

THRILLING RALLY ENABLES TOWN TO MAKE CUP PROGRESS

HIT BACK AFTER BEING A GOAL DOWN

Fairchild's Valuable Winner In Late Stages By CHILTERN

WHEN Reading took the lead after 65 minutes in a match at Kenilworth-road that never looked like producing a lot of goals, few of even the most ardent Town fans could have given much for the Town's hopes of making progress to the coveted third round of the Cup.

However, they showed the ability to fight back which might be the forerunner of better things in League matches and they snatched a dramatic victory in the later stages.

READING felt that they had earned a replay and I would not disagree with that, but I felt that they made the mistake of playing for a draw, with rather too much emphasis on depth in defence and they paid the penalty in the end.

What their tactics did accomplish was to limit the Town attack to very few shots in the first half and most of those which were produced were wide of the target.

Only once before the interval was the capable Wilkie severely tested and then he saved brilliantly a piledriver from Turner.

Poaching Of Webb Was A Threat

AT half-time, with the score-sheet blank, it looked very much as if a second meeting would be necessary to settle this Cup-tie because, apart from Webb, who was always poaching

when Turner shaped to take the kick and there flashed into the memory the fact that Turner missed a couple of vital penalties last season.

Fairchild Got The Valuable Goal

THIS time, however, he did not fail, cracking the ball low just inside the post to give Wilkie absolutely no chance.

So the game was right back in the balance and there should have been another penalty to the Town because Walker handled blatantly, a fact that was missed by the referee, but seconds later came the goal that proved to be the winner.

It was scored by Fairchild whose only other goal this season was against the German team Kaiserslautern, but he will never score another of such value to the club.

McKechnie Nearly Had Another

TURNER began the movement and there was a mix-up in front of the Reading goal during which Fairchild, who had closed in, crashed the ball into the corner of the net with his left foot.

After that, Reading threw everything into attack in an effort to save the day, but the Town were not going to yield their advantage and the defence stood firm.

In fact, there was nearly a third goal for them when McKechnie

FOR THE RECORDS

LUTON TOWN 2
Turner (pen), Fairchild

READING 1
Webb

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Morton, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, McGuffie; Fairchild, Smith, Turner, McKechnie, Weir.

READING: Wilkie; Walker, Meldrum; Evans, Spiers, Travers; Jones, Shreeves, Martin, Webb, Allen.

Referee: K. H. Burns, Dudley.

Attendance: 9,047.

took advantage of a defensive muddle, drew Wilkie from his goal and rounded him, but could not force the ball into the empty net before Spiers, made a quick recovery.

Restored Some Of The Lost Prestige

FROM the point of view of restoring some of their lost prestige, this victory was immensely important to the Town and it might well have the effect of stimulating the interest of some of the supporters they have lost.

Certainly, it was a splendid fighting rally to save a cause that had seemed lost.

In the end, the forwards redeemed themselves for a general

lack of thrust in their finishing, for which quite a deal of credit must go to the Reading defence in which Spiers and Meldrum were outstanding.

Reading's Defence Covered Well

IT was only rarely that the hard-working Turner could escape the attention of the strong centre-half, and the covering of the defence inside their penalty area was very good.

Possibly, on this occasion it was McKechnie, who was a whole-hearted trier, who posed the most danger because although Smith used the ball well, he did not suggest a deal of power in finishing.

Fairchild was the livelier winger, but he always found difficulty in getting past the hard-tackling Meldrum.

Pacey Strengthened The Defence

AS had been expected the return of Pacey brought extra strength to the defence and the middle line had a very good match, with Fincham outstanding again and making very few mistakes.

McGuffie did well and there was a measurable improvement by Morton who held Allen, and Bramwell kept Jones quiet.

In fact, apart from the way in which Webb hung around the goalmouth, there was not a great

deal of trouble from the Reading attack. Baynham was not often severely tested, but he handled the ball with great confidence.

Reid Is Available For Visit to Walsall

ON the other wing, Weir went some way towards justifying his inclusion because he did get the ball across with more frequency than Jardine has been doing, but he missed a couple of scoring chances which could have been expensive.

In the midst of the glamour of the Cup, the Town must try to improve their League position, and they have an important match at Walsall on Saturday for which John Reid will be available.

Presumably room will be made for him by switching McKechnie to outside-left, though Manager Bill Harvey has not made any announcement to this effect.

"Own Goal" Costly For The Reserves

THE Reserves, unfortunately, who are very much in the relegation zone of the Football Combination and are badly in need of points, found bottom-of-the-table Bristol Rovers too much for them and were beaten 3-1.

In the first half, the defence had something of a hammering, but Tinsley was beaten only once, but they were much more in the game afterwards and O'Rourke

marked his debut with an equaliser.

Unfortunately, the Rovers went ahead again 17 minutes from the end when Scott put through the own goal and there was another success for Rovers after 84 minutes.