

Two in four minutes to level the score

By CHILTERN

JUST when all was looking lost for Luton Town in their second round FA Cup-tie at Swindon this afternoon, two dramatic goals in four minutes put them on level terms. With their tails right up, the Town went out for victory.

Allen headed Town's first goal after 58 minutes and Whittaker followed with a penalty. Swindon had turned round leading by two goals (one a penalty) scored by their star winger Don Rogers.

Although yesterday there was some slight doubt about the fitness of the pitch—enough to induce Swindon to ask the referee to travel overnight—there was in fact never any doubt today about the match going on. In point of fact, it had dried out very well, but had been heavily sanded in both penalty areas, and also down the middle.

It looked, too, as if at least a light roller had been on it. Whether it was liable to cut up or not, it looked presentable enough before the start.

There was the traditional Cup-tie atmosphere, with the Town having a very strong following, and the Swindon fans, who have a successful team to follow anyway, rallying around in their thousands. There was the prospect of a 20,000 gate, although this figure had not been reached ten minutes before kick-off time.

For one reason or another there was a considerable shuffling of the Town team. Largely, it was because Bruce

after a series of tackles had failed to dispossess Heath, Rogers shot narrowly over.

Suddenly, the Town swept into the picture, with Allen making a brilliant pass to Whittaker, who, however, was firmly tackled by Dawson.

Swindon came back quickly and Branston was penalised for a foul on Heath. The free kick brought a corner but it was cleared by Allen, who was back helping the defence.

TOWN'S FIRST CORNER KICK

Neat play by Allen and Buxton sent away Ryan to gain the Town's first corner. It did not profit them much, and again there was the swift Swindon break out of defence which was causing the Town defenders to bring Taylor into action frequently with back passes.

After 13 minutes Branston suffered a facial injury but carried on immediately.

The Swindon forwards were still doing more of the pressing, and were being backed up by Butler, who had a hard shot beaten down by Dougan.

The best Swindon chance so far fell to Smart, who was sent through a gap but Taylor came out quickly. The inside-left did not make the most of his opportunity, and the goalkeeper was able to dive full length and save.

TWICE-TAKEN PENALTY

With 17 minutes gone the referee awarded a penalty for a foul by Hare on Rogers. It seemed to me a harsh decision



Ray Whittaker levelled the scores with a penalty for the Town after 61 minutes.

because it looked as if Hare slipped as he challenged the winger and that the offence was incidental.

Rogers himself took the kick and saw his shot saved as Taylor threw himself to his left. The Town's jubilation promptly turned to despair when it was seen that the linesman standing on the dead-ball line had signalled that the goalkeeper had moved before the shot was taken.

Again the referee pointed to the penalty spot, despite Town protests, both to him and to the linesman concerned. This time ROGERS made no mistake, shooting wide of Taylor's right hand.

The Town's attempts to get their attack moving were not meeting with a great deal of success, for many of their passes were being cut off.

The first hint of trouble for Swindon came when Hare joined the attack. Whittaker allowed his pass to go on to Allen, who was on the left wing, and the latter's shot

rebounding off his chest, but to safety. Now, for almost the first time, the Town had forced Swindon back, and Allen shot over from longish range.

ALLEN ASKS FOR A PENALTY

Allen looked most aggrieved when the referee refused a penalty when Harland appeared to have stopped a powerful shot with his hands.

Both teams were tending to be caught offside, and in each half there were decisions which I thought tended to be sharp indeed.

As good an opening as had been created so far by the Town came when Allen fed Whittaker, whose low cross gave Buxton a reasonable chance, but the centre-forward could not control the ball quickly enough, and Nurse and Harland converged on him.

Swindon broke out swiftly again and Taylor had to come yards out of his goal to scoop the ball from Smart's feet. He followed up to make certain by kicking it into touch.

There had been no real evidence yet of thrust in the Town. They won another corner, and Branston went up in a fruitless attempt to connect with his head. He went down with his second head injury of the match, but it takes a lot to upset this stalwart, and within a minute he was back in position.

In a snap Swindon raid, Terry got a foot to the ball, despite considerable opposition, and sent it just the wrong side of the post.

SWINDON WASTING THEIR CHANCES

The game was developing into a rugged and muddy battle. Swindon were having the more chances, but were not making the best use of them, as when Rogers, from the inside-right position, was left with a great opening by Terry, but shot wide with only Taylor to beat.

