

SECOND-HALF SPURT BY TOWN LANDS

TWO VITAL POINTS

Tinsley thwarts the Vale by brilliant play

By CHILTERN

PORT VALE 1, LUTON TOWN 2

A LATE change was necessary by the Town for their visit to Port Vale this afternoon because Billy Harber went down with an attack of influenza. To fill the vacancy Manager George Martin gave a chance to Barrie Fry, who has been playing well in the reserve team.

Possibly, this may occasion some surprise, in view of the fact that Billy Stark normally is regarded as first replacement. Stark, however, damaged an ankle in training, and as there was some doubt about his complete fitness, it was decided to give him a try out on the wing in the reserve team.

Port Vale, who were rather disappointed in their last match, which they lost by the only goal at Rochdale, made two defensive changes. Right full-back Whalley was omitted. Miles was switched there, and Sproson, who made 45 League appearances last season — but only one so far this time — came in.

Vale's attack remained the same, and Jimmy Hill, £5,000 signing from Everton ten days ago, made his home debut. Fry, by the way, had had two previous league appearances for the Town, but both were at outside-right. It was a mixed day for weather, stormy and wet, when the Town arrived at a spacious Vale Park, but by the time

within range of the lowering sun.

There had been considerable rain during the morning, but the well-grassed pitch had absorbed it very well, apart from immediately in front of the goal-line.

Tinsley was first in action from a centre by Smith, and then French came into the picture with his brilliant dribble which brought him diagonally into the middle but it ended rather tamely.

Then came a corner to the Town from which Read was penalised for pushing.

When the Vale broke away, Taylor showed speed, and the attack was reinforced by Wilson coming right through, only to be stopped by Thompson, who conceded a corner.

TINSLEY COMES RACING OUT

First real threat to Town came after a passing movement between French and Fry had been broken up. Vale made ground quickly, and Tinsley had to come racing to the edge of the penalty area to throw himself at the feet of Smith, who was closing dangerously.

Thompson was doing well in Town's defence in these early stages.

Vale had a free-kick for a foul by Moore. It was cleared eventually by Read, whose centre sent French on a long incursion into the home half.

It looked promising until Sproson intercepted the winger's pass.

With play still at the Vale end, French aimed a corner, but it yielded nothing.

So far, defences had been on top, and the Town's was being helped by some indecision by Vale's forwards near the penalty area.

Their best effort came from Rowlands, in the form of a speculative shot from 25 yards. It seemed to gather pace on the greasy turf, and Tinsley was glad to push it for a corner.

WELL-DEVELOPED RAIDS BY TOWN

Two or three times, well-developed raids by the Town, just failed to come to fruition, and at the end of one of them the referee had a word with Read for unfairly charging O'Neill.

On balance, the Vale had been slightly the more dangerous, and there was a narrow escape for the Town following a lone raid on the left. Finally Tinsley had to go down hurriedly to reach a shot by Hill, and it was with some difficulty that he prevented the ball breaking away from him.

Town replied, and Whittaker after beating one opponent tried a shot which carried wide of the far post.

There was a prompt reply by the Vale, down their right, where Smith showed cleverness. Poole backed up the attack and forced Tinsley to the fingerlip the ball around a post.

Town were not showing the smoothness we have seen from their forwards in home matches, mainly because too many of their midfield passes were going astray, and because O'Rourke had been allowed no scope at all.

A splendid bit of play by Jardine not only broke up a home attack, but put the Town on the move again.

wind, were not easy, and the football suffered.

Town's best attempt came from a free-kick. It was taken by Read, who blazed the ball a foot over the bar, with O'Neill somewhat startled by his temerity.

VALE MAKE MISTAKES

A series of careless mistakes by the hitherto immaculate Port Vale defence ended with hands by Wilson. From the free-kick, French gained possession and centred to O'Rourke, who, off-balance, could only turn the ball wide, but it was the best chance to come the Town's way so far.

Soon afterwards, O'Rourke received a head injury in a heading duel with Sproson, and, while both were feeling the effects, there was a strong Vale raid in which the Town had the narrowest of escapes.

When the ball came across from the left, Tinsley could not reach it, and Hill glided it apparently directly for the corner of the net, but Rivers had summed up the situation, and racing back, he turned it for a corner. It must have been only inches in front of the goal-line.

Vale were still looking the more assertive in attack, particularly down the left wing, but were not impressive in front of goal. Again, Tinsley went down in timely fashion, to cut off a centre by Taylor when the Vale inside-forwards were dithering.

DEADLY FINISHING IS NOT THERE

Just occasionally, the Town's attack was sparking as we know it can, but the deadly finishing was not evident against close covering, and the only shot was a sliced affair by Read.

French suddenly showed up with a dribble and a pass to O'Rourke, who misguidedly returned the ball to him too quickly, the result being a goal-kick to the Vale.

As half-time approached, the sun went in completely, the sky clouded over darkly, and rain began to fall.

