

Last Minute Goal—And Town Earn A Point

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FIRST SUNDERLAND GOAL MORE LIKE AN ACCIDENT

By "Chiltern"

SUNDERLAND 2, LUTON TOWN 2

HAD it not been for a cold wind one would have thought that it was a spring day in Sunderland where the Town were expecting just about the toughest away test they would meet this season.

There was every expectation of a big crowd in the 35,000 to 40,000 region because this Sunderland team, playing attractive football, are drawing in the customers regularly.

Despite their setback at Southampton last Saturday, their first for nine matches, they were unchanged.

Unchanged, too, were the Town, because manager Sam Bartram resisting some pressure to make forward changes, decided to rely on the same formation.

Conditions were just about perfect with the pitch in excellent condition and the wind not really strong enough to be a handicap.

The last time we were on this ground, the result was 7-1 against the Town, which must have given food for thought to the players, before the start. But at least they were forewarned about what could happen if this expensive Sunderland team did get on top and they were pretty confident in their own minds that they could repeat their Liverpool performance.

Some amusement was caused before the start when the referee came across to the touch-line and borrowed a coin from a Police inspector so that the toss up could take place.

Anderson won the toss and there was never any doubt about which way he wanted to kick because he quickly walked to the end he was going to defend, not that I thought there was much advantage.

A SWIFT ATTACK

There is nothing like a Geordie crowd for a full-throated roar and we heard it from the start as Sunderland went on to the attack. With a minute gone, Overfield missed a chance of putting them ahead after Cope had mis-headed the ball.

Left in a reasonable position, he pulled the ball badly across the face of the goal and Pacey scrambled it away.

Early happenings were not too promising for the Town because Sunderland were looking dangerous and again the ball went across the face of their goal, this time from McNab, who popped up in the inside-right position following a throw-in, but the referee pulled up play for some infringement and it was a free kick to the Town.

Playing with tremendous confidence and power, Sunderland crowded on the pressure and following a corner, which Standen punched away, Hooper had a shot deflected for another flag kick.

From this Anderson shot wide and it had certainly been a fiery baptism for the Town.

Slowly the Town began to get

their bearings and produce some neat football in midfield which failed to get them very far.

A free kick brought their first serious raid and McNally placed it well into the penalty area where the tall Hurley promptly headed clear.

Anderson was again threatening to be a great thorn in the Town's flesh and finding himself in a wide open space, he laid on an opening for Hooper who produced a bewildering bout of footwork that looked certain to bring a goal, because he booked the ball back to Clough, who, however, was too close to Standen really to get in a shot and the goalkeeper was able to smother the ball.

McNally damaged his right ankle when Clough made a delayed tackle on him after the ball had gone, and there was a stoppage while he received attention.

Strangely, the referee did not give a free kick, but re-started play by bouncing the ball.

Twice Cope thwarted Sunderland attempts to find a way down the middle, and then Standen snatched the ball away after Anderson had again come through and Cope had missed his kick.

Sunderland were much on top and the game seemed to be developing largely on the lines of the one at Liverpool a fortnight ago.

MORE DANGER

So far we had not seen the Town as anything approaching a force in attack and it continued to be Sunderland who were doing the pressing. Standen went down in a hurry to cut out a low centre from Overfield after he had brushed off a challenge from McNally and then with Ashurst joining in the attack Cope stuck out a foot and made a deflection which could have been dangerous but in the event sent the ball narrowly over.

Sunderland were moving the ball about, using the 20-yard pass, with great accuracy, whereas the Town in their midfield attempts were tending to get themselves sewn up through keeping the ball too close.

Clough missed a chance of put-

ting Sunderland ahead when from point-blank range he turned the ball wide after Hooper had made another dazzling run.

It was a quarter of an hour before the Town had their first shot at goal and then it came from Walden who came in on the inside of Ashurst and blazed away left-footed but unfortunately straight at Wakeham, who made a safe catch.

PENALTY GIVES LEAD

With 18 minutes gone, Sunderland took the lead from a penalty which was awarded when Hurley came racing up into the Town penalty area in anticipation of a corner from Overfield.

As he came up, intent on heading the ball, Cope and Groves closed in on him but I thought that the final obstruction was more accidental than anything else.

The referee thought otherwise because he promptly pointed to the penalty spot and HOOPER took the kick.

It was by no means a well-taken kick, and I think that had Standen stood still he would have saved.

However, he moved to his right and the ball actually went in off his legs.

