

Newport turn round with shock lead

By CHILTERN

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THOUGH parading Peter Denton, their new right winger from Coventry, Luton Town found Newport County a tougher handful than expected at Kenilworth Road this afternoon, and turned round a goal down.

Not until after 59 minutes did Allen shoot the equaliser. The Town had only themselves to blame for putting their 100 per cent home record in jeopardy, for they had had enough chances to be ahead.

For their first home appearance on a Saturday for five weeks, the Town had a newcomer on view in Peter Denton, signed from Coventry City on Wednesday.

He is at outside-right, but even so, there was a recall to the team for Graham French, who came in on the left wing. The reason for this was that Ray Whittaker had not recovered from the groin strain he received at Hartlepool, and John Ryan, who has had a pretty long run at outside-right, dropped out.

The Town's only defensive change was in goal, where Tony Read returned after recovery from injury, but before the match manager Allan Brown told me that he had decided on a different sort of plan that that which has been operating.

That was the employment of John Moore in the middle two, with Dougan taking over the defensive role that Moore has generally held.

A BLOW TO NEWPORT

A blow to Newport yesterday was that their centre-half, Alan Williams, was ruled out because of illness, and this made a place at centre-half for Mike Deacy, who stands six feet four.

Included in the line-up was former Town winger Gerry King; and another ex-Town player, Billy Stark was the substitute.

Considering the recent bad weather and the operations that have gone on, the pitch looked in good condition.

There were obvious signs of the places where holes had been drilled, because the surface had been sanded over, but there was certainly no suggestion of water-logging, although the surface was on the wet side.

It was a dull, grey afternoon with the threat of drizzle at the start, but, even so, the crowd seemed to be in the five-figures bracket again.

JUST OVER THE TOP

Attacking the Oak Road end, the Town were soon away, and French gained a corner, for which Branston went right up, and he rose higher than anyone else to nod the ball just over the angle of the woodwork.

As the Town persevered, Jardine, making ground down the wing, was fouled by Deacy, and from the free-kick the Newport defence was in some trouble until the ball bounced off Buxton's shin and went to temporary safety.

Rioch, from his favourite range of just over 20 yards, sent the ball wide as the Town kept up the pressure.

The Town brought Denton into action for the first time, and his centre was caught on the goal-line by Weare.

Newport began to settle down, and Buck, veering in

that all he could do was to push the ball to Rioch, who was well off the mark with his attempt.

King found himself escaping an appeal for offside, but his centre was weak, and Read had no trouble in cutting it out.

From the clearance kick, Allen made a determined run through the middle and finally was obstructed. Again the free-kick yielded nothing.

FRENCH SHOULD HAVE DONE BETTER

Moore, however, lobbed the ball back into the penalty area and French, realising that he was on side, steadied himself and possibly should have done better than to allow Weare the chance to push the ball spectacularly around the post.

FLUTTER AS NEWPORT BREAK OUT

After that came a quick break by Newport and Buck made a shot that was too close to the far post for comfort.

Newport persisted, and it needed a fine one-handed save by Read, probably the product of a reflex action, to keep out a point-blank drive by Hill.

After this somewhat surprise turn about, the Town hit back in force, and Allen caused Weare to make a mistake for which he did not have to pay the full penalty.

Then, the goalkeeper was lucky to be in the line of flight of a header from Denton following a corner by French. Even so, the goalkeeper fumbled before finally making a safe clearance.

GAPS APPEAR IN TOWN'S DEFENCE

The Town were still the more persistent, but Newport were dangerous in their thrust, and both Buck and Hill caused trouble when gaps appeared down the middle.

One threat was averted by Branston, and another by Dougan, who at one time looked to be in imminent danger of conceding a penalty.

Newport's danger in their

breakaway could certainly never be discounted, and it was as well for the Town that the referee ruled that the ball had crossed the line for a corner when King got away and floated over a dangerous centre.

The newcomer Denton was quite often prominent, and he forced Weare to pull down the ball from under the bar.

NEWPORT QUICK IN THE TACKLE

On the whole, though, the Town's finishing had not been all that impressive, and they seemed a little put off by the quickness and strength of the Newport tackling.

One of the worst misses was by Buxton, who failed to apply the touch that was necessary when the ball came across low, at speed, admittedly, from French. There was not much doubt that the Town should have been ahead by now.

