

Owen gives struggling Newcastle crucial draw

Michael Owen scored a second-half equaliser to give Newcastle United a crucial point in their fight against relegation with a 1-1 draw in a Premiership football match at Birmingham City.

Birmingham, two points worse off than Newcastle and even more in the mire, took a first-half lead through James McFadden but Owen pounced in the second half to give Kevin Keegan's side a share of the points Monday.

Newcastle moved up one place to 14th, four points above the relegation zone, while Birmingham are now 16th.

In a match distinctly lacking in quality, Birmingham were the marginally better side in the first half but it took some slack defending to hand them the lead.

McFadden was allowed to steal in behind several ball-watchers and he slotted the ball past Steve Harper.

Keegan had gone with a three-man attack of Owen, Obafemi Martins and Mark Viduka, but they were starved of the ball for much of the first half.

Newcastle came out with more intent after the break and Owen almost equalised only for Maik Taylor to make a brave save.

But Owen did not make the same mistake second time round when Taylor could not hold a shot by Martins and he slipped the ball past the goalkeeper.

Both sides had a couple of chances to win it but in the end they settled for a point.

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