

Lively City keep defence busy

By CHILTERN

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THE Town's hopes received a tragic blow after 27 minutes of this FA Cup tie when a foul by John Moore brought a penalty decision from which Lee calmly put Manchester City ahead.

Up to then the Town defence had coped well enough with the lively City attacks. They relied heavily on the offside trap, however — and more than once it almost proved their undoing.

It was traditional Manchester weather. Rain began as a drizzle early this morning and was still coming down at kick-off time.

The pitch was in first-class condition, soft and probably liable to cut up, but it had escaped the frost and snow. In fact, there were fewer bare patches than on most pitches at this stage of the season, and it had been rolled flat.

The Town fielded the team that won the last two matches, and the only alteration in the squad was that McDerment replaced Sheffield as substitute.

Sheffield has not played in a competitive match for the best part of a month, and McDerment is probably the more adaptable player to come on in an emergency.

ONE CHANGE

The City had to make a change because Mike Summerbee broke down in training during the week and was ordered complete rest for seven days. In his place came another £35,000 signing, Bobby Owen, from Bury, who had been in the League team only eight times since the start of the season.

There was a considerable following for the Town, probably running into four figures, and prospects ten minutes before kick-off time were of a crowd of over 30,000.

Branston won the toss without apparently gaining any major advantage. The first incident was a foul by Allen, who caught Bell squarely in the back, and the inside-right, going down in a heap, had to have attention.

Bell was quickly all right and the free kick into the penalty area was cleared by Moore after Branston had headed the ball forward.

Then a foul by Harrison, which brought a free kick 20 yards outside the penalty area, kept the City on the attack, but they made poor use of it so that Slough had no difficulty in booting clear.

OFFSIDE

City hit back quickly, and although there was no signal from the linesman the referee firmly gave an offside decision against Coleman.

As expected, the City were going all out for an early goal which meant some heavy work for the Town defence. Lee, from a fairly good position, blazed the ball far too high.

Slowly the Town began to settle down to play some attractive football in midfield but the only time the City defence was under stress was when Lewis challenged Dowd as he made a clearance, and the ball went awkwardly to Rioch who could not control it.

IN JEOPARDY

A bad clearance by Moore straight to the feet of Lee put the Town goal in jeopardy, but Young, to whom the final chance went, only half hit his shot, which went gently enough to Davie.

Certainly City were looking the more dangerous, and when Coleman sprang the offside trap, Moore was glad to put behind for safety as the ball came across low.

So far the Town were weathering what had been regarded as the danger period. At the same time they could not shake off the City pressure, and Coleman won a corner off Dougan, which Slough cleared decisively.

Over-elaboration by Coleman spoilt a reasonable chance

TEAMS

MANCHESTER CITY:
Dowd; Pardoe, Mann; Doyle, Booth, Oakes; Lee, Bell, Owen, Young, Coleman. Substitute: Bowles.

LUTON TOWN: Davie; Dougan, Bannister; Slough, Branston, Moore; French, Lewis, Allen, Rioch, Harrison. Substitute: McDerment.

Referee: Mr. K. H. Burns, of Stourbridge.

for the City. Then Pardoe came up into attack to make the best scoring attempt so far with an awkward shot that was going inside the angle of the woodwork until Davie got across to make a fine save.

Davie again saved the situation by emerging quickly to snatch the ball from the feet of Bell after a projected back-pass by Branston had not reached its objective.

The first real scoring effort from the Town came in the 17th minute when Harrison received a pass from Rioch. Confronted by three defenders, he tried a deceptive chip which landed the ball only marginally over the bar, with Dowd looking very much baffled.

A good tackle by Moore staved off another City attack spearheaded by Lee and in the main the Town defence was coping well with this early Manchester exuberance.

In the main the Town were claiming a fair amount of success with their offside trap, and Bell was their latest victim as the City persisted in attack.

FLOWING

Then came a flowing movement by the Town in which Lewis was prominent, and Rioch, seeking to control the ball just outside the penalty area, was fouled by Doyle.

Lewis, with his back to the wall of defenders, teed the ball up for Rioch, who hit it on the volley and caused near-heart failure among the City fans as he missed a post by inches.

When City came back again Bannister made a completely unnecessary catch at the ball, two-handed, above his head, but atoned by clearing the free kick with some despatch.

The impression these early stages had left on me was that the City were tending to be too clever and finicky, particularly in front of goal, and it was not cutting much ice so far as the Town were concerned.

The Town were contriving to be dangerous when they broke away, particularly through Harrison.

So far as I could see, the main danger confronting the Town was largely of their own making because of their fondness for the offside trap.

In the 27th minute came tragedy for the Town when they conceded a penalty. Moore pulled down Lee, whose chance of contributing anything effective had virtually gone. At the same time, Moore was committed to his tackle, which was late, and the referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot.

Without any trouble at all, LEE beat Davie with the spot-kick to put the City ahead.

Then there was a stoppage while the referee had words with Branston, who was at that time well away from the scene of action. This was followed by a Town thrust

during which Dowd stuck out a foot to save from Rioch who, however, was ruled offside.

