

NOTHING COULD DIM TOWN'S BRILLIANCE

A Superlative Display From A Complete Unit

By Chiltern

ROTHERHAM UNITED 1, LUTON TOWN 5

An excited supporter ran on to the pitch as the whistle went for the end of this Cup-tie at Millmoor on Saturday and shook hands with every Town player, an action that just about expressed the feelings of everyone from Luton who was there.

This was a superlative display by a team that played as a complete unit and every man deserved that congratulatory handshake and the cheers that rang in their ears after they left the field after gaining one of the most famous Cup victories in the club's history.

To gain a true picture of the merit of this success it is only necessary to glance at the Second Division table, which shows Rotherham as being well in the promotion race, and at their home record, which shows 19 points.

In their previous 13 matches at Millmoor, Rotherham had yielded only 16 goals, and yet here were the Town forwards blasting gaping holes in a defence that, hitherto, has been regarded as most adequate.

Probably Rotherham will take encouragement in their disappointment from the feeling that few defences in the country would have been able to do much about stopping the Town forwards in their rampaging form of the first half.

After an even sort of start, in which Rotherham might well have taken an early lead had Grainger connected with his head a centre from Guest, the Town gradually clicked into gear, and when they did the home defence had probably the most harassing 25 minutes of their career.

We have heard a lot about the Continental style of play, but during this period the Town played it as well as any team from the Continent could have done.

No fancy, unnecessary frills about it, but fast, cohesive and extremely forceful attacking football, with the ball being made to do the work all the time.

EVERYONE TOOK UP THE OPEN SPACE

Whenever a Town player had possession of the ball there were always two or three of his colleagues in the open space, ready to accept the pass, and usually shouting for it.

Result was that Rotherham seldom managed to get in an effective tackle, and the quality of the passing was so high that very little went astray.

Even before the Town scored in the 26th minute Rotherham had been lucky to survive, particularly when a shot by Turner through a crowd of players struck Quairney, who could have known little about it until he felt the impact.

As was the case in the previous tie, it was CULLEN who began the scoring with a grand goal from a pass by Morton.

Instead of shooting first time, Cullen cleverly beat Selkirk to leave himself in a much better position, and his low drive was well out of Quairney's reach.

This was the start of an amazing seven minutes, in which the Town scored three times and wrecked completely the home team's hopes of an appearance in the last 16.

Four minutes later, CUMMINS

raced on to a pass from Shanks to make a shot of such power that it seemed a near-miracle that it did not break the roof of the net.

Then came TURNER, finding that tell-tale gap down the middle, to put on a third after 32 minutes, with Morton the provider of the opening and Quairney again left in a hopeless position.

Hard though Rotherham tried and pack their defence though they did, they could not dim this Luton brilliance, which continued to shine brightly right up to half-time when Rotherham must have felt some relief that things were no worse, for they very well might have been.

Barring a sensational rally, the game was won and lost at that stage, but full marks to Rotherham for the way in which they hit back in the second half.

Beginning with only ten men because Burke was having a stitch inserted in a gash above the eye and missed the first four minutes, they attacked ferociously and threw the Town back on the defensive from the start.

NEW EXPERIENCE FOR TOWN

This was a new experience for the Town, who were forced to bring all their defensive goggedness into play, and Grainger certainly livened things up when he took over Burke's place.

In view of this, I was rather surprised that Grainger was moved back to his extreme wing position when Burke returned, for there had been little scope or support for him there.

For some time, the tables were turned, with the Town forwards seeing little of the ball, but when they did, always looking the more methodical and showing the greater skill.

It was largely sheer enthusiasm and desperation that enabled Rotherham to hit back so hard, and they received the encouragement of a goal by GUEST in the 63rd minute.

He just managed to get a foot to the ball as Baynham came out and Owen narrowly failed to kick the ball off the line as it went in near a post.

Such a success might have been expected to produce even more pressure from Rotherham, but, instead, the Town became the more dangerous side again and showed that, when the forwards had the chance to get moving, there was not a great deal the home defence could do about it.

Turner had a shot deflected by Johnson's head, but there was always the feeling that a quick thrust by Rotherham might bring another goal and really set this game alight.

Thoughts on those lines were dispersed after 74 minutes when TURNER beat Quairney to a pass from Davies and turned the ball into the net from a most acute angle.

Even though their position seemed more hopeless than ever Rotherham kept on fighting, but much of the edge had gone out of their raids and they had not sufficient cleverness in approach to work out the openings.

In the gathering gloom and with two minutes left, TURNER completed a hat-trick when he tapped the ball through after Quairney had pushed out a left-foot shot by Morton.

A great display by the Town in which every player shared equally, and it was one of those days when criticism is completely unnecessary.

The forwards moved like a well-oiled machine, with the Cummins-Cullen wing, a formidable partnership now, doing a great deal and balanced by the effectiveness of Davies and Turner on the right.

Then, in the middle, there was Morton, taking much of the weight, distributing the ball cleverly and providing openings for three of the goals.

TRIUMPH FOR TURNER

It was, of course, a personal triumph for Turner to achieve such a fine individual feat on what is nearly his native heath, and his father was there to see it.

Brilliant wing-half play by Pemberton and Shanks gave the forwards the maximum of support, and, in addition, there was a dour defensive display from both which cut down the danger from the inside men.

From Burke, there was scarcely ever a dangerous threat, so completely did the dominating Owen play him out of the game, and the grip the Town held in the middle of the field for all but the opening phase of the second half meant that the danger man, Grainger, did not see a great deal of the ball.

When he did, he found Aherne waiting for him, marking him closely and always ready to make a rugged tackle. With the exception of a short, sticky period early after the interval, Dunne was completely sound, too, and his use of the ball was an outstanding factor.

Baynham was confronted with several difficult situations in the second half, but he was equal to everything, and the confident, completely safe way in which he caught pretty nearly everything that came across, was of the greatest assistance to the Town.

ROTHERHAM UTD.: Quairney; Selkirk; Johnson; Marshall; Noble; Williams; Grainger; Henderson; Burke; Guest; Reeson.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne; Aherne; Pemberton; Owen; Shanks; Davies; Turner; Morton; Cummins; Cullen.

Referee: E. T. Jennings, Stourbridge. Attendance: 21,231.