

REAL PROMISE FROM THIS FORWARD LINE

Town Lost Deserved Point In The Closing Minutes

By Chiltern

MANCHESTER CITY 3, LUTON TOWN 2

QUEER how the results of meetings between these two teams follow a regular pattern. Each of their last four meetings has resulted in a 3—2 win for the home side, and on each of their last two visits to Maine-road, the Town have been deemed unlucky.

So it was on Saturday when, with any luck at all, there would have been two points with which to return home, but a combination of missed chances in the first half and then the desperation of the City in the second, deprived them of what they deserved which was at least half of the spoils.

All through, the better, more effective football came from the Town, whose forward line looked as if it had taken on a new lease of life.

Aided by the dash and enthusiasm of McLeod, the strength and determination of Turner and Morton and the trickiness of Cullen, they had the City defence continually in trouble once they overcame the shock of being a goal down in three minutes.

That came in almost the first serious attack of the match, when Clarke, left unattended as he often was, slipped the ball inside to DYSON. Quickly, the inside-left sold the dummy to both Jones and Owen and beat Streten with an oblique shot into the far corner of the net.

Recovering from that, the Town, with fast, direct methods which were eminently suited to the mud, took control of the game once they had equalised after 14 minutes through TURNER, who beat Trautmann from close in after a cross by McLeod had been deflected by Ewing.

TURNER STRIKES AGAIN

From then until nearly half-time we saw the best display from the Town forwards for several weeks. TURNER struck again in the 27th minute when, after having his first shot from a corner by Gregory kicked off the line by Little, he smacked the ball first time into the net from the rebound.

At that point the Town looked booked for a win. They were adapting themselves much better to the heavy conditions by keeping the ball moving forward all the time and forsaking the cross-field and even backwards football that we have seen from them so often away from home this season.

Had luck really been with them, or, maybe, had their finishing been a little more emphatic, they could have placed themselves in an impregnable position by half-time.

Trautmann made an almost incredible save from Turner, McLeod twice failed to exact full advantage from openings which he had made himself, and other reasonable chances slipped by.

At half-time the Town were well worth their lead, which should have been more decisive, but they had a storm to face when the second half began.

CAME OUT FIGHTING

No doubt, driven by desperation after their three consecutive defeats, the City came out fighting, gained control of the middle of the field, and forced the Town right back on the defensive.

Yet, in their breakaway, the Town were still the more direct and forceful and were unlucky on two or three occasions not to gain the goal that, undoubtedly, would have proved decisive.

With 19 minutes left, the City suddenly struck. The ball came across the Town goal from Fagan, and Jones, at full stretch, could only touch it towards the deadline. There Clarke gained possession, beat Jones near the line and made a centre that DYSON met with his head and beat Streten.

Then came the storm. Cheered on by wildly enthusiastic supporters, the City threw in everything. The Town weathered it, but just when it seemed all odds on them gaining a point, the tragedy happened.

There were just four minutes to go when Paul swung a long cross-field pass to the left. Cullen, back helping the defence, had possession, but, instead of adopting safety first tactics, tried to beat Dyson, who made a successful tackle.

Then he pulled the ball back to CLARKE, off whose head it went into the furthest corner of the net to give the City a victory which they scarcely deserved.

CRUMBS OF COMFORT

Crumbs of comfort for the Town were contained in the display of the forwards during the

first half — their most positive display for weeks.

Only weakness was at outside-left, where Gregory, too often standing still, could make nothing of Leivers and was perhaps the chief culprit in the number of times the forwards were caught offside.

Streten was in brilliant form, making a number of brilliant saves, and Owen was another who saved the Town when they were under extreme pressure.

Because of the unorthodox approach of the City forwards with Johnstone playing the deep-lying centre-forward game, Smith's role was almost that of a second centre-half, which he fulfilled faithfully, and most of the support to the attack came from Shanks.

After an uneasy start in which Fagan worried him a great deal, Aherne crowded out the winger, and Jones would have done better had he been less inclined to jockey Clarke and put in some whole-hearted tackles, because it was from the left wing that all three goals stemmed.

MANCHESTER CITY: Trautmann; Leivers, Little; Barnes, Ewing, Paul; Fagan, Hayes, Johnstone, Dyson, Clarke.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Jones, Aherne; Shanks, Owen, Smith; Cullen, Turner, McLeod, Morton, Gregory.

Referee: P. F. Power, York.

Attendance: 27,253.

Other Critics Said:

TOWN GOOD ENOUGH FOR POINT

The offside trap and the lights combined to beat Luton at Manchester City, but all the national newspaper critics agreed that Luton deserved at least a point, and would not have been flattered had they brought home both of them.

The lights are proving to be Luton's bogy this season, and they fell into the offside trap time and time again and many promising raids were brought to a premature end.

Streten, for some fine saves and Turner for his markmanship, received special praise from the critics.

Here are some quotes:

"Luton looked much the more convincing in attack until the half-time lights went on. Turner and Morton . . . were altogether too snappy for Paul and Barnes." Sunday Express.

"In the clinging mud, Luton always moved more menacingly than did City, with Turner and Cullen in great form on the right wing." Sunday Chronicle and Empire News.

"For long spells Luton Town looked far the better side and their all-round team-work was more dangerous throughout." Sunday Dispatch.

"Rallying under the lights, Manchester City snatched a win four minutes from time." Sunday Graphic.

"The speed and direct ideas of Gordon Turner and George McLeod often drove gaps into the City defence . . . but for all Luton's more compact and confident look they were caught far too easily in City's offside trap." News of the World.

"It was tough luck on Luton, for most of the game they had played the better football." The People.

"Luton should have brought two points home from Maine-road. In all the football arts they were superior — with just one exception. They lacked the experience to beat a cunningly-set offside trap." News Chronicle.