

LAST 10 MINUTES FATAL AGAIN

No Points For Town—Yet They Gave City A Lesson

By Chiltern

LEICESTER CITY ... 2 LUTON TOWN 1

The last 10 minutes of a match seems to be a period fraught with an unusual amount of danger for the Town and on three occasions recently goals conceded during this late stage have deprived them of their just reward.

So it happened at Leicester on Saturday when they saw a point that was so completely within their grasp that the issue seemed to be one of whether Leicester could hang on, rather than of any question of them snatching victory.

Player who blasted the Town's hopes was their former colleague, Peter Small, who came racing in seven minutes from the end to reach a bouncing ball with his head just as Aherne rushed across to try to cover.

SMALL was there first by the merest fraction and the ball bounced in just inside the post to give Leicester as fortunate a victory as they will ever achieve before their own supporters.

One of the remarkable features about this match was that the Town held such superiority as to earn comments of the "only one team in it" variety, and yet never enjoyed the confident feeling of having their heads in front.

That this should have happened, there is no doubt, despite the fact that they were dealt a severe blow 15 minutes after the start when Morton was harshly penalised for handling during a duel with Hines for possession of an awkwardly bouncing ball.

PENALTY AWARD WAS HARSH

No danger threatened, for the incident took place wide of the goal and the ball bounced up to strike the centre-half on the upper part of the arm. When the referee pointed to the penalty spot, there was a concerted appeal by the Town players that availed them nothing and, with ROWLEY making no mistake with the kick, they found themselves a goal down in the most unlucky fashion.

Not that they allowed the setback to put them off their stride. Rather had it the effect of giving more bite to their raids and it was no more than their due when they drew level seven minutes later.

Hesitation by Gillies in clearing a through pass by Cummins, gave TURNER the chance to nip in, control the ball and drive it out of the reach of Anderson before the Leicester defence could recover fully.

After that, in the face of all-out Luton pressure, the City defence was reduced to desperate kick-anywhere methods for long periods and it was surprising that the Town had not built up a comfortable lead by the interval, so often did the home defence seem to be on the verge of capitulation.

Certainly, it was not the Town forwards' lucky day with their shooting and they gained no more success after the interval, when they continued to deal out a football lesson to the home side, who survived only through some capable goalkeeping by Anderson and by the way the defence packed the penalty area.

Anderson made several fine saves, notably from Turner and Davies, and the latter was unlucky to see a scoring shot kicked off the goal-line by Milburn.

Crisp, clever football kept the Town on top, and it was only seldom that anything was seen of the home forwards and then they did not manage to reach shooting distance.

Then came the shock of that late goal by Small to produce what was truly a fantastic result on the run of the play.

In trying to prevent it, Aherne received a gash on the top of the head and was at outside-left, for the last few minutes during which the Town shaken by the turn of events, could not even get near to threatening another equaliser.

What the Town could draw a great deal of satisfaction from was the quality of the football they played in conditions that were far from easy.

With fine understanding all round they moved smoothly and dangerously and it was only when it came to finishing that the full stop was applied.

Even so, they were far more to be sympathised with than to be blamed, for the Leicester goal often had something approaching a charmed life and many goal-worthy efforts met with an undeserved fate.

Nothing but a full measure of praise will do to describe the way in which MacEwan came through his baptism in League football, for he led the line with the assurance of a far more experienced player.

His showing was so highly promising that the Town are most hopeful now that he will end their worries about this position and, if he gets the right sort of material, he should be among the goals very quickly.

From the line as a whole, there was much clever and effective football, with both inside forwards working hard to make openings and thrust coming from both Davies and Mitchell.

Much of the solid look there was about this Town team could be traced to the strength in the middle line where Morton was right on top of the job and both Shanks and Watkins mastered the City inside men to such an extent that their attack was badly out of joint for most of the match.

Nor from Griffiths and Small was there much more than a very rare threat, so close a grip did Dunne and Aherne obtain on them.

Result was that the close marking and sound positional play, cut down the shooting by the City front line to a minimum and meant what was for Stretton, probably his least busy afternoon ever on this ground.

LEICESTER CITY: Anderson, Milburn, Jackson; Baldwin, Gillies, Russell; Griffiths, Morris, Hines, Rowley, Small.

LUTON TOWN: Stretton, Dunne, Aherne; Shanks, Morton, Watkins, Davies, Turner, MacEwan, Cummins, Mitchell.

Referee: J. C. Pollard. Thorton Heath. Attendance: 31,782.