

TOWN DO IT! READING VANQUISHED

7-12-63 262 THRILLING FIGHT BACK AFTER SHOCK REVERSE

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, READING 1

DESPITE the fact that there was a considerable following from Reading, said to be more than 2,000, I cannot recall a Cup-tie at Luton arousing so little enthusiasm as this one at Kenilworth-road did this afternoon.

All over the ground there were wide open spaces, and ten minutes before kick-off time I doubt whether the crowd had reached 8,000. It was disappointing, because the weather, though cold, was dry and crisp, and Reading have been having a good run of success on the field.

There were changes in the Town team after their poor showing at Wrexham last Saturday, and there was a half-back re-shuffle consequent on the fact that Dave Pacey's suspension period was over.

Pacey returned to right-half, and Alwyn McGuffie switched to the left, to the exclusion of Mark Lownds.

In the forward line, there were three changes, with Fairchild and Weir on the wings, McKechie, who was on the right-wing last week, moved to inside-left, Reid being ineligible, and Jardine was dropped.

On the other hand Reading, after the boost of a fine win at Bournemouth last Saturday, contented themselves with merely bringing in first-choice goalkeeper Wilkie, now recovered from injury, for Dixon.

The match provided a most vivid colour contrast, because of the argument about a possible clash, the Town appeared all in white, even to stockings, and Reading looked the veritable "Red Devils" in red shirts, shorts and stockings. It gave the affair a distinctly Continental touch.

The inevitable toilet rolls thrown into the Reading goalmouth held up the start for a few seconds.

FINCHAM WINS THE TOSS

Fincham won the toss and chose to defend the Oak-road end.

Reading were the first away with a long through-pass which Fincham allowed to pass harmlessly to Baynam, and then a Town attack broke down with a pass by Turner going straight to the feet of Meldrum, who quickly switched the ball back to Wilkie.

There was more of the Cup atmosphere once play was on, but some of the Luton exuberance faded when Turner, left in an open space by a shrewd pass by Pacey, forgot all he knows about angles, and shot straight and about four yards wide.

McKechie made a brave attempt to break through from a pass from Pacey, but was tackled, and when Reading replied Fincham made an excellent stop when Martin was threatening to send Shreeves away with a clear field.

An attempt by McGuffie to be too clever put the Town in danger, because Webb gathered the ball and shot from 25 yards. Happily, Baynam made a safe catch.

McGuffie redeemed himself in the next minute with a strong tackle, and neither side yet had shown the ability to take the upper hand.

NEAT PLAY BY TOWN

A neat movement by the Town begun by Smith reached Fairchild, who kept the ball in play, but when his centre came across, there was no-one except

Smith in the area, and the ball was too high. A quick thrust by Fairchild which took him past Meldrum looked promising, but having got himself inside the area, the winger made a shot that cannoned off the legs of Travers for a corner kick. This led to a scramble following which McGuffie tried one of his "specials" which unfortunately for Town was a few feet wide of target. Meldrum, Reading's left-back, was outstanding in these opening exchanges, and he started off the next Reading raid when he moved on to a misplaced pass by Fairchild. He went right through, beat Morton, and made a centre that tested Baynam. One of the Reading forwards was offside, however, and the anxiety ended.

Reading were dangerous in quick thrusts, and this time it was Evans who did the prompting. He left Webb with a chance to make a centre, but Baynam pulled it down in the face of opposition.

GOOD WORK BY WEIR
A couple of good bits of work by Weir boosted the Town's hopes, but Reading's defence was covering well and few loop-holes were appearing.

McGuffie showed the right idea but the wrong sort of execution with another long-range drive that went harmlessly by.

So far it had been a case of defences very much on top.

Most danger to the Town was coming from inside-left. Webb, who was hanging about handily in the open space, and when he picked up a clearance by Meldrum the ball flashed across the face of the goal with no-one able to do anything about it.

In midfield, the Town were using the ball quite well, but again there was not much sign of punch at close quarters.

Then, they had a narrow escape when centre-forward Martin switched to the wing to make a centre that was scrambled away with some difficulty.

When the Town struck back, Weir dropped the ball just over the bar after a movement begun by Pacey and carried on by Turner and Smith.

There was still little sign of real penetration by direct set forwards, however.

READING WASTE A GOOD CHANCE

Allen won a corner off Morton. It was badly placed, so that Fincham headed away, but the ball was quickly returned, and with the Town racing out of defence

for the Reading fans when Spiers made a back pass that looked as if it might elude Wilkie, but the goalkeeper was quick enough to cut it off.

READING LOOKING DANGEROUS

Reading looked the more dangerous, and Frevors just missed the angle of the quick drive, with a fierce rising drive. Although the Town were having a fair share of the play, they had not found a way of opening up the quick-covering Reading defence, and the penalty area always seemed to be thickly populated with red-garbed figures.

A foul on Smith, that left him beating the ground like a wrestler in a strangle-hold, gave the Town another chance to make progress, but again the defence covered up, and there was no loop-hole to be exploited.

BAYNAM TAKES A KNOCK

Six minutes before half-time Baynam was injured in a challenge by Weir, who was still loitering about in front of goal, and there was a hold-up while he had some attention to his right ankle.

Then Wilkie, of whom we hear great things, had the chance to prove himself when Turner, from deep inside the penalty area, lashed away first time, and the goalkeeper threw himself to the left to make a fine save.

In the main, though, the Town were sadly lacking in thrust at close quarters.

Quite a number of fouls were escaping the notice of the referee, and there was one blatant one on Fairchild almost under his nose.

