

FORWARDS GIVE TOWN BRIGHT START IN NEW DIVISION

Bradford fight all the way in tough tussle

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 3, BRADFORD 1

TRADITIONALLY the opening day of the football season coincides with a heat wave, but tradition went by the board today when the Town made their first appearance in the Fourth Division against Bradford at Kenilworth Road. There was rain all morning and a torrential downpour which began an hour and a half before the kick-off must have discouraged many people.

So heavy was the rain that there were at least a dozen calls to the club's office inquiring whether the match was still on. In the event, the pitch, looking immaculately green, had absorbed the moisture and it looked in very good condition.

With two right-wingers, Pleat and Harber out of action through injury the Town turned to Barrie Fry, who is on a two months' trial, to fill the vacancy.

He was one of four newcomers on view, the others being Thomson from Liverpool, Woods—ex Blackburn—and Moore, who was with Motherwell last season.

A training injury to John O'Rourke, which kept him out of a midweek trial, cleared up in time for him to lead the attack today.

Bradford, whom the Town last met in the Second Division

TEAMS

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; Thomson, Jardine; Gibson, Woods, Moore; Fry, McKechnie, O'Rourke, Reid, Whittaker.

Substitute: Riddick.

BRADFORD: Hardie; Gordon, Lightowler; Pansen, McCalman, Flynn; Lawrie, Hector, Fryatt, Ham, Bird.

Substitute: Burns.

Referee: Mr. K. Stokes of Newark.

sion all of 16 or 17 years ago, had only on: newcomer—Gordon, the right-back they signed from Dundee the week before last.

Half an hour before the start the weather had cleared, though there were still some ominous dark clouds at the back of the Kenilworth Road goal.

WOODS LOST THE TOSS

The Town turned out all in white, even to stockings, and Bradford sported the colours that used to belong exclusively to Plymouth Argyle—green shirts and white shorts.

This was the first day of the new substitute rule, and Gordon Riddick, named by the Town for this role, duly appeared, track-suited, on the trainer's bench, as did Bradford's nominee, Burns.

Woods the new Town captain, lost the toss—not that there was any noticeable advantage—and the Town defended the Kenilworth Road end.

The crowd was spread out, which made it difficult to estimate, but I would put it around the 6,000 mark at the start.

TINSLEY IN ACTION

There was action for Tinsley when Reid missed a ball in midfield, Bird swept past Thomson and closed in before delivering a low drive that Tinsley could not hold, and Moore came to the rescue by kicking away.

Then came a brilliant move by the Town in which McKechnie, Reid and Fry participated, but it fizzled out when Whittaker headed wide from Fry's centre.

A fine through pass by Reid split the Bradford defence and McKechnie was a bit unlucky to be pushed off the ball as he bore down on the goal.

Bradford were dangerous in quick thrusts and it required a splendid save by Tinsley to

keep out a close-range shot by Lawrie.

WHITTAKER SNAP-SHOT

A snap-shot by Whittaker gave Hardie his first serious task but the goalkeeper proved agile and made a clean catch.

In a spell of further Town pressure, Whittaker gained a corner, but as the ball came across the whistle went for some infringement.

From the goal kick, trouble developed at the Town end because Woods was beaten in the air, and Hector, who has a reputation as a marksman went through, chased by Moore. Fortunately, Tinsley came yards out of his goal and smothered the ball as the inside right shot.

Both goals were having close calls and Whittaker, looking dangerous, nearly got the important first goal when he took advantage of slowness by Pansen, but in the end was crowded out. Immediately afterwards the Town had rank bad luck when, from 20 yards, O'Rourke swung on to the ball, beat Hardie and saw it crashing against the bar and coming back into play.

BRADFORD FAIL WITH FREE KICK

Two corners fell to the Town, who were moving the ball about crisply in attack, with Whittaker prominent in these early stages.

A foul by Thomson on Bird gave Bradford a free-kick about 30 yards out. But like Lightowler's first shot, it was beaten down and he

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drove well over with his second.

There was another free-kick against the Town, this time when Woods was judged to have pushed Fryatt, whom he was finding difficult in the air. The kick was taken short and it was the Town's turn for a narrow escape, because Flynn let fly from all of 25 yards and his shot suffered a similar fate to that of O'Rourke's earlier, thudding against the bar with Tinsley well beaten.

There was certainly plenty of incident, and O'Rourke, racing on to a pass by Whittaker, forced Hardie to make a sketchy one-handed save as he fell.

After 21 minutes came the first injury, when Ham needed attention, but it was not necessary to bring on the substitute.

Chance of a goal to the Town came when Gibson sent



Tony McKechnie who scored two of Town's goals

away Fry who cleverly made for the deadline and pulled the ball across low. Unfortunately no-one was positioned to receive it and eventually it went out to Whittaker who shot hastily, a harmless lob.

So far, what we had seen had certainly been no bad advertisement for Fourth Division football for both teams were showing speed and cleverness.

TIMELY TACKLE BY WOODS

When Bradford threatened again Woods made a timely tackle by throwing himself at the feet of Hector, and then Tinsley saved from both Ham and Bird.

