

CREAK, CREAK, CRACK IN TOWN DEFENCE

NEWCASTLE MAKE FULL USE OF OPEN SPACES

McGuffie's Goal The One Bright Spot

By Chiltern

NEWCASTLE UTD. 4, LUTON TOWN 1

I CAN remember days when the Town's visits to Newcastle drew upwards of 40,000 people.

Today, in weather that was dry after early rain, but still dull, it looked as if the gate would do well to finish on the 20,000 mark. Not that it was difficult to understand, because Newcastle are situated near the foot of the Second Division table, which must be a bitter pill to their supporters after their relegation last season.

In an effort to improve the attack, which had scored only six goals in nine matches, Len White was recalled as leader and Hale switched to inside-right to the exclusion of Leek.

Omission of the Welsh international was an interesting commentary on the dangers attendant to an outlay of over £20,000 for a big-name player, because Leek so far this season has failed to reveal his true form.

In defence there was one alteration, McKinney displacing Keith at right back.

McKECKNIE OUT

Unfortunately, the Town were without Tommy McKecknie, victim of some tough Middlesbrough tackling on Wednesday.

At one time, yesterday morning, it looked as if he had recovered from severe bruising, but reaction set in later, and he had to be left out.

In came Alwyn McGuffie, for his first League game of the season at inside-left, and so the Town had to change the team which has gained six points from the last three matches.

NEWCASTLE UNITED: Hollins; McKinney, McMichael; Neale, Heslop, Dalton; Hughes, Hale, White, Allchurch, Tuohy.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Cope, Groves; Walden, Ashworth, Turner, McGuffie, Fleming.

Referee: R. Harper, Sheffield.

Strangely, McKinney who was playing only his second match of the season in the first team, was Newcastle's captain in place of the Welsh International Ivor Allchurch.

Cope lost the toss, not that there seemed to be any disadvantage in this, because there was no wind to speak of, and certainly no sun.

EARLY ATTACK

In the first minute, there was a brilliant Town movement begun by Fleming and carried on with a smart reverse pass by Turner.

At first, it seemed McGuffie would not quite reach it, but he did, and brought Hollins to his knees with a fast low drive.

That was a promising start by the Town, who went on to gain a corner on the right, from which they tried to turn the ball goal-

wards, but did not get hold of it properly, and it went for a goal kick.

It had certainly been a promising opening by the Town, and they continued in that vein, with Ashworth just failing to find McGuffie with a through pass, and then Hollins pulled down a lobbed free kick by McNally, given for a foul on McGuffie.

NEWCASTLE TAKE LEAD

Newcastle were first dangerous when McNally, attempting to clear, put the ball straight to Tuohy, who crossed the ball into the Town penalty area, two defenders went for it, missed it and it ran to ALLCHURCH, who from the inside-right position left Baynham helpless with a rocket-like drive into the roof of the net to give Newcastle the lead after five minutes.

That came as a great shock because Newcastle had just not been in it previously and it was the first time that they had entered the Town penalty area.

So the Town paid for yet another avoidable defensive mistake.

That goal set up just about the biggest roar Newcastle have heard this season and for a time the Town visibly shaken, were thrown back on the defensive.

A needless foul by Walden on Tuohy brought further trouble and from the free kick the ball hung about the Town penalty area with Ashworth getting in Morton's way and finally Allchurch got in another drive that might have worried Baynham had Cope not been in the way.

TROUBLE FROM WINGER

Thus early it was evident that McNally was being worried by the speed of Tuohy and Walden had to come back into his own penalty area to give away a corner after the right-back had been outpaced.

This Baynham cleared with a decisive two-fisted punch, but Newcastle were soon back and with Bramwell failing to control the ball, Hughes was left with a shooting chance from a sharp

angle and sent the ball a yard wide of the far post.

Newcastle were playing with a great deal of confidence since that early goal so that the Town forwards were achieving little at this stage and play was mostly at the Luton end.

Hughes did some splendid work in mid-field where he dispossessed Fleming and made a square pass to Dalton who came through at speed, hit a shot from 20 yards and saw the ball rise just too high.

When at last the Town did get away, Ashworth was so harassed by Dalton that he was forced to run the ball out of play. Generally speaking, Newcastle were looking the more assured.

Certainly, they were having the more attempts at goal and Hughes cleared the bar from just outside the penalty area.

