

GALLANTRY OF TOWN'S TEN MEN

NEVER GAVE UP THE STRUGGLE

Hopes That Owen Will Be Fit For Visit To Swansea

By Chiltern

By a coincidence both the Town and their Reserves figured in matches on Saturday in which a player was injured and was off the field for the whole of the second half.

There, however, the coincidence ended for, in the case of the League side, they were the victims of the injury handicap whereas the Reserves, playing against the Rovers at Bristol, had a numerical superiority during the second half.

Without Sid Owen, who was taken off with a head injury after a collision with Briggs, the Town put up a sterling fight against Birmingham, but suffered their second home defeat of the season.

However, with some of the luck which must attend the efforts of a depleted side, they might have pulled this game out of the fire.

Owen was sent home suffering from bad concussion, while the game was still on, but there are hopes that he will have recovered in time for the visit to Swansea on Saturday, though no decision can be made until later in the week.

Davies Repeatedly Caught The Eye

THERE will be delay, too, before it is known whether Roy Davies will be able to play, though the news of him was brighter yesterday than was thought to be the case immediately after the match on Saturday.

Certainly, he gave no sign of a recurrence of the muscle trouble that affected him previously during the Town's gallant second half fight.

He was one of the players who

caught the eye repeatedly, both at inside-right and at right-half where he spent the greater part of the time after the interval.

Never Gave Up Their Great Fight

IT often happens that a team will rise to the occasion when forced to play a man short and that happened in this match.

The Town, despite the fact that they faced arrears of 3-1, and were in an apparently hopeless situation, never relaxed for a moment in their fight to improve the position.

Could they only have got within a goal of the City, there might have been a really epic story to write, for with this encouragement, the Town might well have produced real uneasiness in the Birmingham defence.

Not Much Luck With Their Shooting

THERE were signs of anxiety against the forceful attacks of the Town's four-man forward line and with any luck at all, the Town would have reduced their arrears in time for them to really hold a chance of drawing level.

Davies was twice unlucky with great shots and then there was that pile-driver from Mitchell that Merrick punched over the bar in style that suggested that he knew very little about it.

Then, there were the three penalty claims by the Town—two of which seemed to have solid foundation—but the referee thought otherwise.

The real tragedy from the Town viewpoint, apart from the major one of Owen's injury, was the City's third goal two minutes after the interval.

Third Goal Was A Bad Blow

BEFORE the Town had settled down to what was an uphill fight, without any warming of the position, Stewart found a way past Ahern and, after drawing Stretton out, beat him with a low shot into the far corner of the net.

That seemed to settle the issue for good and all, but the Town had other ideas, for they rolled up their sleeves, metaphorically speaking, and proceeded to give a really workmanlike display.

The other blow which had a lot to do with their eventual defeat was Birmingham's second goal which came only three minutes after the Town had drawn level.

Setback Greeted The Return Of Owen

IRONICALLY enough, it came immediately after Owen had returned to the field for the last few minutes before half-time and followed a throw-in.

There was a tussle for the ball over on the Town's left flank. First Davies slipped when it looked as if he would clear and then Taylor attempting to get the ball out of the danger zone, kicked it against Warhurst.

It rebounded into the penalty area, and Warhurst gained possession.

His final shot was only half-hit, but the effect was successful enough, for the ball struck the inside of the post and bounced into the net.

Equaliser Had Come Three Minutes Earlier

ONLY three minutes before that occurred Stobbart had put the Town level when he headed the ball almost out of Merrick's hands, after a well-placed free-kick by Mitchell.

That had neutralised the goal obtained, also with a header, by Purdon after 24 minutes and there was something wrong with the Town's covering for a corner kick that this should have been allowed to happen.

Birmingham settled down to the greasy conditions more quickly than the Town and were distinctly threatening in attack, but once the Town got into their stride, they looked a dangerous formation, too, and Purdon's goal came as something of a surprise.

Taylor's Success Was Too Late

BEFORE this happened, the Town had a couple of chances of going ahead, but the finishing was not quite crisp enough.

When the Town's second goal did arrive through the perseverance of Taylor five minutes from the end, it was too late for a desperate late rally to be launched, for two minutes before, Smith had headed Birmingham's fourth goal from a centre by Briggs.

Stretton expected the centre-forward to have a crack at goal and covered his near post.

Instead, Briggs crossed the ball and although Stretton got across his goal very quickly, he could not position himself in time to stop Smith's effort.

Morton Did Finely As Emergency Pivot

SO, there it was. As is usual against Birmingham, there were no points for the Town, but they earned plenty of honour for their glorious fight against the odds.

Every one of the ten men put in everything he knew in that second-half and Morton surprised some people with the quality of his display as an emergency centre-half.

Not that it was surprising really, for this is one of the many positions he has filled successfully in the second team and he made a very fine job of keeping a grip on Briggs who had no chance to repeat previous scoring feats against the Town.

Taylor Switched Back Into The Attack

DAVIES demonstrated that he can be more than useful at inside-right or wing-half and Tay-

FOR THE RECORDS

LUTON TOWN 2

Stobbart, Taylor

BIRMINGHAM CITY . 4

Purdon, Warhurst, Stewart, Smith

LUTON TOWN: Stretton;

Cooke, Ahern; Morton, Owen, Watkins; Davies, Taylor (J), Stobbart, Davie, Mitchell.

BIRMINGHAM CITY:

Merrick; Green, Badham; Boyd, Atkins, Warhurst; Stewart, Purdon, Briggs, Smith, Wardle.

