

HIGH DRAMA CAME IN THE LAST

BROWN'S HEADER A TOWN POINT-SAVER

Gallant Fight Back After Being Two Goals Down

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 2, MANCHESTER UNITED 2

AT last, the Town have broken the stranglehold that the champions, Manchester United, have held over them, but it was a terribly close thing, with the goal that gave them their only point of the holiday coming in the 89th minute of the exciting Boxing Day fixture at Kenilworth-road.

Before the biggest crowd, 26,458, there has been on the ground since Wolves were here at the beginning of last season, they fought back gallantly to wipe out a two goals lead and to save a match that they had always looked likely to lose.

The Town's bad luck started before the holiday because they had to take the field at Old Trafford without three key players in Bob Morton, Sid Owen and Gordon Turner.

Even worse befell them the next day when, with these three still not available, Ron Baynham had to stand down because of a bruised thigh muscle and Eddie Marsh, who travelled to Luton to see the match, found himself making a dream debut in the first team.

Marsh is one of those players to whom fate has not been very kind because for years he was stand-in at Charlton to Sam Bartram and now has the onerous task of understudying Baynham.

But no player could have taken his chance better than he did in this match in which he made a series of thrilling saves and, on this showing, the Town have no need to worry about a reserve for this position.

Indeed, the reserves who found themselves called upon so unexpectedly for first team duty did a real job of work.

LOOKED LIKE THE INEVITABLE

On a muddy surface, United, strong and fast, looked to be steering towards inevitable victory after SCANLON gave them the lead in the 28th minute.

It was a simple sort of goal that came when the outside-left suddenly switched through the middle and brushed aside challenges from Dunne and Pacey.

I thought one of the defenders might have made a successful tackle and there was some hesitation, though not on the part of the United player who blazed the ball into the roof of the net.

Shortly after this, Pacey had to go off for attention to a gashed forehead, but soon returned and the Town staged a rally during which Brown missed a chance from close in and Cullen had a shot charged down.

When a mistake by Dunne left TAYLOR with a perfect chance of which he took full toll two minutes from half-time, the

tackle so quickly and firmly as he can.

For a youngster like Pacey to be called upon for a couple of tough matches such as they proved to be, was a considerable ordeal and he did a tremendous amount of work even after his injury.

GOOD WORK BY GROVES

But the defence looked stronger when Groves went to right-half and some of the football he played was well in advance of anything we saw from the United.

Another indefatigable worker was Pearce who, however, has fallen into a bad habit of running with the ball and he was dispossessed several times.

Still, from the defence as a whole there was 100 per cent fighting spirit and errors can be forgotten in view of that.

That spirit was apparent in the forward line, too, with Groves constantly scheming,

Brown, captain for these two matches, working himself into the ground and plenty of dash and enthusiasm from Adam and McLeod.

These last weeks, Adam has been a far more effective player because he is getting on with the job and the one real disappointment was Cullen.

Playing at inside-forward for the first time in the senior side, he found little going right for him and it was not until the last 20 minutes that he really came into the game.

Not a great football match this, maybe, but it was ideal holiday entertainment for a crowd, the size of which must have been a matter of real encouragement to officials.

LUTON TOWN: Marsh; Dunne, Hawkes; Pacey, Kelly, Pearce; Adam, Groves, Brown, Cullen, McLeod.

MANCHESTER UNITED: Gregg; Foulkes, Byrne; Colman, Jones, Edwards; Berry, Charlton, Taylor, Viollet, Scanlon. Referee: K. Aston, Ilford.

Town's case began to look hopeless.

First sign of hope came five minutes after the restart when, during a scrimmage following a free-kick by Kelly, GROVES forced the ball through off Edwards's body, with Gregg well beaten by the deflection.

Shortly after this Pacey, who had aggravated his head injury, switched with Groves and missed a reasonable chance from a corner by McLeod.

NAME WAS TAKEN

Tempers became a little frayed and Viollet had his name taken for what seemed to be mild offence compared with what had been allowed to pass.

United had chances of putting themselves in an impregnable position, but they did not look the part of champions in front of goal and all three inside forwards failed with good opportunities.

Even so, they did not look likely to lose their grip until that dramatic last minute when BROWN soared high to connect squarely with his head a high cross from Hawkes. Again Gregg was well beaten and pandemonium broke loose after this tremendous effort.

In fact, the scenes at the end with all the Town players cheered off the field were something to remember, and the team could do with a lot more of this sort of warm support.

This was by no means the Town at their best, but it will be remembered by everybody who saw it as a heroic fight against all the odds, and was probably a better performance than some of the clear-cut victories the team has gained.

EVERYBODY FOUGHT

There were failures, I know, but the point was that everybody fought to the utmost, and while there is this sort of spirit in the club, then the team will come to little harm.

By and large, the defence earns full marks, with Marsh playing an outstanding part and Kelly doing a very useful job against Taylor, who was a long way from being as dangerous as he can be.

Hawkes, who has fitted into the scheme of things so well, was more impressive than Dunne who is not getting into the