

THREE IN TEN MINUTES SHATTER TOWN'S CUP HOPES

Sunderland Late Burst Ends Replay Hopes

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 0, SUNDERLAND 3

The weather ruined the Town's prospects of having a near 20,000 gate. Four hours' heavy rain must have deterred hundreds from coming and, more than that, it turned the pitch into a potential quagmire. Before the start there were signs of water standing on the top.

George Hardwick, the Sunderland manager, surprised everybody by including at inside-right 22-years-old Tomy Mitchinson, a local product who has had only a handful of first team appearances.

He was preferred to Harry Hood, who has been in that position, and Irish international John Crossan, who has missed the last two matches through loss of form.

Obviously Sunderland's final decision dictated by the state of the going and their choice was limited because their Eire international, Charlie Hurley, who was fancied to return to the team in one position or another, broke down in training yesterday.

This I feel increased the Town's chances considerably because I have the greatest respect for this big, imaginative player.

So Sunderland made only one change. On the other hand the Town would have been glad to make an alteration but John O'Rourke, after a week of promise of fitness, decided yesterday morning that he was not ready for a match of this character.

So the selectors decided to rely on the team that beat Oldham last Saturday.

This was partly dictated by the fact that Ray Whittaker has not recovered from groin trouble, which meant that Freddie Jardine continued at outside-left with Barton again at left-back.

VISITORS' BIG FOLLOWING

Sunderland brought a tremendous following considering the distance and some of them were outside the Town ground almost at first light this morning.

An hour before kick-off time they were still snapping up stand tickets eagerly and there were prospects of a sell-out of the accommodation.

In fact despite the rain, which ironically eased as kick-off time approached, this had all the ingredients of a Cup-tie occasion.

Most parts of the ground were comfortably filled apart from the open Kenilworth-road terrace, where there were large gaps.

Attendance was nearing the 15,000 mark when Reid won the toss to give the Town

TEAMS

LUTON TOWN: Baynam; McBain, Barton; Pacey, Caleb, Reid; Pleat, Riddick, McKechnie, Rioch, Jardine.

SUNDERLAND: McLaughlan; Parke, Ashurst, Harvey, Rooks, McNab; Usher, Mitchinson, Sharkey, Herd, Mulhall.

Referee: K. E. Walker (Blackpool).

the advantage of quite a stiff breeze.

The Town were prominent early on. A free-kick by Pacey went through the massed defenders but McKechnie could not quite fasten on to it and McLaughlan saved comfortably. With the Town pressure continuing, Pleat appeared to be pushed in the back by Ashurst well inside the penalty area but the referee's verdict was a corner. This was headed away. Then Mulhall made ground and after a minor skirmish Mitchinson shot weakly wide.

Certainly the Town were showing no sign of an inferiority complex and they certainly had the better of the opening exchanges.

There were roars from the Sunderland contingent for a penalty when Sharkey finished headlong in the mud following a combined tackle by Reid and Barton, but the referee did not agree.

TOWN DEFENCE COVERING WELL

In the main the Town defence was covering well and coping with some well-directed Sunderland raids.

The pitch was not playing at all badly and there was no question yet of it being a mud-beap, though the ball was moving quickly off the surface.

First shot of any merit came from Jardine who was rather fortunate to survive a couple of tackles before blazing the ball in from an angle. McLaughlan pulled it down capably.

Sunderland's reply was an

attack inspired by Herd which ended with the ball coming across from Usher, and Herd heading tamely into Baynam's hands.

JARDINE SHOT SMOTHERED

A chance of the Town taking the lead came when Riddick suddenly crashed the ball across the face of the goal and it reached Jardine. The winger seemed to be in an offside position, but there was no signal from the referee and Jardine hit the ball—first time, only for McLaughlan to go down and smother it.

McBain suddenly put the Town defence in trouble by electing to pass to Rioch, who was covered anyway. Fortunately, Sharkey, who had been left with a clear run for goal, was caught offside.

Back came the Town and the ball crossed the Sunderland goalmouth dangerously following a centre by Jardine and a header by Riddick, and there was no doubt at all that the Town were giving their distinguished visitors something to think about.

Pacey had to receive attention following a hard tackle, then a centre by Pleat, who seemed to have the beating of Ashurst, brought a corner.

PACEY BETTER, USHER HURT

Pacey was quickly all right again, the corner was cleared, and Sunderland swung back into the attack with Usher beating Barton. Reid and Caleb came to the rescue and in this particular incident, Usher was injured and there was another stoppage.

