

HALIFAX MUD BATH

French sent off after second half incident

By CHILTERN

66/67

NEW signing Derek Kevan made his mark by scoring Luton's only goal after 59 minutes of this mud bath at Halifax this afternoon. It was an advantage that the Town did not hold for long, however.

For two minutes later they were reduced to ten men when French was sent off. And after 73 minutes centre-forward Parks got the equaliser as Halifax threw everything into the attack.

Derek Kevan, former England centre-forward signed from Peterborough United yesterday afternoon, met most of his new colleagues for the first time at Wakefield this morning while the Town had lunch.

Appropriately he was making his first appearance for the Town in his native Yorkshire only a few miles from Bradford where he began his league career.

Gordon Riddick moved to inside-right and David Pleat dropped out to become the substitute.

Heavy rain since early this morning caused the pitch to be waterlogged, though there was nothing like as much surface water as there was at Kenilworth Road last Saturday.

Nevertheless it was only after an inspection by the referee about an hour before kick-off time that the game was definitely ruled on.

KEVAN THE SPEARHEAD

It was obvious from the start that Riddick was destined to be the midfield link man and Kevan, of course, had the spearhead role for which he was signed.

It was very dull when play started and I felt, the floodlights might have been switched on immediately, but they were not.

Both teams had difficulty in adjusting themselves to the conditions in the early stages. There could have been an early goal to Halifax had Parks been quicker in controlling a beautiful through pass by Smith, but Slough came across to make a hard tackle.

This seemed to inspire Halifax and Read was brought into violent action, going down to save a terrific drive by Hutchinson.

PITCH BECOMING A MORASS

Rain was still falling and the pitch was becoming a morass, with the ball sticking and shooting in turn.

There were several free-kicks for minor offences. From one against Kevan, Bodell lifted the ball into the goalmouth and Read had to scramble around the post a close-range header by Parks.

Then the floodlights came on — and not before time.

The lively Halifax team had been more dangerous so far, but the Town now began to settle down.

The Town were tending to be caught in possession through running the ball too far—conditions were crying out for the long hard pass.

Halifax came again to gain a corner off Moore which was not cleared properly and Bodell came racing through from near the centre line to make a hard low centre that rebounded off Parks. The ball went just wide.

KEVAN STOPPED BY FOUL

Kevan came into the picture with a clever dribble, which was stopped by a foul midway in the Halifax half. Whittaker took the free kick with such accuracy that Russell had to concede a corner.

The Halifax defence looked strong and was covering well.

There was good covering too by Dougan when Halifax raced away again, then Slough again came to the rescue.

However Halifax persisted and Read could do no more than tip away a centre by Taylor to Holmes. It was Riddick, back in defence who came out with the ball, at the second attempt.

Several times Halifax were caught in the Town's offside trap.

A BRILLIANT THROUGH PASS

A brilliant through pass by Dougan found Kevan but he had no-one in close support and was hemmed in by three defenders. At the same time, the success of the move was a pointer to the Town as to what was needed on this treacherous difficult going.

With 25 minutes gone, White still had not had a direct shot to save. On the other hand Halifax continued to threaten at intervals, with Parks chasing everything. It was from a Parks header that Holmes sliced the ball wide from a good position.

Riddick was spoken to by the referee for a foul on Atkins.

Play settled in the Town half for a time, but they were defending grimly—Read

TEAMS

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. J. Clarke, Studley, Warwickshire.

cut out a fierce cross by Holmes.

Then White was given a difficult task, going down full length at the foot of a post to a drive by French after Whittaker had centred.

JARDINE CLEARS OFF THE LINE

Then Kevan sent away Whittaker who tried a shot from 25 yards which White pulled down without much trouble.

Straight from this Halifax came away again and a centre by Taylor went right across the face of the goal before being returned by Holmes.

Read reached the ball but could not hold it and it went to Parks. He aimed for the vacant net and a goal seemed certain.

Possibly the ball crossed the line before Jardine, I think it was, kicked it away. Appeals for a goal went unheeded, and the referee gave the Town a free kick, presumably because Read had been impeded.

KEVAN HAS A SHOT

The Town were beginning to look more competent in attack and White had to punch away a high centre from Whittaker.

Moore appeared in the attack to find Kevan, who was just offside.

At last Kevan had the chance of a shot at goal from a pass by Whittaker and he got plenty of force behind the ball, which struck a defender to go for a corner. Whittaker placed the kick behind.

