

LATE RALLY GAVE TOWN CUP WIN

Hit Back Courageously After Being A Goal Down

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, READING 1

THIRTEEN minutes from the end of this second round Cup-tie, Mike Fairchild's left foot lit a flame that was badly needed at Kenilworth-road and which might be the start of better things for the Town.

That shot knocked out Reading, who had been beaten in only two of their previous 12 matches and who had climbed the table into fourth place, so it was no mean performance.

The unfortunate thing, of course, is that the Town have not been able to profit from this victory by securing an attractive home match in the next round and so whip up some of the enthusiasm that has evaporated.

From every point of view, this was a notable victory because the Town had to come from behind to win and it was not until 19 minutes from the end that they managed to open their account.

Previously, their forwards, though they built up their raids skilfully enough in midfield, had not shown sufficient thrust to break down a Reading defence that funnelled quickly back into their own penalty area and which left few gaps.

Just once in the first half, near half time, did it seem that they would yield, but Wilkie made a wonder save from a Turner special.

But the dying seconds of the half should have brought a goal because Weir failed to control the ball near the edge of the penalty area when left with a good chance.

Weir had another opportunity just before Reading opened their account in the 65th minute, but he shot much too high from well inside the 18-yards line.

WEBB DREW FIRST-BLOOD

Reading's goal came in a snap raid through WEBB who, throughout, had been lurking dangerously in the Town's goal-mouth, and he blazed the ball past Baynham after his first shot had rebounded off a defender.

At that stage, the Town's hopes of continuing interest in this competition seemed slim indeed but, commendably they had the courage to hit back, and six minutes later, they were rightly awarded a penalty, when Turner was pulled down for a second time, after the referee had operated the advantage rule on the first occasion.

TURNER shook off the effects of the heavy tackle to crash the ball low into the corner of the net, well wide of Wilkie.

For a time after that Reading concentrated on defence, with even the poaching Webb being stuck in defence, but the attempts to force a replay failed because FAIRCHILD, who had moved into the middle, made a backing left-footed shot during a scramble to leave Wilkie helpless again.

Then Reading switched to des-

perate all-out attack, but the Town defence held firm and there was very nearly another goal to them when McKechnie at that time the only forward upfield, rounded Wilkie, following a misunderstanding by Spiers and Walker, but the former recovered before he could plug the ball into the empty net.

GOAL-LESS DRAW SEEMED LIKELY

There was never much between the teams and for a long time such was the supremacy of the defences, that a goal-less draw seemed the most likely result.

However, the Town found that little extra punch that had been missing earlier, in the closing stages and that just clinched victory.

There was a lot of hard, willing work from Turner, who, however, found the strong Spiers a difficult barrier to break down, but he was dangerous at times, as was McKechnie, who covered a tremendous amount of ground.

In a quiet, unassuming way, Smith was fairly effective, but he did not promise a deal of finishing power, and of the wingers, Fairchild, though he found Meldrum a stumbling block, was the livelier.

Weir's approach to this hard-fought match was a little on the delicate side, but he did manage to get the ball into the goalmouth more often than has been the case in recent weeks from this wing.

Bolstered by the return of Pacey, there could be little complaint about the defence, in which Fincham again stood out and Pacey and McGuffie were two industrious, effective wing-halves.

Morton came out on top from his duel with Allen. Bramwell, too, did well, and Baynham gave a display of capable handling and good anticipation.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Morton, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, McGuffie; Fairchild, Smith, Turner, McKechnie, Weir.

READING: Wilkie; Walker, Meldrum; Evans, Spiers, Travers; Jones, Shreeves, Martin, Webb, Allen.

Referee: K. H. Burns, Rugby.
Attendance 9,047.