Referee: W. J. Edwards, Yeovil.

Attendance: 15,937.

lor, too, once again showed strength in the tackle during his stay at right-half.

He was moved back into the attack in the hope that his opportunism could put the Town back into the game with a real chance and he made some brave attempts to bore a way through the Birmingham defence.

Mitchell switched over to outside-right for the second-half and with his shooting always a factor in the Town's struggle, he was unlucky not to get his name in the list of scorers.

Davie Formed A Wing On His Own

STOBBART led the line with plenty of zest and spirit and was a rare handful for Atkins who did not look particularly happy against him.

There was some smart footwork from Davies in the first-half and he succeeded quite successfully afterwards in forming a wing partnership on his own.

Purdon "lost" Watkins occasionally, but the left-half had quite a good match and was often up helping the attack after the interval.

Cooke Nearly Caught City Unawares

NOBODY fought harder than Cooke and one of the memories to be retained of this match was his amazing dash up-field which might well have led to a goal to the Town had the pass from Mitchell reached him.

There were times when Cooke was not in full command of the situation against Wardle, but his hard tackling was a feature and he was more successful than his partner.

Ahern opposed in Stewart a tricky winger whom he could not keep in subjection despite the fact that he never gave up the attempt to do so.

Stretton certainly did not suffer by comparison with the present England goalkeeper, Merrick, and he made several brilliant saves, including one in each half from shots that looked almost unstoppable.

Chiltern's Forecasts

F.A. CUP, 2nd ROUND

Bradford v. Bradford C.
Bristol R. v. Weymouth
Buxton v. Aldershot
Chester v. Leyton
Colchester v. Bristol C.
Gillingham v. Rochdale
Ipswich T. v. Exeter C.
Leytonstone v. Newport C.
Lincoln C. v. Grimsby T.
Millwall v. Scunthorpe Utd.
Norwich C. v. Chesterfield
Reading v. Southampton
Southend Utd. v. Oldham Ath.
Swindon T. v. Torquay Utd.
Stockton v. Folkestone
Gateshead v. Guildford C.
Tramada R. v. Blyth Spartans
Walford v. Hartlepool Utd.
Witton Albion v. Workington
Wrexham v. Leyton O.

DIVISION I

Aston Villa v. Bolton W.
Barnsley v. Charlton Ath.
Chelsea v. Blackpool
Huddersfield T. v. Arsenal
Manchester Utd. v. West Brom
Preston N.E. v. Fulham
Stoke C. v. Newcastle Utd.
Sunderland v. Derby C.
Tottenham H. v. Middlesbrough
Wolves v. Manchester City

DIVISION II

Barnsley v. Hull C.
Brentford v. Leeds Utd.
Bury v. Birmingham C.
Coventry C. v. Notts C.
Doncaster R. v. Sheffield Wed.
Everton v. Southampton
Leicester C. v. Cardiff C.
Nottm. Forest v. Rotherham Utd.

Rovers Lost Their Goalkeeper

THE injury in the match at Bristol was to the Rovers' goalkeeper, who was replaced by full-back Lockier for the second half. When the interval came the score was 1-1 Turner having succeeded for the Town.

Somewhat surprisingly, the Rovers fighting with the same zest as the Town first team showed regained their lead, but goals from Hall, following a corner, and Turner, assured the Town of two badly needed points.

The match was played in thick mud and there were pools of water on the pitch at the start. The Town were strong in defence and there was no obvious weakness throughout the whole team.

Three Goals Lead Was Whittled Down

FOR the "A" team, there is another trip to Hastings for a Metropolitan League Cup replay for they lost a 3-0 lead and finished at 3-3 last Saturday. Extra time was started, but lasted only four minutes before the referee decided that the light was too bad to carry on. One of the Town's scorers was the amateur inside-forward, D. Allen, who scored the first goal. Others came from Groves and Kent. Errors by Stibbards contributed to Hastings' first two goals, and they drew level during the second half.

ATHLETICS

Tie In County Championship

Two members of Luton United Athletic Club, R. White and K. Birch, dual-headed for first place in the Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire senior cross-country championship at Bampton (Hants.) on Saturday.

Luton runners fared very well, filling seven of the first ten places. The team award was won by L.U.A.C. who provided the first three runners home.

Vauxhall Motors' team was third, and D. Edwards, who led their team home, finished fifth out of a large field.

Running without team support, J. Lawrence, Old Lutonians, finished ninth.

The course consisted of three two-mile laps of cross-country and one mile of a steepchase course.

The race was started by Air Marshal Sir J. Whitworth-Jones. After the event Squadron-Leader Drake welcomed the Association on its first visit to Huntingdonshire and said he hoped the championship would be staged there again.

Cups and medals were presented by Lady Whitworth-Jones.

First ten home were: 1 R. White (Luton U.A.C.), 2 K. Birch (Luton U.A.C.), 3 D. Edwards (Luton U.A.C.), 4 P. Birch (Bedford and C.A.C.), 5 D. Edwards (Vauxhall Motors A.C.), 6 W. J. Farrar (Bedford and C.A.C.), 7 M. J. 32secs., 7 G. Hyde (Luton U.A.C.), 47mins. 40secs., 8 W. J. Lewis (Crowland A.C.), 47mins. 47secs., 9 J. Lawrence (Old Lutonians A.C.), 47mins. 47secs., 10 H. Nichols (Bedford and C.A.C.), 48mins. 12secs.

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