

BLACKPOOL HAVE TWO REPLAY TEAM DOUBTS

"50-50 CHANCE" OF MATTHEWS PLAYING

Turner Making Progress: A Decision Later To-day

By Chilern

What might well turn out to-morrow to be the most exciting Cup-tie staged at Kenilworth-road for years, both the Town and Blackpool had team doubts yesterday, but Luton appeared to be in the better position since there is a good deal of uncertainty about the fitness of two of Blackpool's internationals, Stanley Matthews and Tom Garrett. Matthews, who pulled a groin muscle on Saturday, was said by Manager Joe Smith yesterday to have a 50-50 chance of playing and the decision has been delayed and may not be made until just before the kick-off.

Twice on Sunday, and again yesterday, Matthews was at Kenilworth-road for treatment. Matthews himself said, "I don't feel it 10 minutes before half-time, but it is a pain when I am running. I am hoping to play, but must be considered doubtful."

In the absence of Matthews, the Blackpool manager has not decided who to put in the team.

Normal deputy, Albert Hobson, on the transfer list and a chance may be given, if necessary, to a youngster in Alex Harris, who has had only two outings in League football.

Forward Re-shuffle Is A Possibility

On the other hand, a re-shuffle of Saturday's attack is on the cards, with even the possibility of one of three inside forwards, Taylor, Brown or Mudie, occupying the outside-right position.

Joe Smith says that he will not decide until he has talked the matter over with the players themselves.

Garrett's trouble is a kick on the calf that prevented him from aiming yesterday, and choice of a deputy would rest between Dick Wright, also on the transfer list, and Roy Gratrix, a youngster from Manchester who has yet to make his League debut.

Turner Is Hopeful Of Playing

THERE has been intensive treatment over the week-end, too, for Gordon Turner, who received a painful kick on the hip-bone during the first half at Blackpool. Turner himself is very hopeful that he will play and was doing some training yesterday afternoon.

but here again it is a case of waiting to see.

There is considerable bruising which was coming out yesterday and the club doctor will examine him again later to-day.

Manager Dally Duncan has not named a possible deputy, but it would seem to rest between Downie and Scott. Otherwise no changes are expected after the fine fight the Town put up in the first match.

Town Fans Waited For Tickets In Blackpool

ONLY tickets for the stand are being issued and season ticket-holders had their opportunity to secure them on Saturday night and all day yesterday. To-day, from 9 a.m., those that remain are on sale to the general public and it was said in Blackpool that some would be returned by the visitors.

Six Luton fans remained in Blackpool overnight on Saturday and were some of the first in the queues on Sunday morning when the tickets were on sale. They obtained tickets and certainly deserved to do so after their vigil.

Time of opening the gates will be governed by the arrival of the gate-men, who have their own jobs to attend to, but they will be open as early as is possible.

Convinced That The Goal Was Offside

NO amount of argument will ever convince the Town players that they should be faced with the necessity of a replay for they held quite firmly to their opinion that the equalising goal that came from Mortensen seven minutes from the end was offside.

In fact, so certain were they before the ball was anywhere near their net that Owen shouted

"Offside" to Watkins, who could quite conceivably have headed clear.

In fact, both Mortensen and Taylor seemed to me to be standing in an offside position and the Town were completely flabbergasted when the whistle did not go for an infringement.

Left Mortensen With Chance Of A Lifetime

EVEN the Stretten magic that he produced consistently during the second half could not prevent Mortensen accepting what developed into the chance of a lifetime and it ended a long run of blanks for the centre-forward in the most fortunate fashion possible.

I have never seen the Town protest so strongly against a decision as they did against this one and their appeals took the referee over to the linesman who had been on the spot and there was that heart-rending interval before the decision was finally given.

General opinion among those who were better placed to see than I was that it was a most obvious case of offside.

Fine Covering By The Defence

PREVIOUSLY, the Town had been hanging on grimly to the one goal lead they had taken so deservedly after their great display in the first half, and a solid defence that covered remarkably well from start to finish defeated the best efforts of a Blackpool forward line that was too frilly and attempted to do too much with the ball.

These close tactics played into the hands of the Town defence, who tackled hard and quickly, and they were aided, too, by the fact that Blackpool were not always inclined to have a crack at goal when a reasonable opening presented itself.

Closing Minutes Were Full Of Tension

IN fact, so good was the Town defence in the face of persistent second-half pressure that they looked to be home and dry as the minutes passed all too slowly for the Town fans—until that disputed goal that kept Blackpool's interest in the Cup competition alive.

Certainly, the minutes after that were full of tension. Blackpool, seeing the chance of avoiding a second meeting with a team that had tested them to the full, tried desperately to snatch a winner.

There was one very close call when Matthews weaved his way through and, with everybody expecting him to centre as he had done consistently before, he tried a left-foot shot that sent the ball ever so gently a bare fraction wide of the far post.

Turner's Injury A Big Handicap

THAT represented Blackpool's last chance, and the Town players were cheered to the echo by their excited followers for their magnificent, hard-fighting display that really earned them the right to have another go at the Cup-holders.

A considerable part of the reason for the grip Blackpool took on things in the second half was caused by the injury to Turner, who switched with Davies in the first minute of the second half.

He was a limping passenger on the wing, with his effectiveness cut down to less than half.

Stretten Right On Top Of His Form

MAN who caught the imagination of the Blackpool fans after the interval was Stretten, who was in one of his most venturesome, yet safest moods, and he made some saves that really brought down the house.