There was no doubt that Sunderland deserved to be ahead, but I am not at all sure that the happening which led to the award was not accidental.

The Town were coming more into it but were still persisting in keeping the ball close in midfield and the only employment they found for Wakeham was when Walden made a high centre which he cut out.

More trouble for the Town followed a corner on the right for which Hurley again came up, and although this time he reached the ball with his head, it was pushed away. It hovered around the Town goal for some seconds before McNally eventually booted it away.

A foul against Groves just inside the Town half gave Sunderland a free kick which Ashurst placed into the goalmouth and Walden, back in defence, gave away a corner to prevent Overfield from centring it after it had been pushed out.

PERSISTENT PRESSURE

Then Standen quite easily saved a shot from Overfield, but the more persistent pressure was coming from Sunderland and the Town were finding it very difficult to mount anything approaching a bout of attacking.

Yet they were a bit unlucky when Turner jumped high to reach with his head a free kick by Groves and steered the ball just the wrong side of the post with Wakeham beaten.

Some of that early Sunderland sparkle had disappeared and the Town were having a fair share of the play in midfield though not contriving to be a menace in attack.

A bad mistake by Standen might have led to another goal, because after a free-kick had been passed back to him by Bramwell, his attempted clearance was charged down by Clough and the ball fortunately ran well wide of the goal.

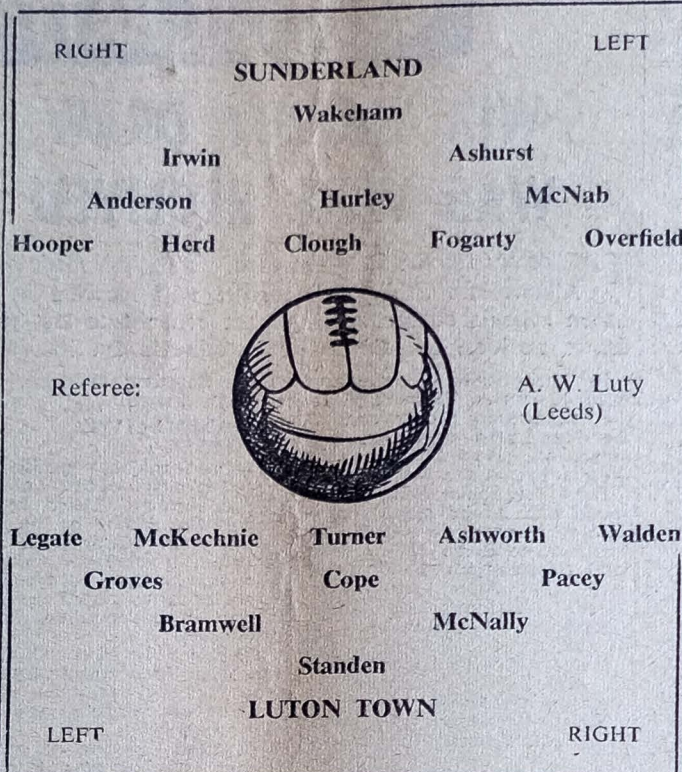
Clough retrieved it, centred and eventually Standen saved from Overfield.

With some emphasis the goalkeeper demonstrated to the referee that Clough had come in with his boot up and it was perfectly true that some of the Sunderland tackling was unwholesome to say the least.

Legate was shaken up in a tackle that brought the Town a free kick, but was quickly all right. Cope was penalised for a timed tackle on

PREMACY

the situation for cing across to dis- who had been left



well-placed by Hooper, and we were seeing another spell of Sunderland's supremacy though they were not very impressive in their finishing.

A sudden breakaway by Sunderland very nearly brought a second goal, because Clough, on the wrong side of Cope, fastened on to a long through pass by Irwin and as the centre-half made his challenge, he cracked in a first-timer that whipped narrowly past the near post.

A break by the Town brought them a free-kick a few yards outside the penalty area when Hurley brought down McKechnie and damaged himself in the process so that he had to have attention before Groves could take the kick.

Groves lobbed the ball into the middle where it caught the Sunderland defence unprepared and Walden sticking out a rather tentative foot sent the ball tamely wide.

THE TOWN'S TURN

With the Town more in the game at this period there was a tame effort, too, from McKechnie who half mis-kicked from the edge of the penalty area after Turner had lobbed the ball to him.

But as half-time approached there was more purpose about the Town's attacking play and it was unfortunate that McKechnie tried to beat one opponent too many instead of making the expected opening for Turner.

