

Owen Injured And Town Had To Re-shuffle Team

By Chiltern

FULHAM 2 LUTON TOWN 0

Becoming used to the prospect of having to re-shuffle their team at some stage of the game because of injury are the Town and it happened again at Craven Cottage on Saturday.

This time Owen, who had returned for this match after injury, was the victim of a gash on the head and spent more than half the time at outside-left.

Just how much influence this had on the final result is difficult to say and the query would seem to lie in the direction of whether the original forward line could have broken down the Fulham defence.

There was a period in the first half when this seemed a distinct possibility and chances cropped up, but the finishing, which has not been the strong point this season showed no real improvement.

Shanks had been in quite lively mood at the start and was unlucky with one flashing drive. In view of this, it was unfortunate that he had to be pulled out of the attack to take over at right-half when Morton switched to centre-half.

THE LOGICAL MOVE

This was the logical thing to do, of course, but it was unfortunate that it had to happen since, with Cullen and Turner mostly held and Davies working hard without getting very far, the line could have done with Shanks.

Quite the most dangerous of the Town forwards was Pye, playing in the middle for the first time since joining the club.

To a large extent, he had to do his own foraging but, even so, in the first half, managed to keep Taylor fully employed and was unlucky not to score with a beautifully taken free kick.

Then, he laid on a chance with which Davies beat Black only to see Lawler race across to scramble the ball off the line.

As an emergency outside-left, Owen was quite adequate, but the fact remained that the re-shuffle disorganised the attack which, apart from some clever midfield play, largely faded out of the picture in the second half.

Owen's mishap occurred after half an hour when he and Brennan went for a ball together and Brennan's boot accidentally caught Owen, who bent low, on the face. He was off for 11 minutes before resuming.

EARLY LEAD FOR FULHAM

At that stage, Fulham were a goal ahead through one obtained by ROBSON after four minutes when he raced on to a through pass by Stevens and resisted a challenge by Streten, off whose legs the ball passed into the net.

The second blow came two minutes after the interval when Streten rather tamely pushed out the ball when it came over from the left and ROBSON beat Turner to it to shoot through a crowd of players.

It was a tame second half in which the Town seldom looked at rescuing anything from the match.

The defence was strong enough with Shanks and Morton filling their emergency roles splendidly and Dunne having a most successful time against the nippy Mitten.

Some trouble for Watkins and Aherne came from the home right wing pair, both of whom tended to lie deep which gave them more

room in which to manoeuvre than was really wise from the Town point of view.

More might have come from this had Fulham's shooting been steadier, but in the main, both Aherne and Watkins did well.

This was not one of Streten's best games. He has to shoulder some responsibility for both goals and there were other mistakes interspersed with some brilliant saves.

FULHAM — Black; Dodgin, Lowe (E); Hill, Taylor, Lawler; Stevens, Robson, Jezard, Brennan, Mitten.

LUTON TOWN — Streten; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Watkins; Cullen, Turner, Pye, Shanks, Davies.

Referee.—R. J. Burgess, Reading.