

THE VALLEY WAS "HAPPY" FOR TOWN

Draw A Tense Struggle In Tropical Conditions

CHARLTON ATHLETIC 2, LUTON TOWN 2

For those, especially the cricket fans, who believe that the football season begins too soon, there was ample support from the conditions that obtained at The Valley on Saturday.

With the temperature in the eighties, the players sweltered and so did the shirt-sleeved crowd. Most of the players agreed that they could not remember having played in such uncomfortable heat before and that such a cracking pace was maintained was a matter for some wonderment.

Naturally enough, there was plenty of tension in this match for two reasons. First was that, on their First Division debut, the Town were desperately anxious to give a good account of themselves and show that they are now in their rightful place.

Second reason was that Charlton have to go back to mid-February to recall their last victory and they badly wanted to end that run and to get off on the right foot.

Result was a hard, gruelling game in which we saw some skilful football in patches, but there was sufficient from the Town, who were always trying to be constructive, to suggest that they are on the right lines.

In Cummins, they had the outstanding ball-playing forward on the field, and if he can keep up this impressive form, then the Town's inside trio will be something of a handful to many defences.

PROMISING COMBINATION

The scheming of Cummins, combined with the dash and thrust of MacEwan in the middle, and the marksmanship of Turner is a combination that holds out a great deal of promise.

On the other hand, Town officials cannot be feeling so happy about the situation on the extreme wings. Davies had a patchy sort of game and Taylor, recalled after two years' absence, was given little opportunity by Campbell, who shadowed him closely.

Doubtless, Taylor will need time to adjust himself to his new surroundings and this was a big test for him on which it is not fair to judge whether or not he will fill the bill in the absence of Adam.

While the players steer clear of injuries, there should not be a great deal to worry about in defence.

The half-back line was a sound, solid department which coped adequately with the switching about of the home inside-forwards and the unorthodox style tried by Leary.

OWEN A GREAT BARRIER

Owen was a great barrier in the middle, Morton stood out for his hard tackling and the way in which he supported the attack, while Shanks gave his usual non-stop display in which his covering was particularly good.

In fact, the whole defence covered well, with Aherne, marking his winger closely, giving Hurst a somewhat unhappy time. Dunne, however, found Kiernan something of a

problem, particularly in the second half, and quite a lot of threat came from this flank.

But, when this game is recalled in days to come, the man whose name will most readily come into the memory is Baynham, for his pluck and tenacity.

Midway through the first half, he threw himself at the feet of Leary to prevent a certain goal. It was a courageous, desperate effort and he paid the penalty by receiving a blow from the centre-forward's knee on the side of his head.

There was a longish hold-up while Baynham received attention and then, to the concern of the many hundreds of Luton supporters, he was taken to the touchline for further treatment, and Dunne donned the goalkeeper's jersey.

INSISTED ON RETURNING

That state of affairs lasted only momentarily, for Baynham insisted on returning and he played for the remainder of the match, although he was obviously still dazed.

At the end he could not recall anything that had happened in the first half and he was in a bad way when the teams went off at half-time.

The scoring began in the 30th minute when TURNER, with complete precision, turned in a centre by Aherne, who had come right up into the left-wing position.

LEARY obtained the equaliser a minute from half-time and actually in the time added for the stoppage for Baynham's injury. He was left with an easy, close-range chance after a down-the-middle movement.

Hopes of the Town took a dive when in the 55th minute Dunne made a bad pass from near the touchline and the ball was pushed through to GAULD, who shot in, wide of Baynham's right hand.

Turner missed a chance of equalising but, with 18 minutes left, Turner made a through pass which MacEWAN collected, made Ufton go the wrong way, and beat Bartram with a fine drive.

In a fighting finish by Charlton Gauld had a goal disallowed for offside and, with almost the last kick of the match, Ayre shot inches wide.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC: Bartram; Campbell, Townsend; Hewie, Ufton, Hammond; Hurst, Ayre, Leary, Gauld, Kiernan.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Turner, MacEwan, Cummins, Taylor.

Referee: K. A. Collinge. Sale. Attendance: 28,800.