

MAC'S MAGIC KEEPS TOWN IN THE HUNT

FULHAM ... 0, LUTON TOWN ... 1

SHORTLY before the start, Town manager Alec Stock announced that he had made changes in the team announced yesterday morning. These were of a tactical nature, and had the effect of bringing in Keith Allen to perform a midfield role with Mike Keen. Alan Slough wore the No. 7 shirt and was destined for the job of sweeper at the back, obviously a tribute to the striking power of the Fulham forwards.

As a result, there was no place for John Collins, who became the substitute. The pitch had had a rare old soaking, and water was standing on the surface all down the middle.

After an even start Fulham looked the more menacing.

But after 10 minutes the Town took the lead through MACDONALD whose joy in scoring against his former club was only too apparent.

It was the product of a dreadful mistake by Moreline, who, with no danger threatening, tried to push the ball back to Webster.

The goalkeeper was always short of cutting it off and MacDonald raced in and had all the time in the world to place the ball into the net.

BRILLIANT

Quickly, Fulham hit back and Starling made a brilliant save, throwing himself to his left from a close range snapshot by Callaghan after which Lloyd blazed inches over.

Fulham were full of fight, but were being contained by sound defensive work, with Slough doing a valuable job at the back as the sweeper.

With the game just over 20 minutes old, Lloyd was injured when tackled hard by Keen, which brought Fulham a free-kick midway in the Town half, but Starling, showing every sign of confidence, emerged to cut it out.

French, who had not had much support so far, was beginning to come into the picture when he was supplied more liberally with material, and Webster had to cut out a centre from him.

Most revealing feature so far had been the complete soundness of the Town defence, where they virtually had five at the back, and were leaving not the semblance of a gap.

Certainly Fulham were not looking so sharp in front of goal as their reputation would suggest, and much of this could be put down to the Town's depth in defence.

The next chance came at the other end, following another defensive mistake. Matthewson made a bad back pass, but Busby, to whom the ball went, was in too much of a hurry and his shot went straight at Webster.

It was a good chance, and acceptance of it would have put the Town in a very strong position indeed.

Just before half-time Conway, who had been having a quiet time, suddenly broke away to make a speculative high shot that Starling was glad to push hurriedly over the bar. Half-time:

FULHAM 0
LUTON TOWN 1

It was the Town who began the second half the more strongly, but neither forward line was finding chances coming easily.

Fulham retaliated down the right, and Brown dropped the ball just over the bar with Starling reaching desperately for it.

CARVED-UP

When the Town hit back MacDonald was carved-up by Matthewson, but the free-kick was cleared after Allen had a shot blocked.

Then Fulham began to show a good deal more urgency. Starling showed good anticipation in coming yards out of his goal to throw him-

By ERIC PUGH

FULHAM: Webster; Pentecost, Moreline; Brown, Matthewson, Callaghan; Conway, Halom, Earle, Lloyd, Barrett. Sub: Tranter.

LUTON TOWN: Starling; Ryan, Bannister; Keen, Branston, Moore; Slough, Busby, MacDonald, Allen, French. Sub: Collins.

Referee: Mr. C. Thomas, Treorchy.

self at Earle's feet as he was chasing a through pass by Brown.

A foul by Keen on Halom gave Fulham a free-kick which was followed by a scramble, but once again the defence covered up to leave not the slightest gap.

Then, as the Town broke away with a lone raid by MacDonald, Webster came right out of his goal and was penalised for handling outside the penalty area.

In addition he was booked for, I should imagine, showing dissent. From the free-kick, French lifted the ball inches too high.

Fulham were showing plenty of fight, but not much final thrust, even though now Conway was wandering into the middle in an attempt to gain possession of the ball.

There was little in it from the territorial point of view, and the Town's lead seemed to be in no imminent danger.

There was a close call for a penalty for the Town when MacDonald was upended by Matthewson, but the free-kick, for such it was, brought nothing.

Now Fulham were becoming desperate, and Keen headed over his own bar to save what would have been a near certain goal.

Even though Fulham were attacking with fury, there was still no real threat to the Town goal. The home forwards were not being allowed to reach close quarters.

In addition, the Town kept breaking away dangerously, and were helped when Ryan, attempting the overlap, was fouled out near the touchline.

In almost the last minute French broke away and made a shot that was deflected inches wide of the post by Pentecost. This was followed by a second corner which had the effect of keeping the ball exactly where the Town wanted it at this crucial stage.

Result:

FULHAM 0

LUTON TOWN 1