

PENALTY MISS COST TOWN A POINT

Gallant Fight Back After Terrible Start

By Chiltern

MANCHESTER UNITED 2, LUTON TOWN 1

STILL awaiting their first point from this Old Trafford ground are the Town, but it could have been otherwise after this hard-fought match had they made the best use of their chances.

Unfortunately, yet again, they got away to a bad start, with Baynham having to pick the ball out of the net after only a minute had ticked by and, with 12 minutes gone, they found themselves two down.

This state of affairs was the product of unusually untidy defensive work, and Owen has seldom had such an unhappy opening to a match as he did on this occasion.

A mistake by him forced him to make a pass to Baynham that the goalkeeper could not prevent from going for a corner which he then failed to clear, and VIOLLET was left with a simple chance to head through.

Before the second goal came Viollet missed a great chance when Owen erred again, and further slack defensive work led to CHARLTON increasing the lead after 12 minutes.

He ran on to a pass from Bradley and crashed in a tremendous shot that gave Baynham absolutely no chance.

To their credit, the Town defence overcame their early uncertainty and, when CUMMINS reduced the arrears after 19 minutes from Adam's centre, they began to look a more settled, more cohesive force.

They had quite a lot of the play in midfield, but their work in front of goal was not impressive,



Bobby Charlton

and United always appeared to hold the more potential danger, though their shooting was not of the best.

Still, the Town reached half-time very much in the game, although they had seen Brown helped off the field a couple of minutes before with a badly cut mouth.

This necessitated three stitches, and they began the second half without him, though he came on and went to outside-right after four minutes.

Meanwhile a collision between Turner and Cummins had prevented the latter making the most of a centre from Bingham, but the best chance the Town had came shortly afterwards, when Bingham was pulled down by Gregg after he had dribbled around the goalkeeper and was shaping to place the ball into an empty net.

There was no doubt about the justice of the penalty award, but, unfortunately, Turner, who, until this season, had a 100 per cent record from the spot, missed it.

He aimed hard wide of Gregg's right hand, but not wide enough, because the goalkeeper beat out

the shot and the attempt of Adam to put in the rebound was foiled by good covering.

Had Turner scored on this occasion, I am quite prepared to believe that the Town would have gone on to victory, because they were causing the United defence a lot of trouble at this juncture.

In fact, with Cummins trying to exploit the down-the-middle route, they continued to do so, but the close quarter work lacked snap and decision.

Yet for quite 25 minutes they were the more impressive combination in midfield, due in large measure to the good work of Morton and Pacey.

When the latter injured an ankle 18 minutes from the end and switched to outside-left, with Adam dropping back, the Town's chances of saving a point virtually disappeared.

UNITED BACK IN GAME

After this United came back into the game again as an attacking force, and had chances of increasing their lead. In the main they were foiled by the brilliant goalkeeping of Baynham, though on one occasion he was helped by Hawkes, who kicked a shot from Quixall off the goal-line.

After their terrible start the Town put up a brave fight, played some neat football in approach, but showed little sign that they had re-discovered the punch that has been missing these last weeks.

The penalty apart, Turner had few chances, but moved quite confidently in midfield, without looking the dangerous opportunist he can be.

Best of the forwards was Cummins, by virtue of his scheming in the second half, when he began a t t a c k after attack. Previously his passing had tended to go astray, and there had been a tendency, too, to be too elaborate.

From Adam, there was quite a lively display, marred on occasion by bad finishing, and Bingham, as an emergency centre-forward after the injury to Brown, kept the United defence on their toes.

Earlier he had not had the best of support, and Brown, though working hard when he was in the middle, lacked penetrative power.

Once he got over his bad start, Owen settled down to something like his normal form, and there was a splendid display by Pacey against £45,000 Quixall.

Morton, too, did not allow the reputation of Charlton to deter him, and it was mostly through the work of the wing-halves that the Town were able to make such a fight for a point.

Both Dunne and Hawkes came through adequately enough, and Baynham made some brilliant saves, particularly in the last quarter of an hour, when the Town's plight might have become worse but for his work.

MANCHESTER UTD: Gregg; Foulkes, Carolan; Goodwin, Cope, McGuinness; Bradley Quixall, Viollet, Charlton, Scanlon.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Hawkes; Morton, Owen, Pacey; Bingham, Turner, Brown, Cummins, Adam.

Referee: J. S. Swain, Cleethorpes. Attendance: 41,195.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

Most national and Sunday newspaper critics thought Luton deserved to share the honours at Old Trafford. United rocked them with a tearaway start, but all were agreed that the Town took the honours after the interval.

"They (United) really won it in 11 minutes, in which time they scored twice. Their goal-scoring job was made easier by an unsettled Luton defence. But in that spell their forwards moved with such urgency and precision that they threatened to make mincemeat of Luton." — "Sunday Dispatch."

"Luton, after that early damage, gave a clear example of how plain and efficient football can always be dangerous." — "The People."

"In many ways Luton were worth a point, particularly as they fought out the second half with both Allan Brown and Pacey hurt." — "News of the World."

"But how Luton fought! When two goals down they steadied themselves to work out intricate and incisive moves." — "Sunday Express."

"Ron Baynham has had some hard times in goal for Luton. But he will never have ten tougher minutes than the last of this match." — "News Chronicle."