

ONE LONG STRUGGLE FOR DEPLETED SIDE

United Worth Their Win, But Had The Luck, Too

By Chiltern

MANCHESTER UNITED 3, LUTON TOWN 0

MOST of the shocks happened to the Town before this match at Old Trafford on Christmas Day. One by one, they were deprived of key players and it was a strange-looking side that took on this heavy task.

It was a hollow victory for United who, even so, had all the luck that was going in the shape of the run of the ball.

Not that they were not worth their winning margin—they were—but the way in which two of the goals came was distinctly fortunate,

When the referee awarded United a penalty in the 19th minute when Groves made what seemed to be a perfectly fair tackle on Charlton and, in fact, emerged with the ball, it looked a terribly harsh decision.

Appeals by the Town made no difference and EDWARDS, from the spot, scored with a terrific drive that sent the ball rebounding back into play off the iron stanchion.

At that time, the reshuffled Town had been showing some signs of settling down and this was a heavy blow to them.

Even more unfortunate was the second goal 14 minutes from half-time, when Charlton made a shot that was going well wide until the ball struck TAYLOR and rebounded into the net well wide of Baynham, who was left absolutely helpless.

DEFENCE HELD ON

There was never much prospect of a successful Town rally, but the defence held on hard under pressure until CHARLTON finally settled it after 70 minutes with a close-range shot during a goal-mouth mix-up.

As Marsh played a hero's part the following day, so did Baynham in this match.

Crippled for much of the time

with a bruised thigh muscle that prevented him from taking goal-kicks in the end, he made a series of brilliant saves and the 39,444 crowd gave him a warm reception at the end for his gallant display.

Seldom have the Town forwards looked less like scoring goals and Turner, sitting on the trainers' bench, was badly missed.

Clear-cut chances were few and far between. Gregory, leading the forwards, with Brown on his left, had a half chance in the first half, but was beaten by the quickness in anticipation of Gregg, who was not given a great deal of opportunity of demonstrating his agility to the home crowd.

Brown, too, went close to scoring, but generally speaking there was no punch in attack, and the United defence had quite a light afternoon.

In midfield, there were some useful contributions from Groves and Brown, but Gregory had not sufficient drive in the middle though there was not a great deal of improvement when he switched with McLeod during the second half.

WERE STRUGGLING

Gregor finished limping with ankle injury, which did not help matters and of the three who played on the wings during the match, the most liveliness came from Adam.

Right from the time when the penalty goal came, the Town were struggling. They fought hard enough, especially in defence where Pacey and Kelly were workmanlike enough in facing this strong opposition.

Pearce and Hawkes did well against the United right flank, but Dunne had his hands full with the lively Scanlon.

At the end, we felt that things could have been a lot worse but on the other hand, they could have been better because the goals were distinctly "scratchy" affairs.

In the circumstances, it was by no means a bad result and it could not be expected that a team playing under the handicap the Town were, would gain any reward from this tough encounter.

MANCHESTER UNITED:—Gregg; Foulkes, Bynne; Colman Jones, Edwards; Morgans, Charlton, Taylor, Viollet, Scanlon.

LUTON TOWN.—Baynham; Dunne, Hawkes; Pacey, Kelly, Pearce; Adam, Groves, Gregory, Brown, McLeod.

Referee: R. P. Hartley, Burnley.