

TOWN ROCKED AS LINCOLN PULL OUT THRILLING RALLY

A two-goal interval lead is surrendered

By CHILTERN

LINCOLN CITY 2, LUTON TOWN 2

TWO goals ahead at half-time, Luton Town seemed to be coasting towards two more promotion points at Lincoln this afternoon, but two second half goals in six minutes by centre-forward Chapman put Lincoln well back into the game.

In fact, lowly Lincoln proved to be doughty fighters, and after Read had given Town the lead after only four minutes, the home side had chances enough to have gone ahead before Whittaker got a good one after 32 minutes.

After passing through incessant rain and snow on their journey north this morning, the Town arrived at Lincoln to find the weather cold, but sunny.

The pitch, despite the rain during the week, looked in a very fair condition, though I was not surprised, because this is known as one of the best playing surfaces in the country.

With Edwards recovered from the bruising, he received at Doncaster on Tuesday, the Town were unchanged and again had Gordon Riddick as the substitute.

No change, either, was made by Lincoln, in the continuing absence of their regular centre-forward Keith Ellis.

TEAMS

LINCOLN CITY: Wakeham; Brooks, Hudson; Milner, Moore, Farmer; Holmes, Hutchinson, Chapman, Farrall, Hawksby. Substitute, Fencott.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; Thomson, Edwards; Reid, Woods, Moore; Harber, Read, O'Rourke, French, Whittaker. Substitute, Riddick.

Referee: J. S. Pickles, of Stockport.

Lincoln came on for their pre-match kick about wearing track suit tops, a manoeuvre which the Town, playing all in white, did not follow.

TOWN TAKE THE LEAD

In the first minute, Harber and Read made a concerted movement which ended with a clearance by Wakeham. Lincoln made a break through Hutchinson, who was stopped by good covering. In four minutes the Town took the lead through READ, who was left with a comparatively simple chance after some approach work on the left flank, to which French and Whittaker contributed.

Read had time to pick his spot in the back of the net,

and he did so with deadly accuracy to emphasise his value as a goal snatcher.

The Town were looking much the more effective team, particularly in mid-field, where they were playing some attractive football.

Whittaker cleverly slipped past a tackle, and O'Rourke should have added to Town's lead, but, with a chance laid for him on a plate, he missed his kick completely, so that the ball travelled to Reid, whose kick was high.

That was a chance of clinching the Town's superiority which might be ruel later.

O'ROURKE NEEDS ATTENTION

Then O'Rourke was injured, his left ankle seeming to be affected, but he resumed after attention, and there was also a hold-up for repairs to Holmes after a tackle on Edwards, which I thought was against the rules. The referee thought otherwise, however, and restarted play with a throw-in. Holmes remained outside the touchline for further treatment.

He soon returned, however. Lincoln were not looking all that effective in attack, despite the fact that they made a dangerous break down the right wing after Edwards made an ill-timed tackle on Holmes which had the effect of pulling the whole defence out of position.

In the end, Farrall muffed a reasonable chance, and then a strong tackle by Woods stopped Hawksby.

TOWN'S GLITTER FADES A LITTLE

Some of the early glitter from the Town had become rather tarnished.

There were strong Lincoln appeals for a penalty, or at least a free kick for obstruction, when Thomson bundled Farrall off the ball, but the referee waved them aside.

A brilliant through pass by French put the Town on to the attack, but Read, trying a solo run, was eventually crowded out at the expense of a corner. This was cleared quickly, and Lincoln came back again with right-back

through passes O'Rourke tried a header, but at a range too long to worry Wakeham.

TOWN INCREASE THEIR LEAD

Determination by Whittaker gained him a corner, only for him to spoil the effect completely by putting the ball behind.

Then, after Woods had broken up another Lincoln attack, Reid, again prompting the front line, pushed the ball to French, whose finish was very weak.

However, the Town broke away in increase their lead after 32 minutes with WHITTAKER the scorer.

It was the product of some almost-casual work by the Lincoln defence, and Brooks in particular, that allowed the eager Whittaker to break clear. From quite a severe angle, he exacted full toll by drawing Wakeham from his goal and putting the ball into the net with a very well-placed shot.

Harber was penalised for a foul but, between them, John Moore and Thomson made a clearance, and then a long pass by Reid to O'Rourke led to Read being left with a shooting opportunity from just outside the penalty area, and he belted the ball not all that much wide of the target.

There was still fight in Lincoln, and quite a reasonable build in approach, but they were sadly lacking in thrust in front of goal. Town's defence, in fact, was still very much in control of the demands made on it.

Edwards, very much in the wars these days, doubtless because of his robust approach, again needed attention from the trainer after he had been fouled by Holmes. He was quickly all right again. The referee then did the Town a bad turn by giving a free kick when Harber was obstructed, though in fact had got clear of opposition.

COMFORTABLE FOR TINSLEY

Even though Lincoln were still very much on the game, their was still little threat from their forwards, and Tinsley was having a comfortable time.

