

SWEAR-WORD TURNS TIE UPSIDE-DOWN

FOR 45 MINUTES at Millmoor on Tuesday night, Paul Walsh looked like making the second leg of the Town's Milk Cup-tie a pointless formality.

But then his impetuous tongue got him sent off. The game he had threatened to win on his own became a typical cup-tie test for the ten men left in the Town side.

Walsh, 21 last Saturday, and selected for the England under-21 party to go to Hungary next week, looked world class in the first half.

CONSTANT PRESSURE

The Town oozed class and confidence, despite the absence of David Moss, and Rotherham were taking a pasting.

A brilliant turn and rapid shot from the edge of the box after good work by Brian Stein and Frank Bunn gave Walsh a goal in the third minute, and seven minutes later, his pin-point cross from the right gave Bunn the simple chance to shoot the second. With Trevor Aylott operating in attack with Walsh and Stein going wide on the flanks, Rotherham were under constant pressure.

ROTHERHAM UTD	2
LUTON TOWN	3
(Half-time 0-2) 83/84 (FLC)	

Aylott was unlucky with a couple of swinging shots from long range, Stein put a good chance over the bar, and the Town's confident build-up often left Rotherham chasing shadows. The Third Division side almost caught the Town on the break, but John Seasman shot wide from a clear opening, and the Town defence rarely looked in trouble.

But Walsh changed all that a few seconds before half-time. Frank Bunn was penalised for a foul just outside the box, and as Walsh lined up in the defensive wall, he made a comment to referee Derek Owen. Walsh admitted later that he had sworn at the ref. Mr Owen had no option under football law but to send him off.

Rotherham's confidence was boosted for the second half, when the Town used Aylott and Stein as a two-man attack, with Ricky Hill and Bunn trying to support them through the middle.

Mal Donaghy, Brian Horton, Kirk Stephens and Hill all broke forward purposefully, and delivered shots without scoring. But slowly Rotherham made the extra man count, and the Town had to fall back on massed-defence.

THE WINNER

A weak clearance header by Stephens enabled Willie Raynes to give Mick Gooding half an opening in the 66th minute, and he made it count with an accurate low shot from just inside the penalty area.

With everyone defending hard for a spell, the Town were hard put to survive. A shot by O'Dell almost beat Les Sealey, but was pushed round the post, and the goal-keeper did well to save a hard header by Rotherham defender and skipper Nigel Johnson.

The growing pressure brought Rotherham an equaliser two minutes from time when Kevin Kilmore somehow eluded three or four attempted tackles and beat Sealey with a low drive.

But Rotherham's jubilation was cut short within 60 seconds when Stein went racing down the right wing, crossed hard and low, and Aylott swept the winner into the net.

MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Sealey; Stephens, Elliott, Donaghy, Turner; Hill, Horton, Bunn; Stein, Walsh, Aylott. Sub: Antic not needed.

ROTHERHAM: Stevenson; Forrest, Johnson, Crosby, Friar; O'Dell, Gooding, Mitchell; Kilmore, Seasman, Raynes. Sub: McEwan not used.

THE GOALS: Walsh for the Town three mins; Bunn for the Town ten mins; Gooding for Rotherham 66 mins; Kilmore for Rotherham 88 mins; Aylott for the Town 89 mins.

OTHER STRIKES AT GOAL: Town eight saved, and ten wide; Rotherham nine saved and seven wide. Corners: 6-6.

ATTENDANCE: 4,035—Rotherham's lowest of season, and the lowest for any Town match since 3,132 saw them at York on February 7, 1976.

REFEREE: Derek Owen, Wirral—Very finnick, but right in football law over the sending off of Paul Walsh.

ENTERTAINMENT: Typical cup-tie in the second half, but it would have been a massacre of Rotherham if Walsh was as clever with his tongue as he is with his feet.