

MUCH-CHANGED TOWN PUT UP GALLANT FIGHT

Caleb is off injured most of second half

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 0, GILLINGHAM 2

WITH ruthless determination, Town manager George Martin took his team apart after the appalling show against Walsall yesterday.

The effect was to make nine alterations, which left only Tinsley and Gibson keeping the same positions.

Out went Barton, Fincham, Pleat and O'Rourke, all dropped, and Jardine, after being named in the original team, had to stand down because of a blistered foot.

So there were chances again for former first-team regulars McBain, Bramwell, Caleb, Lownds and Whittaker. Apart from these alterations there were positional switches for Harber, Phillips, Riddick and Reid.

On the other hand, Gillingham, still having an outside chance of promotion, contented themselves with one alteration, and that was at centre-half, where Burgess stood down in favour of White.

Naturally enough, after yesterday's disappointment, there was a sharp decline in the attendance, which, however, was bolstered by a considerable following from Gillingham.

After a miserable morning, the sun came out for the start, which was seen by about 6,000.

There was a tentative start, and to the crowd an amusing interlude when Harber was penalised for a foul. Hudson, after first trying to steal a yard or two and coming in for some finger-wagging from the referee, removed the flag on the centre line in order to facilitate his run at the ball. This produced further gestures from the demonstrative Mr. Aldous.

Early on there was evidence that this was going to be a tough battle, with both teams needing points for vastly differing reasons. Reid made the first clear-cut shot for the Town from a centre by Whittaker, but unfortunately he did not hit the ball squarely, and it rolled almost gently to Simpson.

Not for the first time, Riddick was shaken up in a hard tackle, which brought the Town a free-kick mid-way in the Gillingham half, but when Lownds lobbed the ball into the penalty area, the centre-forward was standing off-side.

By and large, the Town in these opening stages had looked more lively than yesterday, but there had been a very few attempts by either side that suggested a goal.

There was a stoppage while Pulley received attention for injury.

Then, Gillingham set up a strong attack in which Caleb made a timely tackle on Gibbs as he was shaping for a shot from point-blank range.

SWEEPING ATTACK BY TOWN

From this there came a sweeping attack by the Town. Riddick began it, and Reid carried it on to Harber. Thewings nearly lost possession, but recovered his poise and forced Simpson to make a full-length save.

After a long dribble by Phillips, there were appeals by the Town for a penalty for hands, which the referee ignored.

With both teams troubled by the liveliness of the ball, neither had established superiority.

Another foul against Gillingham brought a long free kick from Bramwell, hooked away by Arnott.

After a determined clearance by Bramwell, Riddick was sent away with a possible chance, until obstructed a couple of yards outside the penalty area by White. However, the free kick brought nothing against this tight-packed Gillingham defence, and then Harber, confronted by two opponents, sent the ball clear from a pass by Phillips.

DEFENCES HOLD SWAY

Gibbs sent the ball high over the bar when tackled by Gibson—so high in fact that the ball went out of the ground.

There was little excitement, and play so far had been mostly punctuated by scrappiness, with the defences holding sway, and neither forward line making real progress.

A gusty wind which was quite strong at times, and was in the Town's favour, was making control even more difficult, and the standard of football was not high.

A neat pass by Riddick sent away the determined Harber, whose centre unfortunately went a little way adrift, and in the end, when

TEAMS

LUTON: Tinsley, McBain, Bramwell; Gibson, Caleb, Lownds; Harber, Phillips Riddick, Reid, Whittaker.

GILLINGHAM: Simpson; Weston, Hudson; Arnott, White, Farrell; Pulley, Gibbs, Newman, Rackstraw, Meredith.

Referee: Mr. R. Aldous, of Ipswich.

the ball came out from defence Lownds sent it well wide.

There were cheers for the referee when he again put a stop to a Gillingham attempt to steal a yard or two from a free kick. He had certainly given the clearest of indications that he would stand no nonsense.

Then came a quick Gillingham break-away. A pass by Gibbs left Rackstraw with a clear run to goal. Bravely, Tinsley came out ten yards to make a daring save, and in the end Caleb calmly hooked the ball for a corner from near to the goal-line.

TINSLEY IS SHAKEN UP

In his attempt Tinsley was injured, and there was a hold-up while he received attention.

Tinsley resumed, though looking shaken, and was immediately in action pushing out the corner.

For some strange reason Pulley, with all the time in the world, chose to handle the ball when it went to him from a goal-kick from Simpson, but the free-kick did not cause Gillingham any trouble, and the general emphasis was still on defensive measures.

Tinsley came out with good judgment to cut off a free-kick by Hudson, but generally speaking neither goalkeeper could come into the category of being in full employment.