For some time, play was confined to midfield where Newcastle were tending to hold the balance and two worthy attempts to find Turner out on the right wing failed, because firstly he was just offside, and secondly the ball ran too quickly for him.

Newcastle were using the offside trap quite a lot and these are tactics against which the Town have never been very happy in the recent past.

Most promising move for some time by the Town was begun by McGuffie with a shrewd pass to Ashworth, who, however, slipped on the greasy turf at the vital moment and was unable to make full use of his pass.

ANOTHER FOR NEWCASTLE

A corner to Newcastle after 22 minutes brought the second goal, through HUGHES.

It came from Tuohy on the left, and there was evidence of slack marking because Hughes was able to run in from the right in to an open space and head the ball firmly past Baynham after the ball had come over Cope's head.

Only a few seconds earlier I had been thinking about the amount of room Newcastle were finding for themselves both in midfield and in the region of the penalty area and here was further evidence of it.

It took the Town some time to settle down after this latest blow, but Turner cleverly laid on a pass to which Walden could run but he was a trifle too late getting there and McMichael was able to block his shot.

There was no disputing the fact that Newcastle's attack carried the more threat and White, after missing the post by inches, was just stopped by the combined efforts of Groves and Baynham.

Then a header from the centre-forward was headed from near the goal-line by McNally, though Baynham was behind him.

TOWN DEFENCE CREAKING

More trouble came for this creaking Town defence in the 28th minute, when HALE secured Newcastle's third goal. It came from a long pass down the middle to which White beat Cope in the air and nodded the ball forward into the open space so that Hale was able to run on to it and head it through as Baynham made a desperate rush out of his goal.

Mistakes kept on cropping up such as when Morton tried to find McNally with a short pass and Tuohy intercepted but this time the winger ran the ball too far.

Just about nothing was going right for the Town. Their passing was mostly too hasty, no doubt dictated by the direness of their situation and as a result was largely inaccurate.

At last they did earn a corner, when Allchurch, back in his own penalty area, pushed the ball off the toe of Turner who was a bit unlucky when the ball came back



One bright moment was given to the Town when McGuffie, playing his first League game of the season, scored in the 51st minute.

from Fleming, because with his back to the goal, he tried an over-head kick and sent the ball just too high.

Newcastle were still being given plenty of room in midfield by that tell-tale gap which allowed Dalton to come through with the ball at his feet at least 10 yards before letting loose a drive that Baynham reached at full stretch, could not hold, but just managed to push outside as White came up for the rebound.

Such attacks as the Town were able to mount were strictly of a temporary nature and carried little or no promise of a goal.

FULL-BACK TAKES SHOT

On the other hand, the busy Newcastle forwards were often menacing the Town goal and even full back McMichael was able to advance to the corner of the penalty area and have a shot, not a very accurate one, because the ball sailed high and wide.

There were still gaps showing in the Town defence and White very nearly made use of one after Cope had been passed once again.

INJURY TO WALDEN

Towards half-time there was a small measure of improvement from the Town but generally speaking they were requiring too many passes to get anywhere and with or minute or so to go Walden suffered a leg injury in a tackle and there was a stoppage while he received attention.

In fact, he was lifted gently a yard or two to deposit him on the outside of the touch line.

So as if the Town had not enough troubles already, here they were down to ten men, but even so they were able to mount a more successful attack than any for some time and Morton, trying his luck from the edge of the penalty area, was a yard wide.

Half-time:
NEWCASTLE 3
LUTON 0

Walden was able to walk off the field at half-time and came back for the second half with his left knee bandaged.

With four minutes of the second half gone, WHITE fully justified his recall by scoring the best goal yet.

Fastening on to a through pass down that gap in the middle, he sold the dummy beautifully to Groves, got him going the wrong way and squeezed the ball in between a post and Baynham.

Badly rattled the Town were and McGuffie, passing back from just outside his own penalty area, nearly caught Baynham napping and the goalkeeper had to scramble quickly to reach the ball.

TOWN HIT BACK

Then the Town did hit back in the 51st minute through McGUFFIE who secured the ball from a low centre by Ashworth, turned quickly and shot well wide of Hollins's right hand from about 10 yards out.

That was about the biggest encouragement so far and was a well-taken chance.

Back came Newcastle and Baynham made a great save from a header by White who was always looking dangerous.

That goal to the Town did little to affect the Newcastle confidence, because they were still finding gaps, and Allchurch, slipping cleverly past Morton, struck Groves with a hard drive.

