

DEFENCE WAS IN GREAT FORM

HELD OUT UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE

Town's Success On First Visit To Rotherham

By Chiltern

There have been two or three occasions at Kenilworth-road this season when the Town have hammered away at their opponents' goal without reward and have been beaten narrowly.

Nothing of the sort happened in reverse at Millmoor, Rotherham, on Saturday, when the Town defence stood up manfully to a terrific battering in the last hour to hold out and enable the Town to mark their first visit to this ground with a win.

Nothing was that the barrage did not under way until the 12 minutes after the

ball was eventually into the net, there had been attempts to do so. Rotherham defence was a cross-field pass by Mitchell's first shot was Bolton, who could not

ended to Sexton, who had been in the goal in League football but not been in the first time.

Reverse Set The Home Side Alight

It was, the ball struck Mitchell, but, reacting quickly, was able to control it and back into the net from close range. The Rotherham defence

It was as if this reverse set the Town defence's test-tube. They arrived, and they were heroes to keep back the tide.

Without all the pressure of this period, the times when the Town defence was not in command were few.

Gained A Tremendous Number Of Corners

It could keep count of the number of corners that Rotherham, but these, placed with great

ings in front of goal, and were usually cleared either by Owen's head or the fists of Stretten.

The goalkeeper's display was being described afterwards as the best by a goalkeeper on the ground this season.

Most of the shots that reached him were in the air, and he dealt with them all with consummate confidence and safety.

Too Much Bunching By Home Forwards

THAT Rotherham were rather off the mark in their shooting helped him to give this highly spectacular display, but there were one or two difficult situations with which he coped brilliantly.

As often happens when a team is continually on the attack, there was no variation of tactics and too much bunching in the goalmouth by the forwards.

This happened to Rotherham who failed to keep the game open and were mostly concerned with trying to drive a wedge down the middle of the Town defence.

Fell Into The Trap For The Unwary

IN pursuit of this aim, full-backs and wing halves lobbed the ball into the Town's penalty area where Rotherham found themselves faced by a solid wall of defenders.

There was little attempt to open up the situation and give the two speedy wingers, Grainger and White, full scope for their cleverness.

These battering tactics, a product of over-enthusiasm and desperation, are a trap for the unwary and Rotherham fell into it.

As for driving a wedge down the



Bernard Stretten

middle they never had much hope of accomplishing this with Owen in such great form.

Owen's Height Was A Great Asset

AS the ball was often in the air, Owen's height was a great advantage to the Town and I should say that he headed the ball far more often than he found it necessary to kick it.

Always, Owen was there to intervene and many of Rotherham's hopes foundered when the attacks reached him.

In keeping the score sheet blank in a League match for the first time since they won at Swansea on December 15, the defence was compact, quick-covering and tremendously hard in the tackle.

No one was more effective in this respect than Morton, who always went in for the ball as if he were determined to gain possession of it and, invariably, he did.

Town Had Cast-Iron Half-Back Line

HIS speed, determination and strength were other factors in the Town's success, and Watkins was never far behind him in the relentless way in which he broke up attacks.

To a cast-iron middle line the Town owed a great deal, and there was a debt, too, to the full-backs, Dunne and Aberne, who had by no means an easy task in watching the home wingers.

Dunne made a shaky sort of start against White, but once he settled down no fault could be found with him, and he was well on top of the situation in the second half.

Occasionally, early in the game, Grainger got the better of Aberne, but the left-back had by far the better of the argument in the end.

Not Memorable Match For The Forwards

AHERNE was another who showed great strength in the tackle and his immaculate kicking with either foot stood the Town in good stead throughout. Then, behind them was Stretten, playing in top form, which means that he was unbeatable.

For the forwards, this is not a match they will remember. They had their moments in the first half and during the early part of the second, but had little opportunity afterwards.

To some extent they could have helped out the Town's over-worked defence in the last half an hour had they tried to hold the ball when it came their way.

Inside Men Were Below Par

WHEN they did gain possession there was a disposition to try a long pass which, too often, was intercepted and enabled Rotherham to go on to the attack again.

In large measure the forwards had to do a lot of defending in the second half, and, invariably, there were only a couple of forwards upfield when the ball did arrive.

Apart from a few flashes, Taylor reached nothing like his normal form and, even when the Town were having an equal share of the play during the first hour and playing more constructively than Rotherham, neither inside forward was really completely in the picture.

FOR THE RECORDS

ROTHERHAM UNITED 0
LUTON TOWN 1
Mitchell.

ROTHERHAM UNITED:
Bolton: Selkirk, Williams;
Edwards, Gibson, Rawson;
Grainger, Marshall, Shaw,
Guest, White.

LUTON TOWN: Stretten;
Dunne, Aberne: Morton,
Owen, Watkins: Shanks,
Taylor (J.), Moore, Sexton,
Mitchell.

Referee: G. Tedds, Bestwood, Notts. Attendance: 18,000.

Moore Was Mostly Held By Gibson

SEXTON was less effective than in previous matches, and Moore could do little against the tall, strong Gibson and was under the disadvantage that the ball often came to him in the air.

