

PACKED DEFENCE

Opportunist Buxton snaps up chance

By CHILTERN

67/08

THE TOWN'S solitary first-half goal in their match against Halifax Town at Kenilworth Road this afternoon was scant reward for their efforts, in which they put sustained pressure on the visitors' defence.

Halifax were all out to stifle the Luton attack, of course. At times they had nine men back in defence, and the Town were having great difficulty in finding a way through.

Halifax made changes from the team they announced yesterday, following the signing from Orient late last night of John Sneddon, formerly with Charlton Athletic and Arsenal. Sneddon is on loan to Halifax and went in at centre-half. In the re-shuffle, Pickering became the substitute.

There were no last-minute scares for the Town, who had French at outside-left for the injured Whittaker, and brought in Ryan on the right.

A drizzle of rain began half an hour before the start. A further handicap to a very big crowd was the chaos caused again by the shortage of buses, but even so there was a satisfying attendance.

TOWN EAGER FOR GOALS

Floodlights — necessary in the murky light — were on from the start.

Halifax immediately went on to deep defence as the Town attacked the Oak Road goal. The Town forwards were looking for goals and White was forced to save early on from Allen and Slough.

Halifax, when they did throw off their defensive shackles, moved quite well in approach, but they did not promise much in front of goal. Little was being given away by their hard tackling defence.

Halifax who suddenly came into the picture when Russell picked up a loose ball and forced Read to make a dramatic save, just touching the ball over the top.

From the corner the Town had a very narrow escape. Parks took deliberate aim from point-blank range and the ball was stopped by Read sticking out a foot—somewhat inelegantly, but effectively.

After rather an arid patch, the Town came back through French. Halifax expected him to centre, but he suddenly cut in on his right foot and forced White to push the ball around the foot of the far post.

NINE MEN IN DEFENCE

Whenever danger really threatened, Halifax were quick to funnel as many as nine men back into their penalty area. So far the Town had not shown signs of breaking down that defensive wall.

The Town pressure was now intense. Jardine came deep into the attack to produce a cross-shot to which White dived late, but the ball flipped away past the far post, just too quick for Buxton, who was closing in.

Both Moore and Jardine were doing much to drive on the Town attack.

STRONG RUN BY RIOCH

Rioch tried to improve matters for the Town with a strong run that ended two or three yards outside the penalty area, where he was tackled ruthlessly, and the ball ran on to Allen whose snap shot was just wide.

The Town took the lead with another brilliant opportunist goal by BUXTON after 26 minutes. The inside-right raced down the inside-left position to pick up a long ball out of defence by Moore. He was badly angled, challenged by Hampton, but even so managed to squeeze the ball through a narrow gap as White came out.

PERSISTENT ATTACKS

The Town was settling down now to attack persistently, although they were

not finding gaps in front of goal all that often. There was a half-chance when Allen cleverly floated across a centre, but Buxton was beaten to it by White emerging beyond the penalty area and kicking into touch.

Meanwhile, Ryan had been trying to fight something of a lone battle on the right wing, where he was again tending to hold on to the ball too long.

Halifax broke out with some threat and speed and Hampton, from fully 30 yards, produced an unexpected drive that passed only just too high.

Russell was penalised for a foul on Ryan midway in the Halifax half, and Slough side-footed the ball to Rioch, who let go a ferocious drive that was perhaps two feet wide of a post, with White badly placed.

Another free-kick to the Town came when Sneddon pulled down Allen from behind and this time it was a little closer to the visiting goal. Moore floated the ball into the penalty area and Buxton did well to reach it with his head, only to send it too high.

A change of scene brought Halifax a corner when Read was unable to stop the ball running behind, but nothing developed from this, thanks to Branston, who then under pressure from Parks was forced to concede another corner.

There was nearly another

TEAMS

LUTON T: Read; Dougan, Jardine; Slough, Branston, Moore; Ryan, Buxton, Allen, Rioch, French. Substitute: McDerment.