A corner to the Town came when Ashworth worried Dalton, and the ball hung in front of goal until being cleared to Morton, whose attempt to return it was cut off.

LITTLE THRUST

Corners were not availing the Town much, because there was little sign of thrust in front of goal, but McNally made rather a better hand of a free kick which caused Hollins hurriedly to punch away one-handed.

Then, with the Town exerting more pressure than at any time since before the first Newcastle goal, there was another free kick when Hughes pushed Fleming, who received the ball again from a lob across the field by McNally.

For once in a way he beat McKinney, but his centre found McGuffie standing offside.

When play swung back to the other end, as it did fairly quickly, there was a free kick inside the penalty area against Ashworth for pushing Tuohy.

END OF EXCITEMENT

This produced some excitement in front of the Town goal until Neale, racing up at top speed, belted the ball high into the crowd.

A long swinging centre by Tuohy found Baynham well positioned and then suddenly Groves appeared up in the Town attack to make a centre which Ashworth reached with his head and the ball went over off the top of the bar as Hollins, in his anxiety, jumped so high that he nearly pulled the woodwork down.

There was a chance of the Town scoring again a minute later, from a centre by Groves, but Ashworth and Turner, who were both together, rather put each other off with the result that the ball went wide off the latter's head.

SWITCH IN POSITIONS

Reason for Groves appearing up in the front line became apparent as play settled down into a pattern again because it was then seen that he had switched with McGuffie in an effort to bring some semblance of order to the attack.

Bramwell upset the crowd by unloading Hughes in unmistakable style, which brought a free kick that McGuffie cleared with some ease.

A pass by Turner, which came almost in the accidental category and reached Fleming, enabled the Town to make some ground, but again it all fizzled out when the penalty area was reached, and the Newcastle defenders always seemed to have so much time in which to make their clearances.

There began another bad patch in which the Town's passes went astray continually and had the effect of putting Newcastle firmly on to the attack again.

Only some desperate measures inside the penalty area kept them

How The Goal Came

ALLCHURCH for Newcastle after 5 minutes.

HUGHES for Newcastle after 22 minutes.

HALE for Newcastle after 28 minutes.

WHITE for Newcastle after 49 minutes.

McGUFFIE for Luton Town after 51 minutes.

at bay and all the signs were of Newcastle increasing their advantage rather than the Town getting back into the game to some tune.

Yet the Newcastle finishing was not so crisp as it had been earlier, though Baynham only just managed to save from Tuohy as Hale came in firmly to challenge.

Then Baynham pushed outside a first-timer from Hale to give another corner to Newcastle, who were well on top again.

To clear this, Baynham had to throw himself at the feet of Hughes, and received a slight knock for his pains.

With the Newcastle pressure continuing, Tuohy beat McNally and missed the far upright by a very narrow margin indeed.

A change of scene came when Turner, still seeking material, went out to the left, beat McKinney cleverly enough, but had to be satisfied with a corner which he took himself and which Heslop headed away.

From that Newcastle swung back in their smooth style and Morton was penalised for pushing Allchurch.

The kick was well placed by Neale and Hale went up to make a header that Baynham pulled smartly from under the bar.

A CHANCE MISSED

Ashworth and Turner tried a double-pronged thrust which in the end brought a low cross from Ashworth that somehow got right through but Fleming on the opposite wing was too slow to react and the chance had gone before he realised it.

A mis-placed pass by Cope when not under pressure allowed Allchurch to gain possession in midfield and there was loud disapproval when the linesman ruled that his long pass to Hughes had gone out of play.

All the same, the throw-in enabled Newcastle to keep on the attack.

Fleming did not make the best use of a chance from 20 yards provided for him by Ashworth because he shot rather tamely straight into the arms of Hollins who saved without difficulty.

At last the Town forwards came down in something approaching an all-along-the-line movement, but the final pass, particularly from the wings, was going astray continually, and the

Newcastle defence was being made to look very good indeed.

Baynham continued to be faced with the more serious tasks, and again he pushed away with decision a centre by Tuohy.

When play went to the other end again, Turner very nearly slipped past Heslop from Groves's pass, but the ball ran away from him at the vital moment.

Generally speaking, Newcastle were going along quite comfortably holding their commanding lead and there was certainly no sign of a dramatic Town revival.

Result:
NEWCASTLE 4
LUTON 1