

**LAST-MINUTE
GOAL BOOSTS
THE TOWN**

SENSATION came when Reading turned out in last night's game against the Town with only ten men because their goalkeeper Steve Death had been delayed. Left-back Denis Butler wore the green jersey, but only for seconds, because immediately play was on Death raced on to the field.

Immediately the sodden turf began to cut up with players slithering all over the place, and it was plain that this was to be a test of endurance rather than skill.

Conditions were shocking. Having worked hard to clear their pitch of snow and ice, Reading were unlucky to encounter rain which, in the last three-quarters of an hour before kick-off, became almost torrential.

All the stand seats were sold. Those who had to be content with the open end of the ground were clearly in for a drenching.

SLIPPERY

Neither side made any appreciable progress for a time because of the difficulties in maintaining control of the slippery ball.

so was MacDonald in the course of a brilliant long run down the left, at the end of which he created the first clear-cut opening of the match.

He squared the ball low to Tees, whose shot was scrambled away by Death. Even allowing for the conditions, my feeling was that Tees should have drawn first blood for the Town.

Reading's reply was prompt, because they gained two corners on the right, the second of which would have brought them the first goal but for the vigilance of Jardine.

Davie failed to cut out the cross, and Habbin's header was cleared from under the bar by the left-back.

The Town moved forward again, first MacDonald and then Slough had hefty shots charged down.

Next threat came from Williams, switching to the right, and after being half-checked twice, he got in a shot that was deflected over the top.

A foul by Slough brought a free-kick in a dangerous position. It crashed into the barrier of players and rebounded to Butler, whose rising drive was brilliantly pulled down by Davie.

Then came a cruel slice of luck for the Town when MacDonald saw a header from a cross by Slough smack against a post with Death hopelessly beaten.

In the first half an hour the Town, having set about their task with determination, were at least as good as their opponents.

MacDonald was very much on form, and he might easily have caught Death napping with a side-footed shot.

For a time Reading were out of the picture as the Town gained confidence, but failed to profit from a free-kick for a foul by Branston.

A move immediately afterwards when MacDonald was pulled down nearly brought a goal. With Reading appealing for offside, however, Tees headed wide of the far post.

SUBSTITUTED

With seven minutes to go to half-time, French, who had been limping, was called off, and Keith Allen sent on.

Almost immediately, he should have scored. He

ERIC PUGH

on last night's big match

TEAMS

READING: Death; Dixon, Butler; Wagstaff B, Allen D, Sharpe; Cumming, Chap-pell, Habbin; Wagstaff T, Williams. Substitute: Bell.

LUTON TOWN: Davie; Ryan, Jardine; Slough, Branston, Moore; MacDonald, Collins, Tees, Keen, French. Substitute: Allen K.

Referee: B. Turner, Rugeley Staffs

distinctly of the "crashing" variety, and the referee had admonishing words, but no more, with Branston and Slough.

Then the latter had his feet cut from under him to give Collins another free-kick that caused some trouble in front of the home goal.

The Town were a little more persistent in their attacks, but now they were being subjected to some heavy tackling, of which Allen and Tees were victims.

Hereabouts, the Town began to press heavily, the Reading defence was in some trouble, and MacDonald had a point-blank shot luckily saved by Death.

On the way play had gone, the Town should have been in front, but they had not quite been able to make the utmost use of their chances.

Branson was hurt in a mix-up which Jardine sorted out, but soon carried on, and Reading suddenly sparked into life.

Tony Wagstaff made an awkward centre that might have got in at the near angle of the woodwork, but for Davie's vigilance.

Now, with 25 minutes left, the heat was really on, with Reading apparently having found their second wind, and it was the Town's turn to withstand pressure.

STRANGE

Definitely the game had swung against the Town. This was strange, because not so long before they had seemed so very much in command.

Yet they had the courage to hit back, and Tees nearly connected with a long centre by Allen.

Shock for Reading came when Death could not hold onto a low drive from Keith Allen.

A lucky escape for the Town came a quarter of an hour from the end when Davie mispunched a corner, and Williams, aiming at an empty net, struck Slough's body.

the Rev. H. Handley, Vicar
of Tortenhoe, officiated.
Mourners were: Mrs. B. E. Barton,
wife; Mr. and Mrs. S. Barton, Mr.
B. J. Barton, brothers and sister-
law; Mr. and Mrs. F. Barton, parents;
Miss M. Taplin, Mr. and Mrs. H.
Gooch, Mr. and Mrs. D. Gooch, Mr.
and Mrs. L. Butcher, Mr. and Mrs.