

Owen's Injury Paved Way For Lucky Arsenal

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 2 ARSENAL 3

Things were going well for the Town until a few minutes before half-time when Owen remained on the ground clutching his ankle after being fouled by Goring and had to have attention.

From that moment onwards, the Town, who were a goal ahead and giving every indication of holding their narrow advantage, found the tide beginning to turn against them.

If ever the misfortune of one team paved the way into the semi-finals of the F.A. Cup for the other, then this was the occasion.

Gaining the advantage of an early goal beautifully headed by Moore which not only enabled them to settle down, but gave them all the confidence in the world, the Town were the better side in the first half.

Hard though they tried, Arsenal could not break down a remarkably efficient defence in which Owen was the king-pin and, by the time the interval arrived, Arsenal's hopes were at a very low ebb.

The goal, after eight minutes, followed a free kick for a foul on Mitchell by Shaw, who headed the ball away in the first instance.

Back it went to Mitchell, who made a short, head-high centre with which MOORE'S head connected and sent the ball out of Swindin's reach.

HANDICAP OF OWEN'S INJURY

At half-time people were saying: "Arsenal have had it," and it certainly looked that way, though the more discerning were wondering exactly what damage had been done to Owen's ankle.

Unfortunately, the damage, which was a recurrence of former trouble, proved to be a considerable handicap and against a re-arranged Arsenal attack which had the strong Roper as its leader, the Town defence did not look so certain-as it had in the first half.

To all intents and purposes Owen was playing on one leg, for not only could he not kick the ball with his right foot, but he could not turn quickly and though he struggled on gallantly, Arsenal scented their opportunity and made the most of it.

For all that, the Town held out until the game was exactly an

hour old and then COX broke away to equalise.

As if the injury to Owen was not sufficient misfortune for one day, the Town fans had the further disappointment of seeing Davies carried off the field with a fractured bone in the ankle 22 minutes from the end.

When that happened the writing was on the wall for all to see and, in the 73rd minute, COX beat Cooke again to put Arsenal ahead for the first time.

STRUGGLED GALLANTLY

When MILTON added another two minutes later, it was all over, but even then, the Town were not done with and, two minutes after that, MITCHELL reduced their arrears from a penalty awarded against Daniel for hands.

Gallantly though they struggled, there was never much hope of the Town forcing a replay.

At the end, though, they received the sort of reception that is usually accorded to winners, which they might very well have been, but for the misfortunes with which they met.

The Town supporters showed their disapproval of Goring's foul, which brought him a second caution from the referee, in unmistakable fashion, and it was most unlucky for the Town that an incident of this sort should, in large measure, prevent the realisation of their ambition.

In meetings between teams from different Divisions, it is usually the more lowly from whom over-robust play is expected, not from a player in a team with Arsenal's great reputation.

TOWN TRIED TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE

Always, the Town sought to play constructive football, even when their numbers were sadly reduced and the half-back line came through this battle with colours flying.

Until misfortune befell him, Owen was outstanding, and Morton and Watkins were not a whit behind.

Aherne had a good match, too, but Cooke began to lose a grip on the situation when Cox was moved to the left-wing and it was down this flank that the danger accrued.

Being beaten at the near post meant that Streten was faulted when the first goal was scored, but that apart, he gave a brilliant exhibition.

Pick of the forwards were Moore, a lively leader, and Mitchell, who played a more orthodox type of wing game and found it paying dividends.

Both inside-forwards were often caught with the ball before they had time to use it and were guilty of some bad passing, too, though both had some sparkling moments, and Davies did much that was useful before he was laid aside accidentally.

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

ARSENAL: Swindin; Barnes, Smith; Shaw, Daniel, Mercer; Cox, Milton, Goring, Lishman, Roper.

Referee: R. J. Leafe, Nottingham.

Attendance: 28,433. Receipts: £6,159 (both records).