Sunderland persevered and Mulhall shot into Baynam's hands. Meanwhile, Usher had recovered and there was an escape at the Town end when Sharkey from the left wing floated across a dangerous centre that went just too high for the oncoming Mitchinson's head.

FOUL AGAINST RIDDICK

A foul against Riddick just inside the Sunderland half brought a free kick which the inside-right cleared to send away Pleat, who was obstructed by Ashurst a couple of yards outside the penalty area.

The free kick was cleared

easily but the Town kept up the pressure without suggesting that they had found anything in the shape of more finishing power.

Sunderland were clever in mid-field, but they were not impressive in front of goal either. In fact goalworthy efforts by both sides were few and far between.

The Sunderland defence got themselves into a tremendous tangle. Herd's attempted pass back to McLaughlan went astray because the goalkeeper had already advanced and the ball trickled for a corner. The goalkeeper beat his fists upon the ground—but he would have been a lot more angry had the ball been a bit nearer to the goal!

SKETCHY SAVE FROM CORNER

Pleat was giving every evidence that he could beat Ashurst, and the left-back pulled him down badly some yards outside the penalty area. From the free kick McKechnie gained a corner which McLaughlan, coming out of his goal, scooped away somewhat sketchily. He was able to recover and get into position to collect a neat lob by Barton.

McKechnie had a long race for the ball following a long clearance by Baynam. He was checked by Rooks and the ball went to Jardine, who was pulled down undermously three yards outside the penalty area by Parke. The free kick was slipped to Pacey and the right-half, obviously remembering his success of last week, blazed away for goal and was not all that far wide of the target.

MCLAUGHLAN BROUGHT TO HIS KNEES

At this stage Sunderland were in a fair amount of trouble and McKechnie, seizing on a mistake by Rooks, brought McLaughlan to his knees with a low drive—though I thought he could have taken the ball in a little further before making his effort.

The Sunderland goalkeeper was far busier than Baynam and the Town pressure continued with Pleat making a good centre. McLaughlan cut it out and was charged in the process by McKechnie.

At first the referee waved play on as Sunderland appealed for a free kick but McLaughlan stayed down and required attention, and the free kick was duly given.

Sunderland, who had hit a sticky patch struck back from this and Mulhall, from longish range and an awkward angle, hit in a shot that caused Baynam some trouble before he was able to clear.

CALEB TACKLE SPOILS CHANCE

A late tackle by Caleb after Ashurst had driven the ball into the penalty area spoiled a chance for Herd, who was, in the picture again immediately, but Reid, again doing a good covering job, popped up to push the ball back to Baynam.

McKechnie was pushed in the back by Rooks as he sought to collect a through pass by Rioch but the free kick brought nothing and this became largely a dogged battle in which defences were on top.

Sunderland should have taken the lead when a mistake by McBain let in Mulhall who cracked the ball low across the face of the goal. Usher, coming in from the right, missed it completely when a touch must have meant it finishing in the back of the net.

Again Ashurst fouled Pleat and from Pacey's free kick Rioch headed much too high. More pressure by the Town brought McLaughlan into action from a back header by Parke.

The Town were certainly making a fight of it and were not suffering by comparison with their First Division opponents.

Just before half-time Rioch was floored to give the Town yet another free kick which, after some preliminary skirmishing by McKechnie and Pacey, was wasted because the latter—who finally took it—pulled it yards wide.

When Sunderland hit back Mulhall beat McBain twice in a narrow space before getting

How The Goals Came

SHARKEY for Sunderland after 78 minutes.
MULHALL for Sunderland after 85 minutes.
SHARKEY for Sunderland after 88 minutes.

in a shot that Baynam had well covered. Half-time:

LUTON 0
SUNDERLAND 0

EXCITING RAIDS BY TOWN

The second half began with a series of exciting raids by the Town in which the ball crossed and recrossed the Sunderland goal without anybody being able to do anything about it.

There was further excitement at the Town end when Sharkey shrugged off opposition to bring Baynam into violent action. Mulhall also caused the Town goalkeeper to go down in a hurry.

During half-time I learned that the knock Pacey had received mid-way through the first half had left him with double vision, but he continued in his normal position.

WATER LYING ON PITCH

Obviously the rain was heavier than it was at the start because water was now beginning to lie on top of the pitch and the ball was skidding about at an alarming rate.

