

FANS APPLAUDED THRILLING BATTLE

Ashworth Snatched The Winner For The Town

By CHILTERN

61/62

LUTON TOWN 4, ROTHERHAM UNITED 3

3ELDOM does a football match contain the ingredients to please everybody, but this one at Kenilworth-road on Saturday came into that category because it was the best seen on the ground for a very long time.

In fact, this game which did not look all that exciting on paper, turned out to be an epic struggle abounding in good football and excitement, with the result in doubt until the very last kick, and the spectators paid their tribute by giving the players an ovation at half-time and the finish.

Goals there were in plenty and six of them came in an all-action first-half during which the advantage swung first to one team and then to the other.

For the Town it looked easy when they scored twice in the first quarter of an hour through McGUFFIE, who calmly tapped the ball through in the first minute after Ireland had pushed out a drive by Fleming, and WALDEN who swept on to a through pass from the left-winger.

Yet, Rotherham had been playing some fast, progressive stuff and, refusing to panic, they continued to do so.

After 17 minutes, TAYLOR chased a long pass from Morgan which beat McNally and, as Standen came out, lobbed the ball over his head into an empty net.

Having thus re-adjusted the balance to some extent, Rotherham went from strength to strength, with their fast wingers worrying the Town's full-backs and the game took a dramatic turn between the 28th and 29th minutes.

First SAWYER took advantage of some poor covering to secure the equaliser and then, McNALLY in an attempt to stop a shot by Kirkman for which Standen was out of position, deflected the ball into the corner of the net.

OVERCAME THE SHOCK

At that stage, few would have given much for the Town's chances because Rotherham continued to play a brand of football fitting their high position in the League table and their long unbeaten run which dated to the beginning of October.

However, creditably, the Town overcame what must have been a considerable shock to suddenly find themselves in arrears and two minutes from half-time, McKECHNIE crowned a hectic first half with an equaliser.

Those who expected a continuance of the goal rush after the interval were disappointed because both defences tightened up considerably and fewer openings occurred.

However play continued to be attractive and exciting, with first one team, then the other, threatening to regain the lead. To the satisfaction of the home fans, it was the Town who got their heads in front again through ASHWORTH after 72 minutes.

Pacey, who had been playing an increasingly attacking role, came through to make a cross which Ironside failed to hold and the centre-forward was on hand to accept the easy opportunity.

Even then, Rotherham were not done with by any means, but they found the Town defence much more sound than it had been earlier, but there was a shock in the last minute when, following a free kick, Standen had to throw himself at the feet of Webster to prevent an equaliser.

ATTACK TOOK SOME HOLDING

For his bravery, he received a hard knock, but probably thought it worth while in that it saved half the bonus disappearing from sight.

That the Rotherham forwards were able to make such inroads in the Town defence during the first half was something of a disappointment, but they were a fast-moving lot and took some holding.

Neither McNally nor Bramwell accomplished completely the task of holding the live'y wingers, but both fought manfully and there was an appreciable improvement by the half-back line, particularly Cope, after the interval.

Both Pacey and Groves were strong and resourceful, and it was largely due to the grip they took in midfield that the Town had such a good second half.

Forward, the disappointment which must be a source of anxiety in view of the injury to Turner, was the fact that McGuffie did not make much of a contribution at inside-right and was switched with Groves before the end.

By far the liveliest member of the attack was Ashworth, who covered a tremendous amount of ground, as did McKechnie, who achieved a fair amount of success.

Although Fleming laid on two goals, his finishing was inconsis-

tent, and Walden was generally the more effective winger.

LUTON TOWN: Standen; McNally, Bramwell; Pacey, Cope, Groves; Walden, McGuffie, Ashworth, McKechnie, Fleming.

ROTHERHAM UNITED: Ironside; Cassidy, Morgan; Lambert, Madden, Lancaster; Webster, Houghton, Sawyer, Kirkman, Taylor.

Referee: A. L. Mason, Maidstone. Attendance: 9,886.