

Chances frittered as Aldershot go ahead

By CHILTERN

AFTER a fortnight's rest, Luton Town were hoping to notch their first away win of the season against Cup-weary Aldershot, but instead found themselves struggling to save a point.

Town wasted at least three good chances in the first half, and turned round trailing by the only goal. Three goals came in six minutes early in the second half, and Aldershot were 3-1 ahead.

After some of the rough Saturdays we have had recently, it was a pleasant change to see the sunshine at Aldershot this afternoon.

Town must also have welcomed the sight of the firm pitch after some of the mud-baths they had had to endure.

From all accounts, the pitch was barely playable for last Saturday's Cup-tie with Brighton. It appeared to have dried out well by today, however, although liberal use of sand in the centre-circle suggested that some softness might still remain.

Aldershot had to make a second change compared with the team that played in the two Cup matches. George O'Brien, formerly of Southampton and Leyton Orient, who was not eligible for the Cup-ties had already been nominated at inside-right for Rafferty and the other change was at left-back.

LAST-MINUTE CHANGE

There, Renwick stood down on doctor's advice almost at the last minute, and Davies another former Southampton player, deputised.

Renwick was injured last Saturday, but managed to recover in time for Wednesday's replay, only to suffer some reaction since.

On the other hand, Town played as selected, with Alan Slough taking over at right-half from Frank Conboy, who became the substitute.

These days, this is about as close to a local derby as Town can get, and there was evidence of this in the strong following they brought with them.

Jardine won the toss and set the Aldershot defence to face the bright sun.

TOWN'S EARLY PRESSURE

Town began with a promising movement in which Rioch, Kevan and Whittaker collaborated, until the winger was forced into touch by Walden.

Town maintained pressure, but their neat approach work failed to penetrate the Aldershot defence.

The Town were playing Kevan and Rioch as the Strikers, with Riddick performing the midfield role.

Riddick set up a movement

TEAMS

ALDERSHOT: Godfrey; Walden, Davies; McAnearney, Walker, Dawes; Walton, O'Brien, Howarth, Kearns, Burton. Substitute: Maloy.

LUTON TOWN: Swan; Thomson, Jardine; Slough, Dougan, Moore; French, Kevan, Riddick, Rioch, Whittaker. Substitute: Conboy.

Referee: R. V. Spittle, of Caister-on-Sea.

that might have brought the Town first blood. When the ball came across from French, Rioch was set to meet it, but Moore came racing up, smashed away first time, and sent the ball much too high.

Then Town came within inches of taking an early lead when a Kevan header flicked the ball to Riddick. He went through with it purposefully before laying on a chance for Rioch. The inside-left tried to place the ball into the far corner, but it rolled just wide.

TOWN LOOKING THE BETTER SIDE

Town had looked distinctly the better side in these opening stages, with the defence in no trouble at all and the forwards promising perhaps rather more than they were achieving.

A foul by Moore on Walton gave Aldershot their first real chance to make progress. Howarth narrowly missed meeting the free kick with his head, and finally Burton put behind.

Town's attacks were still tending to break down, however, partly because the final passes were frequently inaccurate.

Nevertheless, they should have scored after a shot by Rioch struck Walden with such force that it winded him. The ball came across, and Godfrey punched it off Kevan's head, straight to French. The winger looked a certain scorer but he sent his shot straight to Davies standing in on the goal-line.

So, Town had had two distinct chances to notch the

vital first goal, and wasted both.

Aldershot were now a little more active in attack.

There was a hold-up for an unusual reason after 18 minutes when the referee needed attention from the Aldershot trainer after appearing to damage an ankle.

After Riddick had headed clear a corner by Aldershot, Town mounted a swift attack, only for Whittaker to be obstructed just inside the penalty area. His free-kick was comfortably headed away by Walker.

When Aldershot broke away, Moore was pulled up for foul on O'Brien. The free-kick was well placed, but Swan came out confidently to pull the ball down.

ANOTHER CHANCE SLIPS BY

Aldershot were certainly getting more than their share of good fortune, and again, following a bad mistake by Godfrey, Davies saved his side by clearing the ball off the goal-line, this time from Riddick, who had harassed the goalkeeper into his error.

French secured the rebound, but his shot was blocked, and so another chance slipped away from the Town.

ALDERSHOT AHEAD

Then, as often happens, the opposition broke away, caught Town's defence napping, and took the lead. HOWARTH was the scorer after 25 minutes.

It was completely unexpected. Nothing very serious seemed to threaten when O'Brien crossed the ball, but Howarth, with his back to the goal flicked at the ball with his heel and caught it with such force that all Swan could do in his desperate effort to save was to punch the ball into the top of the net. It was bound there, anyway.

This was distinctly against the run of play and served to emphasise that Town just could not afford to waste their chances.

