

OPPORTUNITY CAME AND SLIPPED AWAY

City Settled Down After They Had Taken Lead

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 0, MANCHESTER CITY 2

Rarely in a Cup-tie, especially in one at such an advanced stage as the fifth round, does opportunity knock twice for a team.

It knocked for the Town in the first half an hour at Kenilworth-road on Saturday when they had sufficient of the play to have taken a winning lead had they been able to force home their advantage. This they failed to do, though twice they were desperately unlucky, and the City went on to steer themselves out of trouble.

Chances of the Town equalling the club record by reaching the last eight looked particularly bright during this period, for they were much the better side, were doing nearly all the pressing and little or no danger was coming from the City attack.

Then came the happening that changed the whole course of the game when the City took the lead in the 30th minute from as simple an opportunity as ever CLARKE will expect to see come his way.

As most goals do, it had a small beginning with a Town raid breaking down at Cullen and the ball being swept up the right wing by Barnes.

Fagan raced past Aherne to make a centre which Baynham made a desperate attempt to reach as he came lunging out of goal.

He succeeded, but could not hold the ball, which spun away from him straight to Clarke who gleefully accepted the chance.

Before that, Morton had crossed the ball in front of goal with Davies not being able to turn quickly enough to give it the tap it needed, but the narrowest escape was from Turner when his low centre went tantalisingly near to the goal-line and the slightest touch would have put the Town in the lead.

UNLUCKY TO BE BEHIND

Unhappily there was no-one on hand, but the Town were most unlucky to have to turn around facing arrears for they deserved to be in the lead themselves.

However, that first goal seemed to settle down the City, and they improved steadily from that point. In the second half, with the wind and driving snow behind them, we expected a fighting rally from the Town, but it never really developed, partly because of the grip the City defence, particularly the half-backs, took.

As conditions became worse—and they were appalling after the interval—the Town forwards, who had moved smartly enough earlier, lost all their snap and precision, and there never seemed real hope that they would equalise.

Their chances became even more remote after 59 minutes, when Dunne miskicked in front of goal when he was not under pressure and CLARKE was again on the spot to make no mistake.

After that, the only hope the Town had was that the referee would decide to abandon the game, but, apparently, he could see the lines clearly enough, though much of the later play was near-farcical.

The Town simply could make no impression on a defence that was most sound once they got over their sticky first-half spell, and with only one worth-while shot produced after the interval, their Cup run fizzled out like a damp squib.

Considering the conditions, both teams did well to produce the football they did, but there was general disappointment among home fans at the way the Town lost a match on which they seemed to have such a firm grip at one time.

CITY HAD WING THRUST

Chief trouble lay in the inability of the forwards to force home their raids, and the conditions did not suit their quick-moving style of play.

Perhaps the main difference between the attacks was that the City had thrust on the wings which the Town were lacking, and neither Davies nor Cullen had a happy match.

Hard though he tried, Morton could seldom get away from Ewing, and another who was closely marked was Turner. Yet, if a goal was to come from anyone, he looked the most likely to get it.

He often took up good position, but was nearly always left waiting for the through pass which has proved such a destructive weapon for the Town this season.

Much of the Town's early superiority emanated from Cummins, who opened up brilliantly, but who then got into the toils and could not make much impression in the second half.

Although some of the pundits do not agree, the Town will always maintain that their way of dealing with the Revie plan was the correct one.

They allowed him to wander, leaving the man nearest to him to tackle him, and the result was that although Revie found a lot of open space and made some shrewd passes, he did not really become a menace.

In his most masterful mood, Owen had an outstanding game, and was ably backed up by Pemberton, always probing away to try to discover a weakness in the City defence, and Shanks, who did a tremendous amount of work and was always ready to cover any gap that might appear.

Not so happy were the full-backs, with Dunne not being able to take the measure of Clarke, and Aherne often troubled by the speed of Fagan.

Baynham was unlucky when

the first goal came, and had no chance at all with the second. Although the match did not produce an abundance of on-the-target shots, he made several good saves, but his goal-kicking was below standard in the second half, perhaps because of the conditions.

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

MANCHESTER CITY: Trautmann; Meadows, Little; Barnes, Ewing, Paul; Fagan, Hayes, Revie, Hart, Clarke.

Referee: F. L. Overton, Derby. Attendance: 23,104, receipts, £4,636.