

TOWN OUT OF LUCK IN FRONT OF GOAL

Should Have Won Match In The First Half

By CHILTERN

63/64

COLCHESTER UNITED 1, LUTON TOWN 1

HAD the Town enjoyed only average luck so far as the run of the ball was concerned in front of goal, they would have taken a sufficiently substantial lead to have ensured that they collected the other badly needed point on their first visit to the Colchester ground.

But just nothing went right for them at close quarters. Colchester had more than their share of good fortune in the matter of narrow escapes and must have been greatly relieved to arrive at the interval still on level terms.

From the way in which things developed in the second half, it seemed that the Town's chances might have evaporated but, when it was beginning to look as if the score sheet might remain blank, came two of the scrappiest goals I have seen this season.

First, after 66 minutes, Lownds made a long clearance out of defence to O'ROURKE who seemed to be standing in an off-side position. There was an immediate reaction from the linesman in line, who lifted his flag, only to drop it immediately.

With a great hole yawning in the Colchester defence, O'Rourke went on to plug the ball into the corner of the net past the advancing Ames.

Immediately, the referee signalled a goal and was surrounded by protesting home players who persuaded him to consult the linesman. As a result of this he merely confirmed his original decision to the disgust of the home players and fans.

That seemed a measure of compensation for the ill-luck the Town had suffered previously when McKechnie had headed against the bar and in normal circumstances, with the ball running right, O'Rourke would have had a first half hat-trick.

The goal came while Colchester were reduced to 10 men following an injury to Trevis, who returned to play at inside-right, with Docherty at right-half and these changes seemed to be beneficial.

BALL WENT IN OFF PACEY

At least, they paved the way to the equaliser 16 minutes from the end and a fluky affair it was. A shot by Trevis was beaten out and the ball went to KING who drove it goalwards.

Baynham was well behind the line of flight until it was changed completely by the ball striking Pacey and being deflected by such a margin that the goalkeeper was left high and dry as the ball bounced just inside the post.

In the closing minutes, Colchester made some show of pulling this match out of the fire and King went close on a couple of occasions. However, had the Town been beaten, it would have been rough justice after the quality of the football they played in the first half.

Then, they were the faster, more imaginative team, with the twin spearhead of McKechnie and O'Rourke continually having the home defence in trouble.

ACCURATE REID

McKechnie showed much improved form and O'Rourke was always dangerous, but the man who did most to make it possible was Reid in his deep-lying role in which he picked up ball after ball and used them with great accuracy.

Of the wingers, Walden was the more dangerous when he concentrated on beating Fowler on the outside, but Whittaker did not have the best of support and, in any case, found Forbes much of a stumbling block.

Although it took a piece of bad luck to force them to capitulate, the defence was not in the same dour mood as at Bristol. In fact, at times there

appeared holes which a more talented attack than that of Colchester could have exploited.

After his triumphant return in the previous match, Fincham was not so dominating, partly because he mistimed the ball in the air and, more than once, he was left stranded. At the same time, he was responsible for some strong work when the pressure was on.

Lownds had plenty to occupy him in keeping tabs on Stark and Pacey, after making a brilliant start, retained his resiliency in defence, but began sending his passes astray.

Of the full-backs, Bramwell with his hard tackling, was the more consistent, because McBain had a worrying sort of match against Grice.

Behind them, Baynham was as cool and vigilant as ever and his present good form is giving a feeling of confidence in these tension laden days.

COLCHESTER UTD.: Ames; Forbes, Fowler; Trevis, Rutter, Rumney; Hill, Stark, King, Docherty, Grice.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McBain, Bramwell; Pacey; Fincham, Lownds; Walden, McKechnie, O'Rourke, Reid, Whittaker.

Referee: N. A. S. Matthews, Bicester. Attendance: 3,913.