Then Hutchinson got the ball into the Town net, seconds after the whistle had gone for offside against Taylor.

DIVING SAVE BY READ

Only a great diving save by Read kept out a shot by

How the goals came

KEVAN for Luton after 59 minutes.
PARKS for Halifax after 73 minutes.

Hutchinson as Halifax began to hammer away again.

Following a signal by the referee a constable was posted on the speedway track behind the Town goal.

The Town did some pressing without really making an impression on the solid defence, though Kevan made a determined attempt to break through into the penalty area.

Another foul by Moore, out on the Halifax right, brought a free kick that led to some more heavy work for the defence.

Pushing in the back by Moore brought yet another free-kick to Halifax 15 yards outside the penalty area, and from this Hutchinson glanced the ball just wide with his head.

Then it was the Town's turn for a free-kick in the centre circle, but before anything could develop the whistle went. Half-time:

HALIFAX TOWN ... 0
LUTON TOWN 0

Rain was still falling heavily, and conditions were becoming worse, and it was a pretty depressing scene.

Halifax began strongly and it was as well for the Town that Moore was in the line of a power drive by Atkins.

OFFSIDE DECISION PLEASED CROWD

French was caught in Halifax's offside trap, which pleased the crowd, who had been irritated by the number of times the home forwards had been pulled up for offside.

Then Kevan made a typical individual burst for goal which was checked by Holmes.

With the Town remaining on the attack Slough came through to gain a corner which Whittaker placed well. White did not intercept, but Bodell was there and kicked clear.

FRENCH VOLLEYS OVER BAR

With Russell joining in, Halifax were pressing again without being able to bring Read into action, though there was a good deal of activity in the Town penalty area for some seconds when at least three shots cannoned off defenders' legs.

A brief break by the Town and Halifax were back again, earning another corner that was booted out. The ball was returned to Holmes, but he shot wide.

A case of blatant pushing by Russell on Rioch brought the Town a free kick and Whittaker floated the ball over to the right. French met it on the volley with terrific force and it flew inches over the bar.

KEVAN TAKES HIS CHANCE

Then Kevan suddenly came into the picture with a clever run in which he had two defenders going the wrong way. From an angle his strong left-footed drive forced White to punch the ball sketchily for a corner, and it was indirectly from this that the Town took the lead after 59 minutes through KEVAN.

There was a melee in front



DEREK KEVAN, who scored in his first appearance for the Town.

of the Halifax goal after Whittaker's corner kick, which was not cleared, and eventually a Halifax defender headed the ball towards his own goal. Kevan sized up the opportunity and calmly headed the ball past the helpless White.

FRENCH IS SENT OFF

Two minutes later there was trouble on the Town right wing, but I could not see clearly what happened. An incident involving French and Bodell ended in the referee sending off French after 61 minutes.

Whatever it was that happened was almost under the nose of a linesman.

So the Town faced an uphill battle with 10 men. They might have increased their lead when Rioch went ploughing through the mud, but White came out to smother his shot and the outcome was a foul on the goalkeeper.

With Riddick playing up the Town were now reduced to three effective forwards, and they hit injury trouble when Atkins fouled Riddick, who had to have attention before the free-kick could be taken.

Halifax were now fighting desperately to draw level, which they did after 73 minutes through PARKS. There were strong Town appeals for offside when the ball came over from Smith, but the referee waved play on. It seemed to me that Read was caught half-way when Parks headed the ball in from point-blank range.

HALIFAX ALL ON ATTACK

Parks headed inches too high with Read hanging on to the bar, as the ball came across from Taylor.

It was not long before Halifax were hammering away again and Read went full-length to push for a corner a shot by Atkins.

At this stage every player except White was in the Town half of the field. Then came a break during which Rioch was pulled from behind as he sought to cleave a way through.

Whittaker's free kick was accurately placed and Kevan was on the spot to make a great effort to put the Town back into the lead with a header that White only just managed to push outside.

Dougan extricated the Town from another dangerous situation by coolly bringing the ball out, and was fouled in the process. But Halifax came back ferociously and a powerful drive by Atkins from just inside the penalty area rebounded against the packed row of defenders.

Kevan caused more trouble in the home defence when he chased a long ball down the middle and White was only just able to snatch up the ball in time.

A foul by Rioch on the Halifax left raised their hopes but this was cleared and eventually ended with Halifax offside.

Into the last three minutes now and it was still all Halifax. They gained three corners but the Town held out. Result:

HALIFAX TOWN .. 1
LUTON TOWN 1