

CITY ADMINISTERED SHOCK TREATMENT

Face-Saving Winner For Town In Last Minutes

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 4, LEICESTER CITY 3

THIS was shock treatment indeed that Leicester gave the Town in the last 28 minutes of a match over which came such a dramatic change that from being a team trailing hopelessly three goal behind, the City all but snatched a point.

In fact, they should have done because, seven minutes from the end, they equalised and that seemed to be the end of the victory hopes of the Town who rallied, however, to get the winner with four minutes left.

So much superiority did the Town show over this struggling, rather listless opposition in the first half that a runaway success was very much on the cards, and it might have happened had there not been some measure of relaxation, some of it, perhaps, unconsciously, by the Town after the interval.

In view of the Cup-tie looming on the horizon, this was perhaps understandable because Leicester had not looked capable of scoring a single goal, let alone three.

Just how much their rally was due to them suddenly finding some fighting spirit, and how much to the Town's Cup consciousness, is difficult to say, but the Town did miss, chances of really rubbing in their advantage before the fight back began.

In a flying start, MORTON scored with a cross-drive after four minutes, and, five minutes later, BROWN threw himself in between Maclaren and a centre from Gregory to score a spectacularly-headed goal.

When, after 26 minutes, CUMMINS made a drive from 25 yards that had so much "cut" on it that it swung alarmingly out of the reach of Maclaren, Leicester seemed well on the way to a resounding defeat.

There was little in the early

exchanges after the interval to suggest that such an incredible change would come over the match.

TWO QUICK GOALS

Then came a spell of three minutes in which the game was thrown into the melting-pot when the City hit back twice through LEEK and NEWMAN.

The first, after 62 minutes, was with a header that eluded Baynham's grasping fingers, and the other, two minutes later, with a raking drive from Newman after a free-kick, awarded for obstruction by McNally, had been taken twice for some reason that was not patently clear.

Hitting back, the Town had much of the play again, but could not find their first-half drive and power, and a scrambled equaliser came the way of the City with seven minutes left.

A very wide back pass by Hawkes that Baynham could not prevent from running for a corner, even though he raced out of his penalty area, was taken short to Leek, who crossed it, and in the melee LORNIE scrambled it through.

By then it seemed too late for the Town to do anything about regaining the point that had been wrested from them so unexpectedly, but we reckoned without the genius of Bingham.

GREGORY RUSHED IT THROUGH

He left Baillie almost standing and his centre was headed goalwards by Brown. In a scramble that followed, GREGORY just managed to force his way through and rush the ball over the line for a face-saving winner for the Town.

On their first-half display, the attack would have worried the best defence in the country with Cummins scheming cleverly and pushing the ball here and there with great accuracy.

There was drive and power from Morton and Brown, and some useful work by Bingham and, less occasionally, from Gregory.

Afterwards, with the Leicester pressure on so unexpectedly, the rhythm went and the Town defence, which had come through so easily and masterfully earlier, began to look worried.

Most trouble came down the wings, with McNally seemingly worried by the way in which Leek switched about and Hawkes losing the grip he had had earlier on Riley.

Owen maintained his high standard against the dashing, inexperienced Lornie, and so did Groves, but Pacey was not quite so prominent as in previous matches.

So Baynham had more to do in the last half an hour than he could have expected reasonably and, of several fine saves he made, the best was a diving one from Newman.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Hawkes; Groves, Owen, Pacey; Bingham, Brown, Morton, Cummins, Gregory.

LEICESTER CITY: Maclaren; Cunningham, Baillie; Newman, King, Appleton; Riley, Walsh, Lornie, Walker, Leek.

Referee: J S Pickles, Stockport. Attendance: 15,786.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

Coasting to an easy victory at half-time; struggling for the points at the end. This is the nutshell verdict of the critics who saw blow hot, blow cold Luton defeat Leicester on Saturday. One point they all made abundantly clear is: Luton cannot afford to have a second-half relapse when they clash with Blackpool in the Cup.

"Luton almost made a present of a point to struggling Leicester after having put themselves into a seemingly impregnable position, for they eased up after taking a three goals lead."—News of the World.

"Through over-confidence Luton nearly came unstuck after they had completely outplayed Leicester in the first-half. For the second they came back as if they had merely to appear to make sure of retaining the three-goal lead they had built up by brilliant high-powered football."—Sunday Express.

"The stage was set for Luton to complete the annihilation when they came out for the second-half. Instead they resumed the game with an air of almost complete indifference. And how they paid for it!"—Sunday Dispatch.

"Syd Owen, Luton's skipper and veteran of many Soccer battles, had good reason to look disgusted on the way to the dressing room."—Sunday Graphic.

"Luton fell into the age-old trap against Leicester and decided to coast through the rest of the match. The inevitable happened. Leicester got back two of the three goals within a minute soon after the start of the second-half, and Luton, having, so to speak, stopped the engines, could not get started again."—Empire News.

"Luton had this game in the bag by the interval—but they nearly lost it in the second-half when three down Leicester fought back to equalise."—Reynolds News.

"On their showing against Leicester, Luton can say farewell to their Cup hopes. Having soared to a three-goal first-half lead they decided they had done enough and that it was time to conserve themselves for next week's tie at Blackpool."—The People.

"Leicester gave Luton a lesson which they will do well to take to heart in view of next Saturday's Cup clash with unbeaten at-home Blackpool. The simple moral is the old, old one that a match is never won until the final whistle."—Daily Mail.

HAS ANYONE SEEN OUR BALL?



Bob Morton and Leicester's Ian King jump to meet a Billy Bingham centre, but the ball beats them—and the three other players in the picture. An incident in the second half of the Luton-Leicester match at Kenilworth-road on Saturday.—R2463T