Twice, offside held up the Vale attack, and on each occasion the crowd did not like the decision. Half-time:

PORT VALE 0
LUTON TOWN 0

At the start of the second half, Port Vale made a substitution with Richards, usually an inside forward, coming on for Sproson, who was obviously feeling the effects of his collision with O'Rourke.

With two minutes gone, the Town took the lead with a well-worked goal by WHITTAKER. It began on the right with French sending outside of Alcock, which through O'Rourke. The centre-forward went on the outside of Alcock, which seemed to fox the Vale defence.

At all events, O'Rourke was

How the goals came

WHITTAKER for Luton after 47 minutes.
O'ROURKE for Luton after 68 minutes.
HILL for Port Vale after 87 minutes.

FANTASTIC SAVE BY TINSLEY

A minute later, the Vale would have been on terms but for a fantastic save by Tinsley, who hurled himself to his left to clutch a Mudie header from a centre by Smith. Truly, Tinsley was serving the Town well in this match.

The goal must have come as something of a shock to the Vale, who had always seemed to have the edge in attack.

For a time after this, it was pretty much stalemate, neither team making much ground.

Twice, French set off on long runs down the wing, but



Centre-forward John O'Rourke was credited with the goal after 68 minutes, that put Luton well on top against the Vale.

each time he was crowded out.

Then, Rowland provided a chance for Taylor, who swung at the ball, but only got the merest flick, so that Tinsley only had to pick up.

When the Town came back with an attack started by Fry, Read tried a first-time shot, which was deflected to O'Rourke. The centre-forward drove left-footed and brought O'Neill to his knees.

Town's attack was now being seen in a better light, possibly because more domination had been achieved in midfield. Yet, the Vale managed to have much of the play, but were defeating their own object by keeping the

ball too close. This was illustrated when some unnecessary short passing ended with three forwards being caught undisputedly offside.

WHITTAKER CUTS THROUGH

A bad clearance kick by Tinsley put the Vale on the attack, but they were far too dilatory.

Whittaker cut through in the inside-right position, but shot wide.

Whittaker, still ranging in the middle of the field, finished weakly from a pass by Moore. Next, a heavy Town raid was followed by a free kick. Jardine went up to join in the proceedings but in the end Read shot wide.

There was a sticky passage for Vale when O'Neill had to run well out of his penalty area to kick away from French, who was following up a long clearance, and then O'Rourke, taking aim from the edge of the penalty area, saw his shot deflected after Jardine had come right through to centre.

O'ROURKE NETS NUMBER TWO

The corner, well placed right-footed by Fry, led to the Town increasing their lead after 68 minutes. In a desperate scrimmage in front of the Vale goal, it was difficult in the dim light to be absolutely certain who had applied the finishing touch.

Certain it was that Read provided the header that put the Vale defence all over the place, and it seemed to be generally agreed that it was O'ROURKE who finally scrambled it over the line to make the Town's position much more tenable.

Now, the Town were looking well in command, further trouble followed for the Vale when Whittaker raced through before centring. Eventually, the ball was scrambled away.

Now, the Vale made a change which possibly they should have made before, because they brought Richards into the forward line, and their player-manager Mudie put himself at left-half.

Town were the more danger-

ous now, and Whittaker brought O'Neill full-length with a powerful low drive that hit the goal-keeper — again an inswinger from Fry, but it was cleared.

A slip by Rivers caused some momentary concern, but Rowlands' shot from 25 yards rolled past a post watched by Tinsley.

A through pass by Mudie put Vale on the move, and it was as well that Rivers was in the way of a drive by Rowlands, otherwise there might have been trouble.

Vale's defence was looking a lot less solid than in the first half, and a move sparked off by French and Fry brought another drive by Whittaker that O'Neill pushed out uncertainly.

When Vale came back, Tinsley again saved well from Rowland, following a corner. Then, followed one for the Town after collaboration between French and O'Rourke.

In the main, the Town were keeping the opposition well



out of shooting range, and the Vale were helping them by the poor quality of their shooting.

The feature of this half had been the way in which the Town had taken command in the middle of the field.

With five minutes left, the Vale set up a strong attack in desperation, but were not getting any change out of the Town's well-drilled defence.

PORT VALE HIT BACK

Then, what we definitely did not want to happen occurred three minutes from the end, when Port Vale reduced their arrears through HILL.

The old campaigner Mudie began it with a shrewd pass to Taylor, who came inside, frustrated Town attempts to lock him out of position, and finally swung the ball across to the inside-right position, where Hill was waiting to smack it into the far corner of the net, beating Tinsley's despairing dive.

That, of course, set the stage for the tense finish that had not seemed on the cards.

It was noticeable that Read came back into a deep defensive position, and Vale, scenting the chance of a reprieve, swung onto the attack again. They were beaten off without much trouble on this occasion.

Then, with the game in its dying seconds, they had a free-kick just inside the Town half, from which Fry tempted disaster by taking the ball back towards his own goal and getting himself into so much trouble that he had to give away a throw-in. Fortunately for him and for Town, the danger was cleared. Result:

PORT VALE 1
LUTON TOWN 2