

Change Of Decision Gave Town Point

LIVERPOOL 2 LUTON TOWN 2

By CHILTERN

ANOTHER hard, fighting display by the Town at Liverpool last night enabled them to gain their third draw out of four away matches, the other being lost somewhat unluckily by the odd goal.

So the Town can be said to have come through this testing period of three away games and two points in a week with quite a deal of credit.

A test it was for them on this Anfield ground, particularly in the first-half when, with the defence looking distinctly uneasy and uncertain under pressure, they were a little fortunate to be level at half-time.

That they were was due to as good a goal as this Liverpool crowd will see this season, a screaming drive from Bingham that simply flew into the corner of the net.

It was as if this success acted as a stimulant to the team as a whole, because they were much more assured after the interval when the defence was altogether more sound and the covering much better.

During the first half far too many high crosses spelt danger for the Town, with Baynham not showing his old confidence and judgment and Kelly not dominant enough with his headwork.

However, the second half brought a different story. If that late goal by Melia had been allowed to count it would have been an unjust result.

That incident really sparked off the crowd of 27,339 who booed the referee off the field.

In the first half the Town made a lot of trouble for themselves by trying to play the short, square passing game. There was a return to more directness in the second half, with the result that the forwards looked a more effective combination. Turner gave by his shooting some further evidence that we have not seen the last of him as a successful marksman.

LIVERPOOL: Slater; Molyneux, Moran; Milne, White, Leishman; Callaghan, Harrower, Hickson, Melia, A'Court.

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

Referee: E Crawford, Doncaster.

Neither Lewis nor Hunt had recovered from injury so Liverpool were unchanged, as were the Town.

Liverpool made a flying start and in the first minute Baynham had to snatch the ball away from Harrower's feet.

Harassed by McBride, White

How The Goals Came

TURNER for Luton after 5 minutes.

HICKSON for Liverpool after 6 minutes.

MORAN for Liverpool after 12 minutes.

BINGHAM for Luton after 36 minutes.

gave away a corner which brought the first positive Town move. This was followed by a header from Turner which Slater pushed around the post.

TOWN DRAW FIRST BLOOD

A rush on the goal followed Imlach's corner, during which TURNER back headed the ball past Slater to give the Town the lead after five minutes.

It was short-lived because barely a minute later a quick Liverpool raid brought a centre by Harrower which HICKSON headed into the far corner of the net with the defence spreadeagled.

There was plenty of action in these early minutes and Turner forced White into a mistake that could quite easily have brought him another goal.

The excitement continued and Liverpool took the lead after 12 minutes through a penalty for hands from which MORAN scored easily.

From a high centre from the left the defence got into a tangle, again through the lack of mastery in the air.

With Baynham out of his goal Harrower headed deliberately for goal and Pacey and Daniel between them made fruitless efforts to save on the line.

A hand shot out belonging to the latter, I think, and there was no question about a penalty award.

LEVEL AGAIN

Liverpool continued to have more of the play and missed a couple of chances through slipshod finishing at close quarters.

Vainly the Town tried to get moving, but that happened only rarely and Liverpool were the more capable looking side in attack.

Neat interpassing by Brown and Imlach at last brought a decisive raid by the Town and was followed by a couple of corners, but Slater was not troubled.

Liverpool were soon back again and from a free-kick by Melia, Hickson headed inches wide, with Baynham beaten.

Then somewhat unexpectedly in view of the way play had been running, the Town equalised through a glorious goal by BINGHAM.

Start of the move came from Imlach who had drifted over to the right wing. He slipped the ball to McBride, who pulled it back to the unmarked Bingham.

Although he was over 25 yards from goal Bingham did not hesitate about cracking away at goal and the ball flew wide of the leaping Slater's hands high into the far corner of the net in the 36th minute.

Throwing back a desperate Liverpool attack, the Town launched a full-scale movement during which Brown shot over from a good position.

Towards half-time there was heavy Liverpool pressure, but the Town got back into the picture through the determination of Turner. Half-time:

Liverpool 2, Luton 2.

During the interval I learnt that the handling that brought the penalty was by Pacey.

Early activity by Liverpool was driven off and the best came from Turner whose drive just missed the angle of the woodwork.

FORWARDS SWITCHING

Switching of positions by the Town forwards and general movement of the ball forward instead of the square passing on which they had relied for much of the first half enabled the Town to settle down into a smoother-looking combination.

Liverpool missed a chance and then a much better effort came from Turner who met brilliantly on the turn a centre by Imlach. Slater just managed to tip the ball over the bar.

When Liverpool came back with a high-powered attack first Kelly, then Dunne, got in the way of scoring efforts and for a few minutes the Town defence was beleaguered.

A bit of ill-feeling on the part of the Liverpool defence crept in when Slater was injured in making a point-blank save from McBride who, however, was perfectly entitled to keep going after the goalkeeper had dropped the ball.

It was soon quelled and the game continued on cut and thrust lines, with both goals having escapes.

Liverpool appeals for a penalty for hands when the ball struck Daniel on the chest were disallowed after, for one horrible moment, I thought the referee had pointed to the penalty spot.

Clear-cut scoring openings were not cropping up for either side often now, due to tighter defensive measures.

Then Liverpool did score, an award that was followed by heated protests en masse by the Town who persuaded the referee to consult a linesman.

GOAL DISALLOWED

To the obvious disappointment of the crowd and the Liverpool players, who rushed up to the official, the goal was disallowed.

The scorer was Melia, who was in an obvious offside position when he planted the ball past Baynham from point-blank range. There was no question about him being played on, because it was Hickson's head the ball struck en route.

The changed decision caused a near uproar among the crowd.

Result:

LIVERPOOL 2
LUTON TOWN 2