On the stroke of half-time Weir on the edge of the penalty area missed a chance by failure to control the ball, and seconds after that the whistle went. Half-time.

LUTON TOWN 2, READING 1

First incident of the second half was an attack by the Town in which Wilkie saved from Smith. Then Town themselves had a narrow escape when Shreeves took deliberate aim after Allen had slashed the ball across the face of the goal, and his shot struck Pacey on the legs.

Pacey suffered a similar fate at the other end when he quickly took a free-kick for a foul on Turner.

Had Travers been playing for Ireland against the All-Blacks he would have earned full marks for a conversion when he sent the ball yards over the bar from a pass by Jones. This, in fact, was typical of the general standard of the finishing. Even McGuffie, drawing a bow at a venture, got a heavy slice on the ball with the outside of his foot and sent it willy-nilly across the goal.

DANGEROUS FOR TOWN

A dangerous situation developed at the Town end after the referee had rightly employed the advantage rule when Fincham punched the ball in an effort to stop a Reading attack, and in the end Bramwell had to throw himself full-length to head for a corner a dangerous cross by Allen.

Baynam who was handling the ball particularly well, was in action pulling down a centre by Webb, made from the right wing.

After this, there was a Town raid in which the ball was kept much too close, first by Weir and then by Smith. These tactics were not cutting much ice against this close-packed defence. This was followed by another Town raid in which the ball was worked out to Weir, who sent it across, but Wilkie cleared comfortably.

While this was happening, Smith collided with Walker and both had to receive attention. Of the two, Walker seemed the more badly affected, but he was able to carry on.

WEIR MISSES A CHANCE

As good a chance as the Town had had this half fell to Weir when, from just over 10 yards out, and not a severe angle, the ball reached him and he swung it yards too high with his right foot.

The referee had a word with Martin for following through with his foot as Baynam came out to collect a through pass after the whistle had gone for offside.

There followed a period of Reading pressure, in which Webb was again dangerous.

READING TAKE THE LEAD

The pattern of play was unchanged with defences still holding control, and then came what I had feared all through this match. Reading scored after 65 minutes through WEBB. The inside-left was again on the spot when the ball came across, but was lucky enough to be given a second chance after his first shot had struck either Fincham or Pacey, who were standing close together, and at the second attempt he flashed the ball past Baynam.

Reading drew confidence from this goal, and they could have had another, because Jones now over when left with a splendid opportunity.

A little temper crept into play, and Shreeves was penalised for tripping Weir, but the free-kick yielded nothing.

PENALTY GOAL FOR TOWN

Fighting back, the Town set up pressure, and Pacey had two shots beaten down.

How The Goals Came

WEBB for Reading after 65 minutes.
TURNER (penalty) for Luton after 71 minutes.
FAIRCHILD for Luton after 77 minutes.

awarded after what looked to be some hesitation by the referee when Turner was pulled down from behind in a sudden rush of Reading defenders after the Luton man had fastened on to a shot from Fincham.

TURNER was not sufficiently shaken by the heavy tackle not to be able to take the kick, and he made no mistake with a low drive well wide of Wilkie's left hand after 71 minutes.

At this, two young supporters ran on to the pitch to pat Turner on the back, which seems to be a popular pastime these days, and more to the point it appeared from behind the Reading goal, a more



Mike Fairchild put Town in front for the first time with a glorious goal 13 minutes from the end.

expensive pastime, I should think! After this, there was another thrust from the Town, in which Wilkie just snatched the ball from Turner's feet, and this game was as much in the balance as it had ever been.

For a time it was back to the wall in defence for Reading, with the Town putting on the pressure and gaining a free-kick for some infringement out near the right corner flag.

This was cleared by Webb, now deployed back in defence, and from his clearance there was a quick raid by Martin and Allen, which ended with Baynam picking up a shot from which the power had been taken.

There might have been another penalty to the Town when Walker appeared to handle inside the area, but the referee waved on play. It did not matter, because seconds afterwards, in the 77th minute, FAIRCHILD gave the Town the lead with a glorious goal.

The attack following the negative penalty appeal had never been cleared, and as the ball came across from Turner, Fairchild who had veered over to the middle, met it with terrific force, giving Wilkie no chance.

FANS INVADE THE PITCH

A dozen young fans now invaded the pitch and prompted an appeal over the loudspeaker system for people not to encroach on the playing area.

Things heated up after this, and Martin was spoken to by the referee for a foul on Baynam.

The tension was on now, and McKechie, back in defence, pulled down Jones to give Reading a free-kick, which was half-cleared, and then Weir, fiddling right back in defence, lost the ball, with the result that Shreeves was able to plug it across, but Baynam was there.

Reading were fighting desperately now to save this match, and it was the Town who were now forced back.

A long centre by Allen eluded two Reading forwards who threw themselves into head-long dives, and they then gained a corner when Bramwell headed behind.

READING PILE ON THE PRESSURE

Every Reading player except Wilkie was in the Town half, but then came a Town break-away by Smith, but McKechie, almost inevitably was offside.

In fact, McKechie was the only Town forward in an attack at this present moment, and he missed a chance by putting this game beyond doubt, when Walker and Spiers got themselves into a dreadful muddle. McKechie



Webb put Reading ahead after 65 minutes, but GORDON TURNER equalised from the penalty spot six minutes later after he had been fouled in a melee.

had only Wilkie to beat. He did so cleverly enough, and faced an open net, but he was off balance, and before he could recover, Spiers nipped in and deflected the ball for a corner.

And so the tension continued. Play returned to the Reading end, which used up precious seconds, and Weir helped by doing some juggling with the ball on his head. Results:

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