

TOWN TOO GOOD FOR FIGHTING SOUTHPORT

Form Of Fairchild Was A Big Revelation

By CHILTERN

SOUTHPORT 1, LUTON TOWN 3

IN the end this League Cup mission to Haig-avenue on Monday evening was accomplished comfortably enough, but for a long time Southport, encouraged by a crowd of 5,375, who showed enough enthusiasm for twice their number, put up a rare fight.

As often happens when a team opposes one from a higher division, Southport played above themselves, but for most of the game the Town had their heads in front and the home team had not the finishing power to improve their situation.

Main difference between the teams was that the Town were able to build up attacks from a defensive position and they had the ability to accept a fair percentage of the chances that came their way.

And, in the end, when Southport had just about shot their bolt, the Town were able to show that midfield rhythm we have been looking for all this season.

In fact, during the latter part of the second half, the Town were able to do exactly the right thing by keeping possession of the ball in mid-field through the simple method of pushing it about.

Not that the match brought the heartening news that the most pressing problem, that of inside-left, has been solved. Goldie was preferred to McKechie, but flopped badly and it looks as if a long apprenticeship in the Reserves is ahead of him before he is called up for first team service again.

Most striking contribution from the Town point of view was from Fairchild, a player who was consistently overlooked last season, despite the fact that the right wing problem was always hovering about.

FAIRCHILD FULL OF CONFIDENCE

Yet, from the start, Fairchild was full of confidence, raiding strongly in a direct manner and crossing the ball accurately. Nor was he afraid to come back to look for the ball and his was an impressive performance.

If he can continue in this vein and with Clapton available and Walden showing great speed and more ability to finish now that he is on the left wing, then the Town have no worries about the extreme wing positions.

In making assessments, due regard has to be paid to the quality of the opposition, but Fleming showed a more positive approach to his inside-right task, shooting more often and generally looking more like

inside-forward material than has been the case previously.

For some reason or another, Turner was hanging back behind the rest of the forward line for much of the first half and it was not until he reversed this policy after half-time that he became dangerous and scored, incidentally for the fourth consecutive match.

Viewing this match as one in which he could afford to experiment, the manager switched Pacey to centre-half and it was a move that paid off because Pacey gave the most impressive showing of the season in this position and there must be some temptation to keep him there.

This would be even more tempting if McGuffie were a little stronger defensively. His use of the ball was almost impeccable, he read the game well, but he was not always decisive enough in defence.

Morton had a fair game, McNally tamed the potential menace of former Blackpool winger, Perry and although Bramwell was inclined at times to give Southport's best forward, Fielding, a little too much room, he came through well enough.

So did Standen, except for two or three occasions when he remained pinned to his goal-line when he should have been out.

FLEMING gave the Town a good start by scoring in the sixth minute after Harris had failed to hold a strong drive by McGuffie.

It was after this that the Southport fighting spirit was at its highest, but it was tamed when WALDEN swept the ball into the far corner of the net after 34 minutes.

However, the balance was re-adjusted five minutes from half-time through a remarkably good goal by BLAIN, who left Standen powerless with a quickly-hit shot.

The goal that really settled the issue arrived five minutes after half-time and was the product of perhaps the best move of the match.

It began way back in defence with McGuffie and Bramwell before the ball was switched to Fleming from whose pass Fairchild made a strong run.

Splendidly he hit a low cross and TURNER was on hand to turn the ball past Harris.

SOUTHPORT: Harris; Cairns, Griffiths; Beanland, McCarthy, Murdock; Fielding, Blore, Spence, Blain, Perry.

LUTON TOWN: Standen; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Pacey, McGuffie; Fairchild, Fleming, Turner, Goldie, Walden.

Referee: E Crawford, Doncaster.