

MIGHTY CITY SHAKEN

By BRIAN SWAIN

77/78 (KLC)

MIGHTY MANCHESTER CITY, a collection of stars brought together at considerable expense to challenge for the Football League crown were given the fright of their lives at Maine Road on Tuesday.

An all-section Town side went close to achieving a result that even League and European Champions, Liverpool, could not manage on the same pitch three days earlier.

In a pulsating Football League Cup replay, the Town did everything but score, and City's all-international attack was kept in check by superb defensive covering.

The Town were so strong that City were reduced to a series of frustrated mistakes which left their own fans jeering with derision and alternatively applauding the Town's efforts.

The game's big mystery was how two teams could slog it out for two hours in freezing wind and rain and not score half a dozen goals.

At the end of extra time with both teams almost numb with cold, and near exhaustion, the two sides were content to settle for the draw—and they will meet for the third time at Old Trafford, Manchester, next Tuesday.

And both sides must surely feel already that they don't deserve to lose.

This second draw was a thrill a minute collision of evenly-matched sides with both doing everything right up to the penalty area without making the best of their chances.

City were left to groan at a referee's decision which ruled out one effort and then to admire the form of goalkeeper Milija Aleksic.

For their part the Town were disappointed at creating the two best chances of the match as City's defence were split by quick fire passing and good running.



● GARY HEALE hangs his head in disbelief as he misses the chance of putting the Town through to a visit to Portman Road Ipswich, in the next round of the Football League Cup. With only minutes to go he missed an open goal chance from five yards out from a cross by Ron Fletcher.

The key to the Town's strength was their sound defence with the back four all helping each other, covering and anticipating mistakes which were inevitable on the treacherous wet turf.

John Faulkner and Paul Fletcher looked better than City's centre-backs and, although City did plenty of attacking, Faulkner kept Joe Royle quiet and Fletcher had a dream game against Mick Channon.

"If Channon's an England player, what does that make Paul Fletcher?" said Town manager Harry Haslam later. "I was proud with the way all our lads played."

City eventually lost their way in frustration as the Town's defence stayed cool under fire, and in midfield, Asa Hartford's flashes of inspiration and occasional brainy passes were more than matched by Alan West and Lil Fuccillo.

Fuccillo had a storming game, forging up and down to link defence with attack, and running unselfishly to both flanks of the widest league pitch in Britain.

In attack the slippery turf beat Jim Husband and Ron Fletcher as much as Tommy Booth and Mike Doyle did.

The game was spiced with goalmouth incident, and excitement, for almost the whole 120 minutes.

Referee Roger Kirkpatrick was carried off with an ankle injury after 12 minutes and linesman Frank Phipps took over with a volunteer ref from the crowd taking the flag as substitute linesman.

Mr Phipps had a game to remember, but City were insensed when he refused claims for a penalty after Channon and Paul Fletcher went down together.

Their anger redoubled when Barnes netted with a



● PAUL FUTCHER

scorching drive. It looked a great goal, but Mr Phipps had seen Royle flick the ball on to Barnes with his hand.

The game's fortunes swung like a see-saw with both goalkeepers having to make good saves.

Royle missed an easy chance by shooting over the bar from 10 yards, but the Town had even better opportunities to settle it in the last 15 minutes of normal time.

Match Details

MANCHESTER CITY 0, LUTON TOWN 0
(After extra time)

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul Fletcher; West, Hill, Fuccillo; Husband, Ron Fletcher, Heale. Substitute Jones not used.

MANCHESTER CITY: Corrigan; Clements, Donachie, Doyle, Booth; Kidd, Hartford, Power; Barnes, Channon, Royle. Substitute: Owen.

REFEREE: Roger Kirkpatrick, Leicester, for 12 minutes. Replaced when injured by Frank Phipps of Wirral, Cheshire who was as good as Mr Kirkpatrick usually is.

ATTENDANCE: 28,254—pretty good on a wet and windy night.

ENTERTAINMENT: Tremendous value with neither side deserving to lose.

REPLAY: Old Trafford, Manchester on Tuesday.

A brilliant move by Heale and Fuccillo made a chance for Husband. His run from deep was perfectly timed, but he screwed his shot wide from six or seven yards.

In the 89th minute the luckless Heale perpetrated a miss which may well haunt his nightmares for

years.

Again Fuccillo was the architect of the move, running the ball down the left, and putting Ron Fletcher clear on the right. His low shot was parried by Corrigan, and Heale barely five yards out, let City live again by shooting wide of the unguarded goal.