RIOCH SHOT

After this the Town had a spell on the attack and there was a distinct threat when Rioch, played onside, broke through in the inside-right position. But his shot, half-blocked, was cut off by Dowd as French closed in.

First corner to the Town came after 34 minutes and was well placed by French, but Branston, right up in the City penalty area, was out-headed for the ball.

City were not long in making another thrust through Coleman suddenly emerging on the right wing. His low shot, which was deflected, was safely picked up by Davie.

When the Town hit back, a shot by Rioch was dealt with comfortably enough by Dowd on the first bounce.

Then Slough extricated the Town from a sticky position in their own penalty area, and set an attack in motion. It came to a full stop through French shooting too high from somewhat optimistic range.

The Town were trying to make progress by means of quick short passes which were not markedly accurate and they were finding few loopholes in the City defence.

The City began to pile on the pressure as the interval approached, but they were still finding difficulty in getting a clear shot at goal, and the only cause for anxiety came from a lob by Owen which went just too high.

Next, Bell and Young figured in a quick passing movement that was cut off finally by a quick tackle by Bannister running across.

Right on the stroke of half-time the City had a corner on the right but before anything could develop the whistle went. Half-time:

MANCHESTER CITY 1

LUTON TOWN 0

First incident of the second half was the booking of Lewis after a tussle with Pardoe, and again I thought the referee erred a little on the side of harshness.

This was followed by an all-out assault on the Town goal during which Davie lost possession, a couple of attempts to clear were frustrated and, finally Dougan gave away a corner.

During the incident Lee was injured and had to have attention.

Then a couple of lucky rebounds put City in a threatening position again until Slough came across to make a timely clearance.

WASTED

At the other end Lewis had the frustrating experience of the ball being hooked off his head by Booth, and with play moving quickly to the opposite goal Coleman wasted a chance by putting his centre behind.

A bad clearance by Dougan put the Town goal in jeopardy again and they seemed a little fortunate when Moore appeared to handle but got away with it.

What was militating against the Town mounting pressure to any persistent degree was the fact that they had never really gained control of the middle of the field. Their passes were being misdirected to a marked degree.

Something of the sort also began to afflict the City defence without the Town being able to take advantage of it.

Certainly the Town were still in this game with a real chance, if only they could

step up their pressure—as they did when Lewis chased a loose ball which he hooked to Rioch, from whom it went back to Allen whose shot was beaten down.

Straight from this the Town's offside tactics broke down again, when Young went racing through, but with only Davie to beat he shot too soon and too high.

There followed a spell in which City were much on top, and the Town were glad to concede a couple of corners to relieve the pressure. Another came when Davie made a fine save at his near post from a searching drive by Bell and for a time the scene in front of the Town goal was hectic.

Then came a break which held out some promise until Rioch's attempt to find French was cut off, and City hit back again with Davie saving from Owen.

Not for the first time French tried a shot from 25 yards which went far too high. Then French caused an attack to break down with an inaccurate pass which brought more trouble for the defence, finally Owen poked the ball wide, with Davie on all fours.

After this there was a corner as the City pressure mounted, and finally Lee shot wide.

SUBSTITUTION

With 18 minutes of the second half gone the Town made a substitution, Lewis coming off in favour of McDerment. If Lewis had been injured it had not been apparent.

Allen, who had been playing in midfield, was pushed up as a spearhead, and almost immediately he made a chance for French to equalise. Unfortunately, the winger snatched at the ball, which he hit with the outside of his foot, and sent it well wide.

I doubt whether the Town would get a better opportunity than this, judging by the way in which things were going.

There had been few chances for Rioch to show his shooting ability, but when one did come, he was a couple of feet wide with a drive that was no more than half-hit.

At this stage City were not playing at all well because their passes were going astray but the Town could not capitalise on this failing.

Throwing off their lethargy, City struck again, and a shot by Young skimmed the top of the bar with Davie reaching vainly for the ball.

Then Davie did well to push clear a hard cross by Coleman, after which Slough, under considerable duress, had to give

How the goals came

LEE (penalty) for Manchester after 27 minutes

away a corner. This Davie cleared with some difficulty, as he did in somewhat acrobatic fashion a shot by Booth from the edge of the penalty area.

DAVIE BUSY

Davie was now often in action. He went down low to keep out a shot from Lee, and stopped a drive from Young with the aid of a foot.

With the game in its last ten minutes there was no real sign of an equaliser, despite a couple of speculative off-target shots by Harrison.

Then Rioch, who had been closely marked throughout, suddenly escaped the attention of Doyle to swerve past him and produce a drive that Lowd at full length turned for a corner.

Now the Town were throwing everything in an attempt to level matters. A long-range effort by Bannister was followed by a fine Rioch header that the goalkeeper reached only at the last split second.

Rioch's attempts had been close enough to cause the City supporters anxiety, and the Town were now really harassing the City defence, putting

up a tremendous fight for an equaliser. But the sands of time were running out for them.

French had his feet chopped from under him eight yards outside the penalty area, but from Dougan's free kick both Slough and Branston were too eager and were caught offside.

Now the City were unashamedly wasting time by keeping possession in the middle of the field, and were being blatantly booed. Result:

MANCHESTER CITY 1

LUTON TOWN 0