The doggedness of Jardine resulted in a corner which was half-cleared to Pacey, who smacked in a first-time shot that flew well wide.

A fine pass by Pacey sent away Pleat, who was always a thorn in the Sunderland left flank. But on this occasion he centred badly and from the clearance Mitchinson made a long solo run—without being tackled before finally unleashing a shot that Baynam, well out of his goal, saved at full length.

When Jardine tried another of his darting runs he was pushed off the ball by Usher, and Barton's free kick, placed with deadly accuracy into the goalmouth, was pushed out by McLaughlan. The ball dropped at the feet of Ashurst who quickly scooped it away.

LONG SHOT BY RIOCH

Rioch tried a shot from 25 yards that was both high and wide—a policy that could have paid off in these conditions, because handling of the slippery ball by goalkeepers was certainly no picnic.

Good anticipation by Caleb got the Town out of trouble after Barton had failed with a sliding tackle on Usher. Parke was the subject of an unintentional sandwich by McKechnie and Jardine which gave Sunderland a free kick and the ball skidded off Barton's head—fortunately right through to Baynam.

Back came the Town with undiminished strength and a shot by Rioch, deflected by a defender, was just prevented from going for a corner by McLaughlan's dive.

It was lively end-to-end stuff with neither team really gaining the ascendancy. The Town were putting up a great fight and showing tremendous determination.

BATTLED THROUGH THE MIDDLE

Sharkey went close with a shot that was inches too high after he had battled his way through the packed middle, and for a time Sunderland kept up their pressure until the talented Mulhall put the ball behind.

PITCH BECOMING A QUAGMIRE

A cross by Rioch went just too high for Pleat's head.

It was still cut-and-thrust football on a pitch that was rapidly becoming a quagmire. Mulhall had a chance from a cross by Usher but failed to control the ball on the slippery surface.

There was a tense moment in front of the Town goal when the ball broke loose following a corner, but Caleb, who was having a grand game, came out with it.

At this point Sunderland were becoming the more dangerous and Sharkey headed wide from Usher's centre.

A needless piece of handling by Pleat following a

free kick which had the effect of putting them on to the attack again but Pacey collected the ball, beat an opponent, and set the Town going once more.

When the Sunderland defence got into a tangle Riddick pushed the ball out to Pleat, from whose centre Pacey shot just wide.

DEFENCES ON TOP

It was typical Cup-tie stuff, with the ball moving sharply from end to end and both defences remaining commendably on top.

Usher shot yards wide when left in a reasonable position and this was followed by a raid by the Town after a Pleat centre. In the end Rioch shot from just inside the penalty area and saw the ball rebound off Harvey.

There was danger for the Town when Usher beat Barton for speed and smacked across a low centre that looked full of threat until Caleb came racing in to intercept and save a sticky situation.

Back came the Town and Riddick, from the inside-left position, nearly beat McLaughlan who had to leap to push over his shot.

SUNDERLAND TAKE LEAD

With 78 minutes gone Sunderland took a lead which they scarcely deserved on the run of the play and it was as a direct result of a mis-directed header in midfield by Riddick that went straight to Herd.

On towards goal swept the inside left before passing to Usher who, with plenty of room in which to operate, cracked the ball low across the face of the goal. SHARKEY was on hand to sweep it into the net past the helpless Baynam.

Spiritively the Town hit back with McKechnie getting the better of Rooks and from his centre McLaughlan dived at the feet of Rioch to smother the ball and prevent what would have been a certain equaliser.

Then good intentions by Pacey went astray because his forward pass was intercepted by Herd. This had the effect of putting Sunderland on to the attack again and in the end Caleb was glad to concede a corner as Mitchinson crossed the ball low.

Blatant obstruction by Rioch on Usher kept Sunderland on the attack and from the free kick Mulhall—who had migrated into the middle was well wide.

Then five minutes from the end Sunderland settled it once and for all with a second goal by MULHALL. The early work was done by Herd who brought the ball through cleverly before pushing it to

his left where there was a certain amount of indecision in defence. Baynam went out but did not get near enough to the ball and Mulhall from an acute angle forced the ball into the back of the net.

Even then the Town were not beaten and McLaughlan had to skid full length in the mud to keep out a shot by Pacey.

Afterwards Sunderland broke away to score a third goal through SHARKEY, who shot from close range after Baynam had failed to cut out a high, dangerous centre from Usher. This came after 88 minutes. Result:

LUTON 0
SUNDERLAND 3