We have come to expect this sort of display from the goalkeeper who is surely playing better now than when he was capped for England and the selectors might do a lot worse than to come and have another look at him.

Much of his work came from the tireless Mortensen, but there was one from Kelly that he reached at full stretch in mid-air and was a remarkable piece of agility.

So, the Town owed much to Stretten, who looked absolutely unbeatable until that doubtful goal came along.

Defence Faced With A Terrific Task

THE defence as a whole had a terrific task in the second half, when with the ball coming back to them regularly because there were few chances for the hand-capped front line to get on the move for any length of time, they were almost continually in action.

In the middle Owen was a strong pillar, who never relaxed his grip on the bustling Mortensen who was ever a trier and he

FOR THE RECORDS

BLACKPOOL 1
Mortensen

LUTON TOWN 1
Cummins

BLACKPOOL: Farm; Shimwell, Garrett; Fenton, Johnston, Kelly; Matthews, Taylor, Mortensen, Brown, Perry.

LUTON TN.: Stretten; Jones, Abernethy; Morton, Owen, Watkins; Davies, Turner, Moore, Cummins, Mitchell.

Referee: T Seymour, Wakefield.

Attendance: 25,242.

looked a better candidate for the centre-half berth in the England team than did Johnston, who was strangely uncertain during the first half.

Plan Was Not Put Into Operation

NEVER put into operation was the plan evolved to cut down the effectiveness of Matthews by having the terrier-like Davies coming back to tackle him when he looked threatening and, to a large extent, the danger posed by Matthews was cut down by preventing the ball reaching him.

When he did receive the ball, Abernethy did the right thing by refusing to be drawn into the tackle and constantly jockeying this prince of wingers.

Naturally, Matthews got across a fair proportion of centres and was much in the game in the last half an hour or so when he lay back on the middle line waiting to pick up the ball, but he was certainly not the match-winner he can be because of the strength of the Town's defence.

Wing Halves Had A Tight Grip

FOR blanketing out the inside forwards as effectively as they did, Morton and Watkins earned high praise and Brown never looked in the International class and was seldom free from the grip of the Town right-half.

Although there were times when he used the ball most inaccurately for him, Watkins put up a great defensive display against the twinkle-toed Taylor who would have done his side better service had he not hung on to the ball too long.

Closer Watch On Perry Is Needed

ALTHOUGH he tended to lay off Perry and there were times when he could have gone into the tackle more quickly, Jones gave another cool, thoughtful performance, but he must mark the winger more closely to-morrow, for Perry will scarcely miss such easy opportunities again.

So, the defence did its part in brilliant style and the forwards had their gay fling in the first half when they moved with more precision and greater smoothness than in any match since Jesse Pye was laid aside and a good part of this was due to the way in which Moore moved.

Johnston rarely knew where he would pop up next and he switched about in most intelligent style.

Magnificent Goal From Cummins

IT was from one of Moore's sallies down the right that the Town's goal after five minutes came, for he took a pass from Davies and made a centre that Shimwell headed straight out to Cummins.

When he came here, Cummins had not much of a reputation as a marksman, but he has shown us before that he can hit the ball hard and true and he did so in this instance.

Coolly, he met it on the volley from the edge of the penalty area and sent it in soaring out of reach of Farm who vainly clutched at thin air.

What a goal to score in a Cup-tie and what a confidence-builder for the Town against such stiff opposition!

Brown's Bad Miss From Penalty Spot

BLACKPOOL had their chances in the first half, none easier than the one that fell to Brown from the penalty spot after Stretten had pulled down Mortensen when he had been allowed to sweep through after another offside decision had gone astray.

Both went down, Stretten recovered first and actually had possession of the ball, but the referee was already pointing to the penalty spot.

Then, to everybody's amazement, Brown drove the ball well wide of the post. There might justifiably have been a penalty to the Town when Davies was brought down most uncere-

moniously but, in this instance, the referee waved on play.

Another Goal Would Have Done The Trick

COULD the Town have secured another goal from their forthright football before the interval, they would have put themselves in a position from which Blackpool could scarcely have extricated themselves.

Best chance fell to Turner, who was put through with only Farm to beat, from something of an angle.

These are the chances Turner usually accepts, but on this occasion he smacked the ball against the legs of the goalkeeper and it bounced to safety.

It was bad luck that Turner should have been injured, for he and Davies were forming an effective wing, finding each other well and switching about in fine style.

Cummins Showed Brilliant Footwork

FROM Cummins, there was one of his best displays since he joined the Town and his footwork was as good as anything that the Blackpool stars could produce, with the possible exception of Matthews.

Time and time again, he

worked the ball brilliantly, was always in the thick of it, and showed accurate distribution.

Mitchell looked to have gained the measure of Shimwell during the first half, but was not so much in the picture afterwards when there was less support and the attempts of the forwards as a whole were limited largely to breakaway.

Good Display In Bad Conditions

CONSIDERING the terrible state of the pitch at Kenilworth-road on Saturday, Luton Reserves gave a very good display when they beat Norwich City Reserves 2-1.

The sudden thaw turned the ground into a "glue-pot" and as the game progressed ordered football became more and more difficult.

Joe Scott gave Luton the lead in the fourth minute after a determined run and although Woan, Norwich's best forward, equalised, Allen restored Luton's lead a couple of minutes before the interval.

Downie gave another hard-working display while Scott got through a tremendous amount of work. Allen, too, never knew when he was beaten. In defence, Smith, Dunne and Baynam were outstanding.