

CONFIDENT TOWN FIND GOALS IN SECOND HALF

Whittaker misses penalty chance

By CHILTERN

AFTER a first half in which their complete superiority was rewarded by only a single goal, the Town went on a second half goal rampage which shattered Exeter City at Kenilworth Road this afternoon.

King, French and new signing Allen all added to the interval lead gained by Riddick, and the advantage could have been greater had not Whittaker's penalty kick been saved in the opening minutes.

After the heavy rain of the last few days, the Town pitch had dried up well for the home match with Exeter this afternoon.

This was largely due to a blustery wind which was still strong and blowing end-to-end towards the Kenilworth Road terraces.

At the same time, the pitch still bore distinct signs of the sand that had been used liberally on it some few weeks ago. Certainly the surface had been rolled flat, but it remained to be seen exactly how it would play.

The Town were parading their new signing, Keith Allen from Stockport County, whom I am now told is not yet 24 instead of being aged 25 as I was informed yesterday.

The transfer deal which involved Derek Kevan came as a major surprise and probably ranked as one of the most speedily completed transfers this season.

In point of fact the signatures were exchanged in a restaurant near Lamworth after 3 p.m. yesterday afternoon.

The one remaining doubt about the Town line-up was removed when Alan Slough passed a late fitness test, and John Moore, who was standing by as deputy, became the substitute.

On the other hand, Exeter were fielding the same team for the fourth consecutive match.

Jardine won the toss and chose to kick with the wind.

PENALTY MISS

After a quiet start the Town broke away dangerously for the first time and were awarded a penalty more because of the insistence of the linesman nearest to the incident than anything else, when Wilkinson pushed over King.

A penalty it was, but Whittaker, who has shown a certain amount of deadliness from the spot in the past, missed it. His shot was not well placed because Smout, without moving all that far to his left, was able to get a fist to the rising ball, and as it rose in the air it dropped tantalisingly over the top.

This was after only four minutes' play. It was the sort of gift opportunity that the Town certainly should not afford to miss.

Nevertheless, the Town pressure was maintained with Allen, who was being used as the dual striker with King, finding Pleat with a header, but a quick tackle stopped this move.

Then Thomson nearly put the Town ahead with a deceptive high shot with which Smout had all the trouble in the world in saving because the wind played tricks with the ball and in the end the goalkeeper nearly fell over the line as he finally clasped it.

Some of the Exeter tackling was uninhibited to say the least, and a very crude effort by Harford laid French low.

French recovered after attention and Dougan, failing to allow for the wind, put the ball wide.

RIDDICK OPENS SCORING

Then, with 12 minutes gone, the Town took the lead through RIDDICK. Riddick it was who began the move with a pass to French, who



GORDON RIDDICK put the Town ahead after 12 minutes.

literally took on four defenders without actually making contact with them because he caught them in two minds.

Then he made a dangerous centre to which Smout came out but dropped the ball when challenged by Pleat, and it ran loose in front of goal where Riddick, who had followed up, had the simple task of tapping it into an empty net.

TEAMS

TOWN: Swain; Thomson, Jardine; Riddick, Dougan, Slough, French, Allen, Pleat, King, Whittaker. Substitute: Moore.

EXETER: Smyth; Embery, Ley; Wilkinson, Harford, Thompson; Keeley, Elliott, Ryan, Blain, Godfrey. Substitute: Smyth.

Referee: Mr. H. D. Davies (Cardiff).

King showed some quick thinking, because in fact he was in front of Riddick, but had taken the precaution of putting himself in the back of the net, thus firmly out of play, and onside because he was not interfering with anybody.

It looked as if some drastic action must be taken soon about this Exeter tackling, because Ley carved up French in unmistakable fashion to receive only some finger waving from the referee.

ALLEN "GOAL" DISALLOWED

The free-kick was headed behind for a corner, which was well placed by Whittaker, and caused some trouble for the Exeter defence, culminating with Allen heading a beautiful "goal" from a centre by French, but it was disallowed on the grounds of offside, a decision with which the newcomer patently disagreed.

Then Allen ran on to a pass by King, with whom he was striking up an understanding, and was not far wide with a low shot. When Allen's goal was disallowed I saw no signal from the linesman, who was best placed, and it was entirely the decision of the referee.

LOOKED LIKE ANOTHER PENALTY

Then came another debatable decision by the referee when King was pulled down from behind by Wilkinson, at least a yard inside the penalty area.