Certainly, the Town's defensive changes had had a tightening-up effect, but there was no real evidence of a greater spark in attack.

Towards half-time there was a strong Gillingham raid, which ended with Bramwell chesting down a centre by Meredith, but a Gillingham appeals for a penalty was turned down.

Gillingham struck again.

How the goals came

RACKSTRAW for Gillingham after 51 mins.
GIBBS (pen) for Gillingham after 71 minutes.

Tinsley came out to smother a shot, and Gibson was injured while the ball spooned over the bar harmlessly for a goal kick. He soon recovered.

Not for some time had there been a well organised Town attacking movement, but they came away more promisingly through Harber, but when the ball reached Riddick the centre-forward found himself firmly shut out.

Then, on the stroke of half-time, Bramwell suddenly crumpled up when the ball was quite 20 yards away from him. Just why, it was difficult to say. This caused yet another hold-up and through injuries the first half had now lasted 48 minutes. Half-time:

LUTON 0
GILLINGHAM 0

First incident of the second half was a snap Town raid led by Riddick, whose centre was hurriedly scooped behind by Hudson, but the corner kick was cleared without difficulty.

Certainly the Town were looking in a more attacking frame of mind, and Phillips ran into position for a square pass by Reid, but unfortunately sliced the ball well wide with his left foot.

At the other end there was a narrow escape for the Town. With the defence appealing for offside, Meredith squared the ball across the face of the goal, but Pulley, running in, missed it.

GILLINGHAM TAKE THE LEAD

After 51 minutes Gillingham took the lead in a raid inspired by Farrell, scorer of two goals against Reading yesterday.

The ball came over accurately, and Gibbs had a shot charged down by Gibson. Fortunately for Gillingham they had the run of the ball, for the rebound went straight to RACKSTRAW who, from close range, crashed it in. Tinsley looked as if he was unsighted, and the ball was travelling fast.

This match had produced a crop of minor injuries, and there were two more when, with Gillingham beginning to get on top, Caleb and Rackstraw collided and the services of both trainers were needed.

Then, there were frantic signals for a stretcher and it became plain that the more seriously injured was Caleb, who was taken to the sideline for further attention.

Rackstraw was able to continue after recovering from a head injury. Play went on with the Town down to ten men, and with Gibson taking over at centre-half, with Lownds switching to right-half, and Reid dropping back.

Meanwhile, it did not look as if the stretcher was necessary, because Caleb was seen to be walking around the ground, leaning heavily on the shoulders of the trainer and an ambulance man.

TOWN MAKE SPIRITED REPLY

Despite their handicap, the Town fought back, and Harber forced Simpson to make a one-handed save from a header following a centre by Whittaker, who had wandered over to the right.

By now, Caleb had reached the trainer's bench, and it looked as if he was suffering from concussion.

Certainly, the Town were fighting back, and Phillips sent a freak kick whipping away the wrong side of the

men were ejected from the arena by a strong force of policemen. One man was struggling vigorously and, then the other followed suit.

In the process, one policeman lost his helmet, but what led up to it all was shrouded in mystery.

According to spectators near the Press box, the cause of the trouble was a fight breaking out between the couple of supporters who were alleged to come from Gillingham.

Gillingham now began to exert more persistent pressure and Tinsley went down smartly to save from Pulley.

Back came the Town with the sort of determination that would have availed them well yesterday, and the lively Harber forced a corner which caused something of a flurry among the Gillingham defence—but no more.

Then the Town's bad luck continued when Gibson made an admittedly late tackle on Newman inside the penalty area, and the referee pointed to the penalty spot.

GIBBS took the kick and made no mistake with a shot that was wide of Tinsley's right.

There was nearly another goal, with Rackstraw diving headlong to head a centre by Newman, but he sent the ball too high.

After Tinsley had saved, despite Newman cannoning into him, the Town ran into further trouble when Gibson suffered facial injury.

There was not now much chance of the Town retrieving anything from this game, for their four-man attack could not harass the Gillingham defence.

There was one moment of panic in the Gillingham defence with Simpson out to the edge of the penalty area to kick it into the crowd. They were playing it safely, and one could hardly blame them.

A RALLY BY THE TOWN

Then came a Town rally with Lownds and even McBain going deep into the penalty area. The upshot was a corner kick that McBain headed goalwards, but Simpson saved as Lownds cannoned into him.

Simpson was getting some booing from the crowd for some time-wasting tactics, and then there was a mix-up between Gibbs and Gibson, which the referee missed.

Lownds was unlucky with a flashing drive that just cleared the bar, but it was a forlorn hope now. Result:

LUTON TOWN 0
GILLINGHAM 2