Buxton and Rioch (who had been kept fairly quiet) suddenly came into the game with a quick movement, which enabled Moore to swing away from longish range, and his fierce shot struck a defender, to be deflected to safety.

The Town were very much on top until it came to the point of finding a way through this packed defence.

King brought Read into action with a fierce shot which, however, flew straight at the goalkeeper.

HILL PUTS THE VISITORS AHEAD

After Newport had had a corner which was cleared, Denton came into the picture by gathering the ball quickly and pushing it down the middle to Rioch. The inside-left appeared to be badly impeded by Wood, though the referee did not think so.

Straight from this, Newport broke away to take the lead after 43 minutes through HILL, who was left with the easiest of tasks after all Read could do was to push out an awkward centre by Jones.

Newport were certainly proving far more formidable opposition than the Town could have expected, and they mounted another heavy raid.

Half-time :

LUTON TOWN ... 0
NEWPORT CO. ... 1

Obviously, the Town had to find some quick improvement if they were to preserve their 100 per cent home record, and they hastened to the attack at the start of the second half.

A centre by French looked promising, but Allen's header was scrambled away. Allen then headed the ball in the wrong direction, and then could not quite reach a corner from Denton.

Meanwhile, French was over at the trainer's bench, changing his left boot for some reason, and he seemed to have developed a limp.

A trainer was required on the field for the first time when Wilson suffered a leg injury, but he was quickly all right.

The Town continued their pressure, with Jardine going right up to the dead-line before pulling back the ball, which was intercepted.

NEWPORT STILL TROUBLESOME

A bad pass by French was intercepted to put Newport on the attack again, and King was stopped inside the penalty area with some difficulty.

When the Town began to build up an attack again, Rioch was pulled down from behind by King.

Quite a lot of trouble was occurring at the Town end, and Buck was twice concerned in movements that might have brought goals. First, he shot narrowly over and then, from a pass from the lively Hill, closed in dangerously for goal until he was caught by Branston.

Buck, for the third time was a threat, and should have made the Newport position more tenable, but from just over ten yards, with the net yawning in front of him, he somewhat carelessly blazed the ball wide.

With 59 minutes gone the Town drew level through ALLEN.

The goal was the product of Jardine's persistence and determination in



Keith Allen restored the Town's sagging fortunes with a cracking goal after 59 minutes.

his runs up the left wing. In one of these he crossed the ball low.

Buxton, who was not well placed, allowed the ball to cross him, and there was Allen to crash it into the net from point blank range.

Things livened up considerably after this, and only a great one-handed save by Read that got the ball over the bar prevented King from restoring the Newport lead.

IT'S A GRIM BATTLE NOW

It was a grim battle now, and some trouble developed between Moore and Hill, much of which escaped the notice of the referee.

The Town appealed for a penalty when Allen was grounded, but the referee waved on play, as he did in the next minute, when Buxton was bundled over about eight yards from goal.

A header by Allen rose just too high, and then the Town swung more smoothly into the attack, with Buxton sending away Denton, whose centre was cleared.

Buxton, prodding forward, forced Weare to go full-length

How the goals came

HILL for Newport after 43 minutes.

ALLEN for Luton after 59 minutes.

though there was not the pace behind the ball to pose a real problem for the goalkeeper.

An accurate centre by Denton was pulled down from under the bar, and then a shot by Buxton was blocked.

TANGLE ON THE TOUCHLINE

French and Wilson tangled out on the touchline and an ugly situation seemed to be developing, but things cooled down. The upshot was a free-kick to the Town, from which Branston got in a header which Weare pushed over the top.

With the crowd roaring the Town on, they set up relentless all-out pressure in a bid to keep their 100 per cent home record.

Newport were packing their defence, but had a close shave as Rioch went racing through.

NEWPORT NOW FIGHTING BACK

With five minutes left, Newport began to come firmly back into the reckoning.

Suddenly, however, the Town had a chance to snatch the winner when Allen was



sent racing through with the ball at his feet, but three defenders converged on him.

Both Branston and Moore went up for a corner on the left, but a complete anticlimax came when French put the ball behind.

An all-along-the-line movement by the Town ended with Denton crossing the ball too close to Weare, who was able to cut it out.

Well into injury time, the Town gained a corner, not well placed again, and that was the end of their proud record. Result:

LUTON TOWN 1
NEWPORT CO. 1