Instead of a penalty, the referee placed the ball inches outside the area, and the free-kick was smothered by the defensive wall.

NO IMPRESSION ON TOWN DEFENCE

Exeter had scarcely been in it so far and had made no impression at all on the Town defence. In normal circumstances, the Town would have had sufficient goals in these first 25 minutes to have more or less assured themselves of being home and dry, especially when he considered the disallowing of what seemed a perfectly good goal and a legitimate penalty claim.

Things quietened down considerably for a while, then French, who was causing the Exeter left flank a deal of trouble, came into the picture again to gain a corner. This was followed immediately by another through a panicky back-pass by Godfrey, in his own penalty area helping out the defence.

French's second attempt from the flag was brilliantly and bravely punched clear by Smout in the face of concerted opposition.

MOORE COMES ON FOR SLOUGH

With 32 minutes gone, misfortune struck the Town when Alan Slough went down heavily, apparently as a result of turning quickly, and lay there obviously in some pain.

After examination by trainer Charlie Watkins, there was a signal for the substitute John Moore to come on, and Slough was led off, limping painfully.

Thirty-five minutes had gone before even the semblance of a chance fell to Exeter, and then it was Elliott who made a hash of it by shooting hurriedly over from a pass by Keeley.

Back came the Town with Riddick sending away French whose centres unfortunately were not carrying far enough.

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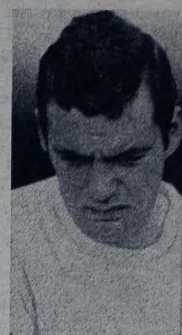
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GRAHAM FRENCH got the Town's fourth goal with a curling shot from the wing.

Exeter activity, helped by the referee who got in the way of a pass by French, which rebounded to the feet of Ryan. For a minute or two the Town defence, which had gone through this match so easily previously, was in some slight trouble.

But then, as consolation for his first-half disappointment, ALLEN marked his debut with a brilliantly headed goal. He sent the ball rocketing well wide of Smout from French's precise centre after 54 minutes.

There was nearly another goal in the next minute when King came racing up at top speed to meet a centre from Whittaker, but was on just the wrong angle, and the ball went the wrong side of the post.

Thus had the Town at last secured the superiority in terms of goals that they had so thoroughly deserved in the first half.

QUICK-FIRE PASSING

They continued to be immeasurably the better side, finding each other well, and there was more panic in the Exeter defence following a quick-fire passing movement

which ended with a Jardine centre that Wilkinson all but put into his own net.

As it was, it was a corner from which Pleat had driven beaten down, and French won another flag kick.

Allen, who was making a very good impression indeed, reached it with his head, and conceivably would have beaten Smout had not Embery been on the goal-line to kick clear.

The goals just had to come. There was another after 59 minutes from FRENCH, who curled in the ball from the



wing. No-one, including the fanatically grabbing Smout, could reach it, and the ball fell into the net for another goal.

TOWN

(Continued from Page 11)

There was a brief fight back by Exeter who, however, were not inspiring much confidence in attack, and it was Smout who was next in action, cutting out a centre from French, who was leading Ley a merry dance.

Best attempt for Exeter came from Keeley with a low shot that Swain stood and watched, thinking it was going well wide. In fact, it was a lot closer to the post than he could have calculated.

Another corner was conceded by Exeter after a joint

How the goals came

RIDDICK for Luton after 12 minutes

ALLEN for Luton after 54 minutes

KING for Luton after 48 minutes

FRENCH for Luton after 59 minutes

Another corner was conceded by Exeter after a joint

effort by Jardine and King, and from it the latter, meeting the ball on the volley, sent it high over.

After a quiet spell, the Town flashed into the attack

again when Dougan came through with the ball and pushed it to Allen, whose shot went behind.

Soon after that, Riddick was injured, but was able to resume after attention.

Twice Whittaker smashed the ball across the face of the goal. Exeter came a little closer into it without ever threatening to score.

Smout was brought into action again, saving a centre by Allen. Riddick closed in.

In almost the last minute, Swain had his first really serious task from a long shot on Blain, which was probably deflected and which used the goalkeeper to move across in a hurry. Result.

UTON TOWN ... 4

EXETER CITY ... 0

UTON TOWN ... 4

EXETER CITY ... 0

UTON TOWN ... 4

EXETER CITY ... 0

UTON TOWN ... 4

EXETER CITY ... 0

UTON TOWN ... 4

EXETER CITY ... 0

UTON TOWN ... 4