

PROVOKED, FRENCH RETALIATED— HAD TO GO

Kevan to bring needed punch

By CHILTERN

HALIFAX TOWN 1, LUTON TOWN 1

Increasingly, it seems, referees, presumably having missed the first part of the incident, are imposing the ultimate penalty of dismissal from the field, on the retaliator.

Graham French was a victim of this on Saturday at Halifax in circumstances which caused even the mild-tempered Allan Brown to fume, and to go on record immediately after the match as saying that he would ask for a personal hearing for the player, and make himself available as a witness for him.

The incident occurred so far away from me that it was impossible for me to see what went on but the Town manager, sitting only a few yards away on the trainer's bench, was in no doubt at all about what occurred.

"French was provoked and retaliated after he had been kicked. The referee admitted to me afterwards that he did not see the incident, but acted on what he was told by his linesman," said Brown, who added that all the linesman could have seen was French lift his hands in retaliation.

Whatever the outcome of it all, one thing that stood out plainly, was that French's sending off probably deprived the Town of their first away win of the season and that against a team with an unbeaten record at The Shay.

SUCCESSFUL DEBUT BY KEVAN

Only two minutes before, they had taken the lead through KEVAN who marked his successful debut for the Town by heading through after a defender had screwed towards his own goal a corner by Whittaker.

Just before that happened, Kevan had shown that he is a force to be reckoned with whenever he receives the ball in the region of goal by forcing White to turn wide a strong drive.

When French had to go, the Town, who had spent quite a slice of the first half on the defensive, were really beginning to threaten as an attacking force, and even when down to 10 men, they might have increased their lead because Rioch raced clean through only to be foiled by the quick advance of White, who smothered his shot.

Naturally enough, the handicap began to tell on the Town as this gruelling struggle in the mud progressed, but they defended heroically and considered themselves unlucky when their lead was wiped out 17 minutes from the end.

CLAIMED EQUALISER WAS OFFSIDE

They claimed that PARKS was offside when he headed through a cross by Smith during a melee in front of goal.

Even after that, the Town were not completely out of it and Kevan brought White into action again with a header that the goalkeeper only just managed to save.

Altogether, it was a highly praiseworthy performance by the Town, who showed tremendous fighting spirit plus a marked tightening in the defence and much better covering than has been the case in the majority of away matches this season.

DOUGAN HAS MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Much of the all-round improvement in the rearguard stemmed from the presence of Dougan, who has made a great deal of difference, not only by his personal example, but by the way in which he dominates the middle and marshals his defensive forces.

Obviously, there is increased confidence generally and there were positive contributions by Slough and Moore, both of whom marked dangerous inside men most capably and so cut down the threat from the quarter whence it was most expected. Thomson and Jardine kept

battling away courageously and successfully while Read obviously appreciated the better cover that was available for him.

KEVAN WILL GET THE GOALS

Forward, there were times, particularly in the first half when the support for Kevan was not what it might have been but once the attack began to function smoothly, the new centre-forward gave much more than a broad hint that he will be well among the goals for the Town.

Loss of French was all the more vital because he had been quite a source of anxiety to the home defence, as was Whittaker who was always looking for the ball and wandering intelligently.

Rioch seemed to find difficulty in getting really into the game in the first half, but settled down afterwards to be a considerable striking force, while Riddick was very effective in his midfield link role.

HALIFAX TOWN.—White; Russell, Bodell; Smith, Holt, Lee (J); Taylor, Hutchinson, Parks, Atkins, Holmes. Substitute: Wooler.

LUTON TOWN. — Read; Thomson, Jardine; Slough, Dougan, Moore; French, Riddick, Kevan, Rioch, Whittaker. Substitute: Pleat.

Referee.—J. W. J. Clarke, Studley, Warwickshire. Attendance.—3,433.