Then, four minutes from half-time came a deadly blow to the Town's hopes when ROGERS atoned for that miss by making no mistake, this time when fastening on to a through pass and gliding the ball into the corner of the net as Taylor came out despairingly.

Obviously, the Town had looked for an offside award, but the linesman made no signal, and Swindon had gained what on the face of things was a winning lead.

There was evidence of slack marking on this occasion, which was certainly not wise with a player of the winger's reputation.

The Town came back fighting, but without bringing Downsbrough into action.

On the stroke of half-time, Branston was penalised for a foul on Terry just outside the area, and it nearly brought another disaster, because Smart got up well to head only inches wide. Half-time:

SWINDON TN. ... 2

LUTON TN. 0

Rain was falling quite heavily and the prospect was that it would liven up the pitch, which had been rather dead in the first half.

Resuming full of fight, the Town made a couple of strong raids, in one of which Downsbrough made a speculative one-handed clearance, Whittaker then sent Ryan racing away. His centre came over accurately, but was well taken by the goalkeeper.

Smart got a kick in the ribs when Dougan's foot went higher than it should have done in trying to control the ball, but the inside-left was quickly all right again, and the battle went on with Terry pulled up for a foul on Branston. The free-kick gave a boost to the Town's sagging hopes, or at least it did until Whittaker put his centre well behind the dead line.

Play began to settle in the Town half again with Swindon forcing two quick corners.

BRILLIANT GOAL BY ALLEN

Unexpectedly, the Town got back into the game with a goal by Allen in the 58th minute.

It was a brilliant centre by



Centre-forward Keith Allen put Luton back in the game with a brilliantly headed goal after 58 minutes.

Whittaker that paved the way. The winger sent it just high enough to ensure that Downsbrough could not reach it, and there was Allen running in to connect almost under the bar and rocket the ball into the net with his head.

Scarcely had the cheering died down when the Town introduced their substitute Micky Brown, who has not been in the first team for some considerable time. The game took a sensational turn when Moore, penetrating into the Swindon penalty area was roughly pulled down by Butler. A penalty was awarded and WHITTAKER put the Town level after 61 minutes.

So the game had taken a complete turn-about in the space of four minutes, which shows what an unpredictable game this can be.

Brown had come on for Slough, and it looked to be a voluntary change. Slough had felt unwell during the coach trip this morning, but had seemed to have recovered.

SWINDON "GOAL" DISALLOWED

Swindon came back with great fury, but the Town weathered the storm for a time. Trollope rammed the ball into the back of the net after Taylor had bravely left his goal. There were strident Town appeals for offside, and although it looked for a moment or two as if the goal would stand, the referee was persuaded to consult a linesman. The upshot was that it was disallowed.

The heat was really on now with Swindon shocked beyond belief at the sudden turn in their fortunes, urgently seeking another goal.

But it was the Town making most of the running and they had a free kick out on their right touchline when Nurse pulled down Allen.

The ball went out to Brown who made a full-blooded drive which I swear went over off a red-shirted defender, but the upshot was a free kick to Swindon.

There was not much in it now, with the Town having gained richly in confidence

How the goals came

ROGERS (penalty) for Swindon after 17 minutes

ROGERS for Swindon after 41 minutes

ALLEN for Luton after 58 minutes

WHITTAKER (penalty) for Luton after 61 minutes

HEATH for Swindon after 83 minutes.

this half. It was Swindon's turn for uneasiness in front of goal when Ryan dropped in a centre and Brown nearly worked his way through.

The Town really had the bit between their teeth.

With 13 minutes left, Dougan was injured and resumed with a limp.

SWINDON BID FOR LATE WINNER

Swindon now hit back, and looked for a penalty when Jardine tackled Heath, but all they got was a corner. This was not cleared properly, and finally Smart fired across the face of the goal.

With seven minutes left, the Town fell into arrears again through a goal by HEATH. The movement began on the touchline, near the centre line, where Whittaker tried to beat Butler and was dispossessed. On went the right-half, before pushing a shrewd pass through, and Heath closed in to beat Taylor with a low shot that went in off the inside of the far post.

The Town came back, and both Buxton and Allen made strenuous efforts to reach a centre by Ryan. When Brown was pulled down by Smart every Town player except Hare and Jardine went up for the free-kick. Moore lobbed the ball into the penalty area, but Allen's attempt to nod it across to Branston did not quite come off.

Swindon were having to fight tooth and nail to keep their narrow lead.

It looked as if the Town had shot their bolt because Swindon took up the running again. Result:

SWINDON 3

LUTON TOWN ... 2