With 29 minutes gone the Town took the lead and there was some doubt about who applied the finishing touch. McKechnie fastened on to a through pass by Whittaker and, although heavily challenged, managed to squeeze the ball goalwards. In the process it was deflected by Gordon's foot. There is no doubt in my mind that it would have gone in anyway, but O'Rourke raced up to make sure.

Whether O'Rourke was there before the ball actually crossed the line is a moot point, but a check with the trainer's bench brought the

How the goals came

McKECHNIE for Luton, after 29 minutes.

HAM for Bradford, after 51 minutes.

REID for Luton, after 57 minutes.

McKECHNIE for Luton after 76 mins.

opinion that the goal should be credited to McKECHNIE.

Bradford fought back and an accidental deflection by Moore made them look dangerous and it was fortunate that Reid was deep back in defence to put the ball behind. From the corner, Flynn, who was doing quite a lot of long-range shooting, sent the ball too high.

The referee's notebook came out to book Hector for a bad foul on Fry who went full-length after being tripped from behind.

There were appeals for a penalty by Bradford when a cross from Fryatt struck Woods but the referee rightly waved on play.

There was no doubt about a handling offence when Gibson punched the ball down, but it was not serious, because it happened half way into the Bradford half.

Reid was unlucky with a long, raking drive that missed by inches.

Towards half-time a heavy raid by the Town saw Reid sprinting hard to catch a cross-field pass. Finally Hardie saved a long shot by Gibson. These lively Bradford forwards could never be discounted and Tinsley made a sketchy sort of save from Hector. Half-time:

LUTON 1
BRADFORD 0

SHOT THROUGH CROWD OF PLAYERS

After a quiet start to the second half the game livened up when Bradford drew level through HAM after 51 minutes. The goal followed a corner by Bird, and Ham shot through a crowd of players. Whether it was deflected en route was not possible to see, but in any case, Tinsley was badly unsighted.

This encouraged Bradford and a minute later Bird sent a shot swinging past the far



post with Tinsley scrambling across his goal. There followed a break by Ham, who had a real tussle with Gibson before finally being penalised.

In a quick excursion by the Town, Whittaker wandered to the right wing to make a deceptive cross that eluded the



John Reid, whose low shot from the edge of the penalty area regained the lead for Town.

grasp of Hardie, and the ball came back into play off the bar.

TOWN REGAIN LEAD

Then the Town regained the lead after 57 minutes through REID. It followed a long punt into the goalmouth by Thomson for which O'Rourke and Hardie went up together. The goalkeeper won but could only push the ball out to Reid, who from the edge of the penalty area smacked it low into the net.

Bradford continued to be lively and dangerous, particularly Bird, who harassed Thomson into giving away a corner, from which Ham, on the half-turn, shot much too high. There was a certain amount of grim tackling by the Bradford defence, Mc-



Kechnie and Whittaker going full length and bringing a free-kick in each case.

THE FIRST SUBSTITUTE

Then, before the second free-kick was taken, a substitute came on. Lawrie, who did not appear to have been injured at any stage, had a word with the referee along with the Bradford captain, McCalman, and then walked off, shaking his head sadly. This got a mixed reception from the crowd, who did not seem at all sure about what was happening. Then Burns was seen removing his track-suit, and he took over at outside-right in an un-numbered shirt.

Then Bradford were in the wars again when Lightowler damaged his leg in a tackle and went to outside-left, with Bird dropping back to left back. There was, of course, no question, of further substitution. A brilliant crossfield pass by Reid put the Town on the attack again but Fry's centre was too hard and too high for the forwards in the penalty area to reach.

Lightowler, soon recovered and resumed his original position.

SECOND GOAL FOR McKECHNIE

There was a narrow escape for the Town when Bird swung across an accurate centre to which Tinsley and Fryatt went together. The centre-forward's head connected, but he had no room in which to place the ball and it flew well over.

Then came a tremendous one-handed save by Tinsley which even the marksman Fryatt applauded.

After 76 minutes the Town's advantage became more decisive when McKECHNIE brought them 3-1 up. This time there was no doubt at all that he should be credited with the goal, which was due to the unselfishness of Whittaker.

The winger, after a brilliant burst could have shot himself from an angle but chose make absolutely certain by teeing the ball up for McKechnie, who put the ball calmly into the net.

There were expectations of another goal when O'Rourke raced through but unfortunately sliced the ball with

the outside of his foot and it went well wide.

After an incident with Ham, Gibson became the second player to have his name taken by the referee.

Bradford were still fighting and they gained a free kick just outside the penalty area when Gibson pulled down Hector.

Flynn lobbed the ball over the defensive wall and Tinsley had some difficulty in pulling it down from under the bar. In a further Bradford thrust, Woods made a timely header clearance from a centre by Bird, and the Town were forced back on the defensive, during which Moore, who had his foot up too high, was penalised for dangerous play.

In almost the last minute, Burns and Hector both missed a dangerous centre from Bird, and the Town breathed again.

Then Whittaker got the ball into the net, but O'Rourke handled and the goal was disallowed. Result:

LUTON TOWN 3
BRADFORD 1