The Town's main hope of a goal seemed to lie down the middle because Hurley more than once was unnecessarily fanciful and he lost the ball to McKechnie, who, however, was tackled before he could find an opening.

Cope fell awkwardly in a duel with Clough and remained on the ground for some seconds before the referee stopped play.

It looked a serious affair because Cope was writhing in pain and there was quite a lengthy stoppage while he received attention.

Fortunately it did not turn out as bad as it looked initially, because Cope was able to carry on, though with quite a pronounced limp. Half-time:

SUNDERLAND 1
LUTON 0

Legate resumed with his right knee heavily bandaged, a legacy of the injury he received midway through the first half.

Happily Cope did not seem to be any the worse for his knock and there was some early pressure from the Town in which Walden

who certainly had not lived up to his high reputation.

He was soon all right again. Playing with altogether more assurance since their goal, the Town were making use of the open space now and were coming in to meet the ball more confidently than had been the case previously.

Then Herd flashed into the game with a shrewd pass to Overfield whose shot was beaten down.

Several times the Town opened up the game splendidly and a blatant piece of obstruction by Ashurst spoilt a clear run for Walden.

The free kick produced a scuffle in front of the Sunderland goal which ended with McKechnie shooting well wide.

SNATCHED BALL AWAY

Just about a half-chance of putting Sunderland back into the lead fell to Clough, but with Cope muffling him he could not get in a clear shot and Standen was able to snatch the ball away.

For a short space Sunderland were in full cry and there were signs of trouble for the Town when Hooper caught the ball on the dead-line to pull it back in deadly fashion.

Happily, McNally was well positioned to boot it away. This was distinctly a danger period for the Town, who were thrown right back to the defensive.

It did not help as just when they threatened to break away Walden handled 10 yards inside his own half and also when Ashworth placed the ball straight at the feet of Overfield, whose burst of speed took him past McNally but somehow or another his low cross went across the goal without anyone being able to get a touch to it.

Relief for the Town came when Anderson was penalised for a foul on Ashworth giving them breathing space to re-assemble their forces and also gave Turner the chance of a race for goal, following a long clearance by McNally.

Wakeham, however, was alive to the situation but so short was the time at his disposal that he did not dare to pick the ball up but kicked off the crossbar.

THE LEAD AGAIN

With 69 minutes gone, Sunderland regained the lead after a snap attack which began from right back with Irwin switching the ball over to McNab, who found Overfield with it.

The winger pushed it down the middle to CLOUGH who, I fancy, rather foxed the Town defence by changing feet before making his final shot which I thought from a not very good position, went under the body of the diving Standen who I am perfectly willing to believe was caught unsuspected.

The better scoring chances were still coming the way of Sunderland and Herd missed one by shooting over after Cope had badly misjudged the ball in the air.

Sunderland continued to be the more dangerous and Anderson, following up an attack which he started, hit the side netting and then Standen risked injury by throwing himself at the feet of Clough.

Hereabouts Legate moved into the middle as a sort of auxiliary centre-forward and he might have scored during another Sunderland mix up had not Turner come in

How The Goals Came

HOOPER for Sunderland after 18 minutes
ASHWORTH for Luton after 57 minutes
CLOUGH for Sunderland after 69 minutes
PACEY for Luton after 89 minutes

for the ball at the same time. Finally it was scrambled away for a corner from Turner's shot.

For a time the Town fought back gamely, though without giving real hope of securing another equaliser.

Unnecessary handling by McNally brought Sunderland a free kick very much in the danger zone, but the Sunderland shyness at close quarters persisted, and this was cleared without much trouble.

With the limping Legate at centre-forward, Turner was now back in his old inside-right spot and the extreme left wing was left vacant, though McKechnie made occasional appearances there.

Play swung in the Town's favour a bit, but they were still not able to build up pressure of such a persistent nature as to cause the Sunderland defence real concern.

Walden made a determined effort by racing into the centre but his shot cannoned off a group of players and then Herd sent Hooper away and it was as well for the Town that Bramwell was in the line of flight of the low centre.

The danger was not cleared and finally Overfield drove the ball across the face of the goal.

Then having abandoned, apparently, their new tactical plan, Legate re-appeared on the left wing.

With only seconds remaining, the Town snatched a sensational equaliser through PACEY who headed the ball through after a shot by Walden had rebounded off the crossbar.

Time was so short that no sooner had the game restarted than the referee blew his whistle for the finish. Result:

SUNDERLAND 2
LUTON 2