A foul on O'Rourke by Les Moore, the tall Lincoln centre-half, brought him an admonishing wave from the referee. Woods took the free kick and placed it deep, but from a severe angle O'Rourke put the ball behind. Half-time:

LINCOLN 0
LUTON 2

There was a strong resumption by Lincoln, driven off by a headed clearance by Woods. The ball was returned quickly, but Chapman was offside, and so, for good measure, was Hutchinson.

With the Lincoln pressure persistent, Thomson slipped the ball back somewhat awkwardly to Tinsley, who had to dive for it, but did so successfully.

Two or three times the Town attack, which was not firing on all its cylinders, threatened to be dangerous, mainly through the prompting of French, but it all came to nought.

Lincoln rallied again but at least three forwards were caught blatantly offside.

A CHANCE FOR LINCOLN

Holmes came right across to the left to try to prod some punch into this Lincoln attack, and he laid on a chance for Hutchinson, who, however, was beaten by the quickness of Woods and, in the next minute, Town's centre-half cleared a corner.

Whittaker earned a corner from a pass by Read, and after there had been a headed clearance, Reid, who was popping up in unexpected places, returned the ball to the goalmouth. O'Rourke gathered it, but from an acute angle sent it just wide of the far post.

In quick succession there came a corner at each end, earned for Lincoln by Farrall and for Luton by O'Rourke from a pass by Whittaker. From the latter there was a scrimmage in front of the Lincoln goal, and finally, French, somewhat disappointingly, shot wide.

There was some disagreement to give Lincoln a corner



WHITTAKER increased Town's lead after 32 minutes with a well-taken goal.

when John Moore came across to clear, apparently off a Lincoln forward, and this was the forerunner of a goal that put Lincoln back into the game after 60 minutes with CHAPMAN the scorer.

In the first instance the corner was met by Whittaker, back in defence, but he only succeeded in sloping the ball back to Hawksby. From the outside-left there came an immediate response, with an accurate centre, and Chapman, lying handy in the centre, put the ball effectively over the head of Tinsley, giving Lincoln the sort of encouragement that the Town, at this stage, could well have done without.

Certainly, that Lincoln goal had put a completely different complexion on affairs.

For Town, John Moore

streamed through to bring Wakeham to his knees from his favourite range, just outside the penalty area.

There was trouble for the Town after this, much of it emanating from the Lincoln left flank. Edwards had to head clear to give Lincoln, yet another corner, and this was the direct product of Lincoln drawing level. Again, CHAPMAN squeezed into the angle of the woodwork. Thomson's attempt to head clear interfered with Tinsley's efforts to clear.

In each case, error, if such it was, was human, but it certainly put Town back in the fire with a vengeance.

Now, the crowd of possibly 4,000, and certainly no more, really had something to shout about as the Town were rocked back, right on their heels.

Having seen their lead whittled away, the Town now showed some determination to try to regain it, but were meeting with more stubbornness in the Lincoln defence than had been the case earlier.

Back came the Town through a scything run by Whittaker, who crashed the ball across the goal. In the uncertain light given us by this mixture of the natural and artificial, it was difficult to decide whether the ball hit the bar or whether Wakeham got a hand to it. At all events, it proved to be a danger.

WHITTAKER AGAIN IN THE LIMELIGHT

Whittaker, who was just about the Town's most consistent forward, earned a corner which Wakeham fisted to safety.

John Moore broke up retaliatory work by Lincoln and Town came away again through French and Whittaker.

Once more they were held by a defence that had developed more stubborn characteristics than previously.

Then, Harber came off for attention to his right knee, and in the meantime Lincoln forced two corners, the first of them after Chapman had been allowed to go from an

How the goals came

READ for Luton after 4 minutes.
WHITTAKER for Luton after 32 minutes.
CHAPMAN for Lincoln after 60 minutes.
CHAPMAN for Lincoln after 66 minutes.

apparently offside position. In the end, Tinsley had to grab the ball from a close-range effort by Hawksby.

Harber returned and the Town pressed, only for O'Rourke to be caught offside.

TOWN UNDER PRESSURE

A foul by Reid and a long free kick from Hutchinson put the Town in deep trouble with 10 minutes left, and it needed a goal save by Tinsley from Chapman to preserve equality.

Town's equality was in jeopardy now, particularly when Chapman, heading for a hat-trick, rounded Woods. It took a full-length save by Tinsley to prevent what would have been the ultimate disaster.

A free-kick came for Lincoln against Woods, and again Tinsley was called into violent action.

Five minutes to go now, and Lincoln were really fighting to snatch the winner. These were tense moments indeed for the Town. They had been driven right back on to the defensive and seemed to have abandoned all hope of regaining their former advantage.

In fact, they were now reduced to having to find touch in desperation.

With a minute to go, Edwards conceded a free kick just inside his own half, and again Brooks belted it high into the Town goalmouth, but before anything could develop the whistle blew for the finish.

Result:
LINCOLN 2
LUTON 2