

WEEKEND tonsillitis sufferer Geoff Anthony was at the centre of confusion before Tuesday night's vital Southern Counties Amateur Championship quarter final. The Wycombe winger had previously been withdrawn from the Berks and Bucks squad, but turned up fully fit at Loakes Park, where the side assembled in the afternoon.

In the meantime Wokingham Town's Mike Nicks responded to an S.O.S. call by rushing to Horsham as replacement for Anthony. After hearing of the mix-up however, he sportingly agreed to stand down so that the Welshman could play.

With everything settled team-wise, the Allied Counties, including seven Wanderers, took the field several minutes late, following a long, arduous journey into Sussex.

MORE PROBLEMS

And there too they met problems before an 80th minute goal cleared their way through to the last four stage of the competition.

For a hard, robust Sussex team proved themselves a far sterner opposition than had been anticipated on the bumpy Horsham pitch. With wingers Steer and Sweet as their danger-men, they claimed a larger percentage of first half play than the visitors, who took quite some time to settle.

Sussex never really looked threatening though, and the second half saw a substantial change in pattern as the Allied Counties' greater talent began to tell.

Indeed the latter 45 minutes became the kind of end-to-end combat which inevitably means missed chances at both ends.

Soon after the interval, the visitors lost Chesham United full back Steve Bates with a fractured nose. His replacement, substitute Pitts took over in a midfield role, while Iain MacLean dropped back to partner the snappy Gary Titterton.

ALMOST TROUBLE

For a fleeting spell the Allied Counties looked in trouble, when two breakaways almost gave Sussex the lead.

But the danger past, and Anthony made his eventual inclusion well worthwhile by laying the foundations of the visitors' decisive score after 80 minutes. Swiftly carrying play up the touchline, he drew goalkeeper Swaysland off his line, before centring for Brian Woozley to shoot on the half-volley from a position inside the 'box'.

The goal capped Woozley's impressive debut for the Allied Counties. The former Hendon and Wembley striker, now at Maidenhead, was used as part of a double spearhead alongside York Road colleague Mick Chatterton.

Chatterton tried hard without ever being given a clear cut chance, while, when Sussex were pressing, Woozley tended to retreat in support of midfield men Larry Pritchard and MacLean.

Wycombe skipper John Delaney sustained a cut over an eye about 15 minutes from time, but, with Ted Powell, kept Sussex raids at bay throughout.

Berks and Bucks will play the semi-final on home territory and, if still involved, can also claim the benefit of home advantage in the final.

SUSSEX: P. Swaysland; A. Tasker, D. Pearson (Eastbourne Utd.), A. Lower, J. West (Horsham), R. Smith, B. Steer (Horsham), P. Medhurst, M. Morgan (Southwick), C. Newstead, G. Sweet. All players from Lewes F.C. unless otherwise stated.

BERKS AND BUCKS: J. Maskell; G. Titterton (Wokingham), S. Bates (Chesham), E. Powell, J. Delaney, I. MacLean, G. Anthony, L. Pritchard, M. Chatterton (Maidenhead), B. Woozley (Maidenhead), J. Hutchinson. Sub.: B. Pitts (Maidenhead) for Bates 50 mins.

Referee: J. Cooke (Surrey).

Half-time: 0-0. Goalscorer: Berks and Bucks—Woozley (80).