

TOWN SHARE POINTS IN DRAMATIC GAME

But The Defence Had Too Many Wide Gaps

By Chiltern

THERE was a remarkable and sensational start to the season at Kenilworth-road last night when the Town, after holding a two-goal lead inside the first quarter of an hour, became two goals down and had to fight back in dramatic fashion to avoid starting with a home defeat.

The man who saved them was the new inside-forward star, Johnnie Downie, who scored a brilliant hat-trick and became the hero of the Kenilworth-road hour in doing so.

As the score would suggest, weakness in defence cost the Town a point. They could not cope with the fast-moving, first-time work of the visiting forwards, and gaping holes appeared far too often.

Owen was badly missed, for Hall was ill at ease, and there was a lack of understanding in the whole set-up, with the full backs playing full-square.

Baynham was not blameless either, and Morton was the only defender to show a real glimpse of his true form.

The forwards rather faded after the bright start, but came back later, mainly due to the scheming and opportunism of Downie.

At times there appeared to be a little too much craft and not enough punch but this was largely because Moore was completely in the grip of Whyte and wasted much good scheming by the inside men.

Downie was by far the most impressive of the new men, but Cummins, obviously a player of ability, probably found his surroundings a bit strange.

To some extent the disappointment at the loss of a point was compensated for by the ding-dong struggle, but the defence will probably cause some hard thinking before next Saturday.

The early minutes, the fourth in fact, brought something of a sensation when Downie was brought down in the penalty area by Brierley.

Unhesitatingly, the referee pointed to the spot, and in the absence of the regular penalty-takers, Mitchell and Pye, Pemberton was entrusted with the job.

To the crowd's disappointment, Pemberton's first shot was deflected on to the bar by Burnett and was scrambled away.

However, PEMBERTON got another chance because the referee ordered the kick to be re-taken, presumably because Burnett had moved, and he made no mistake this time.

TOWN FORWARDS CLEVER

For a spell after that, the Oldham defence looked unsettled against clever play by the Town forwards, and another good move left Adam with a chance, but the ball ran away from him.

Oldham's forwards were little in the picture for a long time.

After 14 minutes the Town increased their lead through DOWNIE, who booted the ball through after Burnett had dropped a centre from Adam, when Moore challenged him.

Oldham hit back and McKENNAN reduced their arrears after 20 minutes, with a low shot from the edge of the penalty area.

The ball eluded the outstretched hands of Baynham, and went in just inside the post.

The goal encouraged Oldham a good deal, and the Town defence looked none too happy under pressure.

After 26 minutes Oldham's equaliser came when Gemmell worked his way out to the right, eluded Hall and crossed the ball low for ADAMS to sweep it through from close in.

OLDHAM TAKE THE LEAD

Worse was to come two minutes later, for fiddling in defence led

to GEMMELL going through again, beating Hall and scoring with a shot that went in off the post to complete a remarkable rally by Oldham.

Oldham were having more of the play now and ominous cracks were still appearing in the Town defence.

The game had swung dramatically, and the Town forwards were not making progress, and were keeping the ball too close against some resolute tackling.

Aherne saved another reverse when Baynham was spread-eagled.

Just before the interval the Town came back strongly, and Moore just failed to take a glorious opening made by Cummins. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 2
OLDHAM ATHLETIC.. 3

With rain falling more heavily, control of the greasy ball became a chancy business in the second half, which the Town began determinedly.

However, there was little finish in their attack, and only a cross-shot by Adam troubled Burnett.

McILVENNY LET THROUGH

Then, after 61 minutes, another defensive mistake between Hall and Pemberton let in McILVENNY to run on to a through-pass and score Oldham's fourth goal.

With Moore completely held, the Town's forwards did not look much like goals, and Oldham in their breakaway were more dangerous.

Gemmell shot against Baynham's legs.

Eighteen minutes from the end, DOWNIE put the Town back in the game with a beautifully-headed goal from Davies's corner.

There was heavy Town pressure after this, and Davies missed a chance when the ball rebounded against his legs.

DOWNIE'S GRAND "HAT-TRICK"

Davies and Adam had changed places.

DOWNIE completed a glorious "hat-trick" after 75 minutes when again he jumped high to reach with his head a centre by Moore from the left wing and put the Town on Level terms.

The crowd went mad at this, and the Town, driven on by tremendous cheering, went all-out to re-establish themselves by regaining the lead.

A nasty mishap occurred when Aherne and Ormond met in a head-on collision and both were knocked out.

Aherne was able to resume, but Ormond was carried off on a stretcher.

Aherne switched to outside-left with Morton going to right-back and Davies right-half.

With only 10 men Oldham held out stolidly and Burnett punched over a high lob by Downie.

Cummins headed into Burnett's hands and the thrills continued.

Oldham had their turn too, and McIlvenny headed over after Baynham had punched away from Adams. Result:

LUTON TOWN 4
OLDHAM 4

Attendance was 22,822.

Ormond was said to be suffering from concussion and was taken to hospital immediately after the match for an X-ray examination.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Aherne, Pemberton; Morton, Hall, Shanks; Davies, Downie, Moore, Cummins, Adam.

OLDHAM ATHLETIC: Burnett; Brook, Hardwick; Smith, Whyte, Brierley; Adams, McKennan, Gemmell, McIlvenny, Ormond.

Referee: Mr. L. Richardson, of Doncaster