

EQUALISER WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

But Fighting Town Never Found It At Nottingham

By Chiltern

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 4 LUTON TOWN 3

Consider the effect on a team that had not conceded a goal in the last three matches of suddenly finding themselves two goals down in the first quarter of an hour of the next.

That was the shocking start with which the Town had to contend at Nottingham on Saturday and, never quite able to reach equality again, they tasted defeat for the first time in six weeks.

To the credit of the team is the fact that they did not allow this unfortunate situation to upset them, and they went on playing the constructive, go-ahead football that they had been producing before these setbacks.

The first came in eight minutes, when BURKITT shot from fully 25 yards, and the ball entered the net just inside the post with Streten making his effort too late.

Then COLLINDRIDGE was left with a simple chance seven minutes later, when Streten, harassed by Ardron against whom he claimed a foul, could not get the ball away.

Not the slightest suggestion had there been in the early stages that the Forest would take such a lead, for the Town had been the more impressive, and should have gone ahead when Watkins was left with a chance, but shot too high.

Things took a distinct turn for the better when PYE reduced the arrears after 17 minutes, and there were threats by the Town of an equaliser until MARTIN set them back on their heels again with a goal after half an hour.

FINE SECOND-HALF RALLY

There the situation remained until half-time, but the way the Town went about their stern task at the beginning of the second half gave rise to hopes that they would not only draw level, but win.

Playing brilliant football, the forwards had the Forest defence very much ill at ease, and when MITCHELL struck the first blow in the rally with a neat header from Moore's centre seven minutes after the resumption, the Town's path looked clear.

For a time it looked only a matter of time before they drew level, and Pye missed a great chance of scoring when he shot over from close in, following Moore's perfect pass.

Some Forest breakaway looked dangerous, but although they went close on a couple of occasions, the main question was still whether the Town could get the vital next goal.

They were doomed to disappointment, though, for 14 minutes from the end LEVERTON, taking a pass from Ardron, pushed the ball into the net as Streten, Shanks and Aherne converged on him.

Even this jolt did not take the fight out of the Town, and a merest ray of hope came when MITCHELL scored again after Davies had successfully challenged Walker for the ball.

Just three minutes remained then, but it was not long enough for the Town to get the equaliser that had eluded them all the afternoon.

This was a case in which defeat came the way of the better-balanced team, and Forest owed their success to simple goals, for some of which Streten must take the blame, and to some missed chances by the Town forwards.

OWEN HELD ARDRON

As a whole the defence was adequate without looking as completely sound as it has been. Owen made a good job of keeping Ardron reasonably quiet, and the full-backs came out creditably against raiding wingers.

Though they took more of a grip when the Town were so much on top in the second half, both Morton and Shanks have played better. They had a tendency before the interval to hold the ball too long, a failing which was eradicated later.

For Streten, this was one of those few matches when he looks uncertain, and he was neither so safe nor so confident as he usually is.

When the forwards score three goals away from home they

should be reasonably certain of not being on the losing side, and, while such an output disarms criticism, it is true to say that they should have had double the number of goals.

Chances that in any other match would have been snapped up easily, were missed, but, even so, the attack gets high marks for a fine display, particularly after the interval.

Although Pye found Gager a worthy opponent, he was again most prominent and had much to do with the smooth way in which the line moved.

So, too, had Moore, whose distribution of the ball was most accurate, and, with Davies, he formed a dangerous wing.

It was good to see Mitchell well among the goals, and he always held considerable threat to the Forest defence. Again, Watkins was working hard in the background, and did not take the eye so much as the others.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST: Walker; Ware, Hutchinson; French, Gager, Burkitt; Scott, Leverton, Ardron, Martin, Collindridge.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Moore, Pye, Watkins, Mitchell.

Referee: R. E. Williams, Newport. Attendance: 22,774.