

McBRIDE'S LATE GOAL WAS A POINT-SAVER

Mistakes Fore And Aft Cost Town A Victory

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 3, SUNDERLAND 3

HAD goals followed strictly the run of the play, the Town would have been comfortable winners of this game which they saved only during a dramatic late rally which came after a spell in which they seemed to be going down to defeat.

Uncertain finishing and some unusual errors of goalkeeping judgment, helped to bring about this disappointing state of affairs and, for the second time in four days, the Town gained a late goal which meant a point to them.

While Wednesday's happenings in front of goal did not really give support to the idea, many supporters had a sneaking feeling that this was to be the match in which the Town forwards would at last come into their own with a crop of goals.

This was based on previous goal riots which they have had against Sunderland, but they discovered the Wearsiders' defence a different proposition from the wide open one which they used to find so easy to break down.

Even so, two goals in the first 16 minutes was a sufficient justification for such thoughts but, unfortunately, sandwiched in between them was a success for Sunderland that should have been prevented.

First of all, after nine minutes, came a brilliantly-worked move which led to PACEY, intelligently running into the open space for the return pass, giving the Town the lead.

Three minutes later, Baynham allowed a shot from McNAB to pass underneath his body, but that particular disappointment was alleviated four minutes later when BINGHAM steered through a cross from McBride.

Here was the Town's chance

to build on this solid foundation, but things did not work out that way because they failed to force home their advantage, allowed Sunderland to settle down to some ordered passing and paid the penalty in the shape of conceding an equaliser.

It came in the 35th minute, after Dunne had raced across to stem one particular spot of danger. Unfortunately, Baynham had also made his effort and when the ball went to LAWTHORP he had the whole goal at which to aim.

Determinedly, the Town began the second half with a series of raids and, for a considerable time, Sunderland were forced to rely on desperate defence in order to retain equality.

There were times when they were distinctly fortunate to do so, but again the Town's finishing was not of the best and some chances were missed.

Then, as happens, not uncommonly in a situation like this, a snap breakaway took the Town defence by surprise and Sunderland went ahead in the 70th minute.

Brown was beaten by O'Neill in a tussle for a through pass by Taylor near the edge of the penalty area. At the same time Baynham had left his goal, and so could only be a spectator of O'Neill's lob as it spiralled into the net.

With two minutes left, McBRIDE banged the ball into the roof of the net, following a corner by Bingham, and in the dying seconds Imlach shot wide when left with a chance of gaining the winner.

DOMINATING WING-HALVES

Three goals against does not tell the true story of the work of the defence as a whole because in Morton and Pacey the Town had two strong, dominating wing-halves, and Brown was effective in a quiet, unassuming way.

Nor did Dunne and Daniel have much trouble with the visiting wingers, but Baynham seems to have struck an uneasy patch and is making mistakes that previously have been completely foreign to him.

Forward, there is still a need for more power and punch in front of goal, though McBride gave his most satisfying display so far during the second half, when he was unlucky not to score more than once.

Queries remain about the inside-forward positions because Turner mostly found the way to goal blocked, and Groves is still taking far too long in which to make his moves and, in addition, is not achieving accuracy with his distribution.

Of the wingers, Bingham, who did much wandering in the first half, made a much more positive contribution than did Imlach, who was largely disappointing.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Daniel; Morton, Brown, Pacey; Bingham, Turner, McBride, Groves, Imlach.

SUNDERLAND: Wakeham; Nelson, Ashhurst; Anderson, Hurley, McNab; Fogarty, Taylor, Lawther, O'Neill, Overfield.

Referee: H. Horner, Coventry. Attendance: 17,632.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"It could be argued that Luton deserved both points. I cannot agree.

True, Luton seized the initiative early on and, by and large, retained it to the end. Yet if you don't exploit openings you don't deserve success.

Despite all the guts shown by the Sunderland defenders, Luton created sufficient goal chances during that prolonged second-half onslaught to have won in comfort." — "The People".

"Despite Luton's three goals there are still weaknesses in the attack. There was plenty of ability in midfield, but not the cool thinking and precision in front of goal to make it pay off.

In the end they were lucky to rescue a point from a game which they should have won with a comfortable margin to spare.

Both these teams could be among the top in the Second Division if they can improve at inside-forward." — "Sunday Express."

"It's Second Division football at Luton, but I can't see any of their fans complaining if this was a fair sample of the lower grade.

From the moment Dave Pacey, Luton's storming fair-haired left-half, crashed home a wonder goal in the eleventh minute the thrills came thick and fast." — "Empire News."

"This was what I call a football match—90 tingling minutes of first-class soccer with a thrilling Luton equaliser two minutes from the end. I shall be surprised if I see a better game this season.

Luton can claim that two of the Sunderland goals were more than a little lucky." — "Sunday Dispatch."

"In the second-half Luton pressure was even more severe. Shots rained on Wakeham from all angles but he dealt confidently and competently with them all. Even then it seemed only a matter of time before he and the Sunderland defence would crack and an avalanche of goals would come." — "News of the World."

"In their three home matches with Sunderland Luton had won 8-2, 6-2, 7-1. This time they were held to a draw and only scraped a point with an 88th minute goal. Why?

Obvious answer is that Sunderland are now a much better team, with a tighter defence. But almost as important a factor in Luton's comparative lack of success was the old, old story of bad finishing.

Luton should have won easily. They had more of the play, carved more openings—and wasted more chances." — "Daily Mail."

"The costly wingers Billy Bingham and Stuart Imlach had much of their sting extracted by Sunderland's promising full-backs Colin Nelson and Len Ashurst."

However, it was another experienced man, goalkeeper Ron Baynham who can take most of the blame for the loss of a point. He presented Sunderland with two goals." — "News Chronicle."