Moore had a couple of shots and a header that might well have counted as goals, and he nearly produced a first-minute shock for Rotherham with a shot that Bolton just reached.

In the main, though, the best football in the Town attack came from the wingers, with Shanks the more consistent and making better use of the ball than did Mitchell.

Mitchell Scored Another Vital Goal

THE outside-left gave Selkirk an extremely uncomfortable time during the first half, but too often did not finish accurately.

However, he underlined his value to the team once again by scoring the vital goal, which brought his League total to 15—a very good output for a winger.

Shanks chased and fought for everything and put across some good centres.

Also, his wing-half experience came in useful when it was necessary to bring back reinforcements to help out near the end of the game.

Town Seldom Looked Like Capitulating

YET, for all that Rotherham pressure in the last half an hour, the times when they looked to be on the point of gaining an equaliser were few.

So efficiently did the Town defence bar the way that there were few escapes that could be called "narrow," and Rotherham knew they were beaten before the end, though it was only the agility of Stretten that kept out a "dipping" shot from Grainger in the last minute.

There was an ovation for the goalkeeper at the end, and he earned it.

Fighting Spirit Won The Day

A BLANK score sheet at the interval was about right on the run of the play, though both teams had scoring chances.

That the Town had not cashed



Ray Smith, Reserve left-half, who scored two goals against Birmingham Reserves on Saturday.

in on the advantage of playing with the slope looked a bit ominous from their point of view, but they overcame this, thanks to the stalwart display of the defenders.

The Town had to fight all the way to gain their first win over this more-than-useful Rotherham team, and it was their fighting spirit that won the day.

Left-Half Scored Two Goals

THE Reserves showed something of this quality, too, in hitting back to wipe out a 3-1 lead held at half-time by Birmingham City Reserves in the Combination Cup at Kenilworth-road on Saturday.

Feature of the match was the unusual feat achieved by Ray Smith in scoring two goals from the left-half position, and his second, a somewhat fortunate affair, set the stage for a great Luton rally that was crowned by a brilliant equaliser by Stobbart.

Failed To Score The Winning Goal

AFTERWARDS, they had chances of improving the shining hour, but although they worried the Birmingham defence into making mistakes, they could not get the winning goal.

In the first half, it was the Town defence who had been unsettled by the experienced Birmingham forwards, who scored twice in the first 20 minutes.

There was a considerable tightening up in defence in the second half and Birmingham found much less scope for their attack.

Town "A" Had Cup Run Ended

HOPES that the Town "A" would win their way into the final of the Metropolitan League Cup were blasted at Dunstable on Saturday when Headington won the replayed semi-final by 3-1.

Headington were strengthened by the inclusion of several of their regular Southern League players and although the Town fought hard, they could not quite hold their own.

Two goals down at the interval, they hit back when Allen headed through after Arthur Taylor had struck the bar, but Headington scored again and that was the end of the Town's Cup ambitions.

Chiltern's Forecasts

DIVISION I

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

DIVISION II

Barnsley v Doncaster R.
Bury v Rotherham Utd.
Blackburn R. v Nottm Forest
Coventry C. v Sheffield Wed.
Hull City v Brentford
Luton Town v Cardiff City
Notts C. v Birmingham C.
Q.P.R. v Leicester C.
Sheffield Utd. v Everton
Swansea T. v Leeds Utd.
West Ham v Southampton

DIVISION III (SOUTH)

Bournemouth v Colchester Utd.
Brighton v Norwich C.
Bristol C. v Aldershot
Gillingham v Plymouth A.
Ipswich v Watford
Millwall v Exeter C.
Newport C. v Swindon T.

Northampton T. v Walsall
Port Vale v Shrewsbury T.
Reading v Leyton O.
Southend Utd. v Crystal P.
Torquay Utd. v Bristol R.

DIVISION III (NORTH)

Bradford C. v Wrexham
Chester v Barrow
Crewe Alex v Rochdale
Darlington v Halifax T.
Gateshead v Mansfield T.
Hartlepool Utd. v Chesterfield
Lincoln C. v Workington
Oldham Ath. v Bradford
Scunthorpe Utd. v Stockport C.
Southport v Accrington S.
Tranmere R. v Carlisle Utd.
York C. v Grimsby T.

SCOTTISH CUP FINAL

Dundee v Motherwell

SCOTTISH LEAGUE DIVISION "A"

Aberdeen v Rangers
Airdrieonians v East Fife

DIVISION "B"

Stenhousemuir v Dunfermline

DIVISION "B" SUPPLEMENTARY CUP SEMI-FINALS

Alloa v St. Johnstone
Kilmarnock v Clyde

SELECTIONS

TEN HOME: Arsenal, Portmouth, Wolves, Blackburn, Sheffield Utd., Bristol C., Millwall, Northampton, Lincoln, Oldham
FOUR AWAY: Newcastle, Leicester, Plymouth, Stockport.
THREE DRAWS: Blackpool v Manchester Utd., Coventry, Sheffield Wed., Brighton v Norwich.

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