

DAVIES SCORES BUT TURNER IS HURT

LUTON TOWN 2, CARDIFF CITY 3

By CHILTERN

IT often happens that when a team is struggling luck runs against it and the Town learned only too well the truth of this last night in their defeat at Kenilworth-road.

Shocked by a goal against them almost before they knew the game was on, and two down by mid way through the first half, they yet put up a tremendous fight against Cardiff.

handicapped by an injury to Gordon Turner after only half an hour, which reduced him to the role of a limping passenger on the wing afterwards.

That was their crowning misfortune, but even so they fought furiously to pull back their arrears and twice got back to within a goal of their opponents.

However, they did not have a kind run of the ball in front of goal but all credit to the way in which the four fit forwards tried during the second half.

Outstanding was Davies, who apart from heading a great goal, led the line with fire and imagination, while Brennan had a most encouraging debut.

It was a hat-trick by Peter Hooper which really sunk the Town, and the tragedy was that two at least of the goals should have been prevented.

In the position they are at the moment, the Town cannot afford defensive blunders and just what Baynham was doing when the second goal came no-one seemed to be able to tell.

The other mistake came right after half-time when Morton boomed and Hooper completed his hat-trick.

Other than that, the defence kept a pretty tight grip on the Cardiff forwards, with Kelly certainly taming Charles.

TEAMS

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Daniel, Bramwell; Morton, Kelly, Pacey; Fairchild, Turner, Davies, Brennan, McKechnie.

CARDIFF CITY: John; Harrington, Stiffall; Williams, Rankmore, Baker; McIntosh, Tapscott, Charles, Hall, Hooper.

Referee: H. Horner, Coventry.

There was a shock in the very first minute when Cardiff took the lead through HOOPER, who made no mistake from just inside the penalty area with a low cross-drive into the far corner of the net.

The movement had been started by McIntosh, picking up a ball deep in the Town half, and evading an awkward tackle by Bramwell.

Over came his centre, too high for the head of the tall Charles, and the ball ran on to the unmarked Hooper, who seldom makes a mistake with a chance of this sort.

This was a shocking start from the Town's point of view, with Cardiff scoring on their first visit to the Luton end, and there was further trouble caused by McIntosh, who was causing Bramwell all sorts of problems.

As the Town settled down they improved and began to have a good share of the play without, however, producing much in the way of finish although Davies made a couple of determined attempts to break through.

Fighting desperately for an equaliser were the Town now, with Davies doing a tremendous amount of work, opening out play, and from one of his passes Fairchild gained a corner from which Turner was again unlucky with an overhead shot that went the wrong side of a post.

Quite often Cardiff were forced back onto the defensive and McKechnie brought a movement to a premature close by blazing the ball wide.

Claims for at least obstruction inside the penalty area by McIntosh on Davies were ignored by the referee during another surge by the Town, and from this Cardiff broke away through the burly Charles down the right wing, but after he had passed inside to Tapscott the return ran too quickly for him.

HOOPER SCORES AGAIN

There were two or three neat touches by Brennan, which the crowd appreciated, but the Town's situation worsened in the 21st minute when HOOPER put Cardiff further ahead with another low drive, this time from 30 yards that seemed to catch Baynham completely off guard.

The goalkeeper scurried across his goal but it was too late because the ball got in just inside the far post, without him having really got down to it at all.

This was a staggering turn of events for the Town and Cardiff who had had only three effective shots at goal had scored from two of them.

Still the Town had the power to hit back and Pacey, trying to emulate Hooper, was a yard wide with a longish range effort.

Then McKechnie won a corner that was cleared with firm decision.

Still the Town persevered, but there was very little at the end of it all, and the Cardiff defence was proving difficult to break down.

Weight of numbers stopped Turner as he made a typical dash

How The Goals Came

HOOPER for Cardiff after 3 minutes.

HOOPER for Cardiff after 21 minutes.

DAVIES for Luton after 40 minutes.

HOOPER for Cardiff after 46 minutes.

DANIEL (penalty) for Luton after 60 minutes.

and then Pacey, joining in the attack, beat McIntosh cleverly but his centre was deflected to be cleared to Bramwell who lobbed the ball back again but once more there was this immaculate covering in front of the Cardiff goal.

With half an hour gone, Brennan very nearly put the Town back into this game, perhaps should have done, and indeed quite a number of the fans were shouting "Goal" as he shot.

Somehow John got a hand to the ball to deflect it around the post.

With just under a quarter of an hour left to half-time Turner came to the trainer's bench to have his left thigh heavily strapped. It appeared that he had damaged a thigh muscle.

He returned at outside-left, with McKechnie going to inside-right. This, of course, was far from helpful in the Town's awkward predicament.

GLORIOUS GOAL BY DAVIES

Then fresh hope came for the Town in the 40th minute when DAVIES headed a glorious goal.

It came from a free-kick well-placed by Daniel and cleverly flicked on by Brennan. Davies, some ten yards from goal, picked his spot in the net and John had not an earthly.

A minute later there was nearly another because McKechnie broke right through and his attempt to find the far corner of the net failed by a matter of inches.

Now even though Turner was virtually a passenger the Town were really fighting to get on level terms and reduce this hitherto immaculate Cardiff defence to kicking wildly for safety.

Davies, still leading the forwards brilliantly, went close again and the crowd were warming to the Town's gallant fight.

Brennan's inexperience showed up only too plainly when he took a pass from Morton fully 35 yards out and belted it for goal so hazily that it finished several yards too high.

Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 1

CARDIFF CITY 2

During half-time I learned that Turner has pulled his hamstring muscle. It is certain that he will not recover in time for Saturday's match.

As had been the case in the first half, Cardiff scored in the first minute. A bad mistake by Morton in front of goal let in HOOPER to complete his hat-trick.

The ball had come across from the left, Morton failed to get it under control, and Hooper was left with an easy task.

That goal set the badly-handicapped Town right back on their heels, and with Turner still on the left wing it was now expecting a lot of them to stage a successful rally.

A quiet period followed in which not much was seen of the Town attack. Turner could do no more than hobble after the ball so virtually the Town had been reduced to ten men.

The Town surged into the game, through fine work in midfield by Davies, who put through McKechnie with a splendid chance. As it happened, McKechnie was too slow to make the most of it, but was pulled down by Stiffall and the referee promptly pointed to the penalty spot.

Then the crowd waited expectantly to see who would take it and it was DANIEL who volunteered for the job, bravely in view of Turner's expensive misses.

And he made no mistake, planting it wide of John into the roof of the net to bring the Town within striking distance again after exactly an hour.

After this, with the crowd roaring encouragement, there was a heavy bout of pressure by the Town, finished off when Morton shot over from the edge of the penalty area.

More injuries came with Brennan and then Charles having to receive attention.

In the closing minutes the Town made tremendous efforts to draw level and there was one amazing scene on the edge of the Cardiff penalty area when players were falling like nine-pins and the services of both trainers were required again.

Result:

LUTON TOWN 2

CARDIFF CITY 3

Attendance: 7,237.