HALIFAX T: White; Hampton, Russell; Smith, Sneddon, McCarthy; Taylor, Massie, Parks, Ryden, Flower. Substitute, Pickering.

Referee, Mr. I. P. Jones, of Treharris.

goal to the Town just before half-time when Slough came racing up to head the ball in with White out of his goal, but Smith had dropped back and headed off the line. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 1 HALIFAX TOWN 0

Halifax brought on Pickering for Parks at the start of the second half. Pickering was sticking close to Buxton.

This seemed likely to increase the difficulties the Town were experiencing in penetrating the middle of the closely packed Halifax defence.

When Allen tried to make an ambitious run he was brought down by Sneddon, and the free kick from Moore nearly brought a goal—the ball was hooked into the goal-mouth and Rioch all but managed to force it past White, who was injured slightly as he dived at the Luton player's feet.

FREE KICK LEADS TO GOAL

It was nearly all Luton pressure at this juncture, and Halifax had a narrow escape when a shot by Buxton was deflected inches wide of the post by a defender. From the corner both Branston and Allen just failed to reach the ball with their heads.

Halifax seemed to have gone back unashamedly on defence and some of their tackling was grim. Pickering fouled Buxton as the inside-right sought to drive a way through, and the free-kick brought the Town's second goal after 54 minutes.

The ball was pushed to Slough, who drove it through a forest of legs, so that it fell loose in front of goal. There was a terrific rush and finally it was MOORE who supplied the finishing touch by forcing the ball over the line from two or three yards out.

Obviously feeling it was

time they did something about it, Halifax came back more ambitiously and Moore conceded a corner after Read had been unable to hold a shot by Taylor.

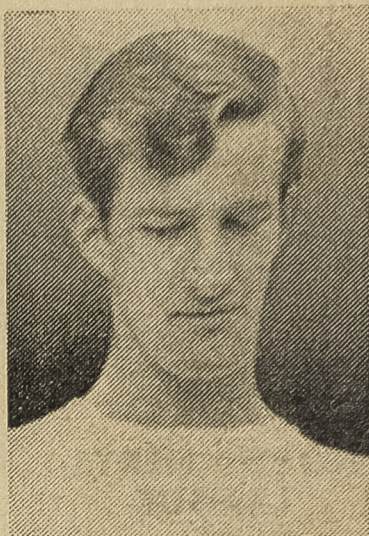
This Halifax spurt, however, did not last because the Town were soon hammering away again.

LITTLE THREAT TO TOWN

When Halifax made one of their spasmodic raids, Read made a good save from Flower. But, generally, there was little threat to the Town goal.

There was a stoppage while Sneddon had his right thigh strapped up, and it looked as if he had pulled a muscle.

The quick, through pass was yielding the Town the best dividends, and one by Moore was eagerly snapped up by Rioch, who, with his



John Moore, who scored the Town's second goal after 54 minutes.

right foot, crashed the ball just wide of the far post.

A terrific mix-up developed in front of the Town goal in which there was a pile of players scrambling for the ball just in front of the goal-line. The upshot was a free-kick to the Town.

ALLEN HEADER HITS BAR

There was never any disputing the fact that the Town were the more assured, confi-



dent team. Allen was unlucky with a header from a well-placed corner by Ryan that sent the ball bouncing on top of the bar.

The Town forwards were continually busy, seeking even more goals to maintain their heavy scoring record at home.

White got himself into a tangle outside the penalty area so that he had to kick wildly away. The ball went to Ryan who crossed it well enough. Unfortunately, though, it went straight to Sneddon, who was on it before Allen could make a move.

Halifax were still managing the odd break away, and Read was twice in action from Flower and McCarthy. And there was one sticky patch

How the goals came

BUXTON for Luton after 26 minutes.

MOORE for Luton after 54 minutes.

of a couple of minutes, which ended with Moore belting the ball upfield.

Towards the end, Halifax were allowed rather more latitude—or maybe it was that somewhat belatedly they realised that some sort of attacking effort was called for.

Result:

LUTON TOWN 2 HALIFAX TOWN 0