A free-kick to Town, seven or eight yards outside the penalty area, was taken by Whittaker. His shot was blocked, and Moore blazed high and wide from the rebound.

Swan had quite a difficult task to keep out a low cross from Burton, and in the next minute had to deal with a hot drive from O'Brien.

Dawes brought Rioch down



BRUCE RIOCH put Town back in the game with a well-taken goal a minute after O'Brien had notched Aldershot's second.

on the right wing, but Thomson placed the free kick badly. From the clearance, Town's defence was caught wide apart, and Howarth raced through the gap to shoot narrowly wide.

Town continued to be attractive in midfield, but it was Aldershot who were beginning to emerge as the more dangerous side because of their willingness to have a shot.

SPLIT SECOND TOO LATE

Aldershot's goal escaped narrowly, however, when Rioch sent Whittaker away. The winger's low shot slid across the face of the goal, and Riddick racing in at top speed was a split second too late.

Jardine came to Town's rescue with a firm tackle when Aldershot broke away again, and in these snap raids the Luton defence was not looking so firm as it had done earlier.

The pitch was beginning to cut up, mostly in the middle and at the end the Town were defending.

Swan injured his back in going down awkwardly, but he was soon all right again.

Almost on the stroke of half-time Burton was sent through with a clear field, but when he could have taken the ball on quite some distance he elected to shoot, and sent the ball wide of the far post.

Half-time:

ALDERSHOT 1

LUTON TOWN ... 0

Some scrappy play, most of it in Town's half, signalled the start of the second half. First Town raid was sparked off by Riddick. His centre was met rather wildly by Davies, who, however, made a good recovery, and Aldershot hit back through Howarth.

Dougan tackled him successfully, but only by having a penalty awarded against him.

The referee pointed to the penalty spot with Dougan looking almost stupefied.

O'BRIEN took the kick himself, and made no mistake in blazing the ball past Swan. This was after 49 minutes.

A minute later, Town put themselves back in the game when RIOCH followed a long ball down the middle, held off an attempt to obstruct him, and hit in a powerful drive that went into the net off the under-part of the bar.

O'BRIEN FINDING OPEN SPACES

It remained to be seen whether the Town could now improve on their finishing and save the game.

O'Brien was finding the open spaces quite dangerous, for Aldershot. He laid on a chance for Howarth, who certainly should have done better than shoot straight at Swan who gratefully picked up.

In the 55th minute the Town's hopes took a stern dive when HOWARTH put in No. 3 for Aldershot with a shot from the edge of the penalty area that caught Swan possibly unsighted, and went in just inside a post.

The initial work had been done by O'Brien, and Howarth secured possession after a tussle with Dougan.

This burst of scoring which had brought three goals in six

How the goals came

HOWARTH for Aldershot after 25 minutes

O'BRIEN (pen) for Aldershot after 49 minutes.

RIOCH for Luton after 50 minutes.

HOWARTH for Aldershot after 55 minutes.

McANEARNEY for Aldershot after 89 minutes.

minutes, had put the Town in an unenviable position, and they were not now looking the confident combination they had shown themselves to be in the first 20 minutes of the game.

French raised hopes with a run that brought a corner, but Riddick just failed to reach the ball with his head.

A long, looping centre from Whittaker followed. Godfrey punched at it one-handed, but the ball dropped safely for him. He was much more certain in the next minute in dealing with a cross by Rioch.

Riddick now had a far more attacking role, because it was absolutely necessary if Town were to salvage anything at all.

Town were still having a good share of the play, but apart from a shot by Kevan that was blocked, and one by Rioch that went much too high, they had not a great deal to show for it.

Quite the best shot we had seen for some time came from Kearns, whose 25-yard drive was no more than a foot or two too high.

FLOWING MOVEMENT BY TOWN

A more flowing movement by the Town brought the ball swinging across goal, but the attack ended with Rioch shooting against the side netting.

With 20 minutes to go, the sands were seemingly beginning to run out for Town. Too many of their passes were going astray.

Moore and Godfrey were hurt in meeting for the ball, and there was quite a stoppage before Godfrey was able to resume.

Kevan breasted the ball down and then drove it too high from 15 yards.

French switched with Whittaker and might have had a chance to score had he not used his hand to control the ball.

PENALTY APPEAL

Aldershot appealed in vain for another penalty when Moore and Kearns went for the ball together and the inside-left went down.

With 10 minutes to go, Aldershot introduced their substitute, Maloy, for Walton, who seemed to be dazed. Minor injuries continued. Kearns was the next casualty.

A much too casual pass by Dougan landed Town in deep trouble, and Jardine had to give away a corner.

A superlative save by Godfrey, who tipped the ball over the bar, was then needed to prevent Slough from scoring.

McANEARNEY scored Aldershot's fourth goal a minute from time following a free-kick for obstruction in the penalty area. Result:

ALDERSHOT 4

LUTON TOWN ... 1