hawksworth.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Cooke, Aherne; Watkins, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Taylor (J.), Stobbart, Davie, Mitchell.