

Crusader Comments

ON THE CONFLICT WITH COVENTRY CITY

IT was a conflict in the fullest sense of the word at times, the worst features being in the second half, when the referee seemed at a loss to know what to do with some of the players. It began fairly early in the game, when the City halves, the flanks in the main, resorted to heavy charging and obstruction, to hold up the speedy raiders of the Town attack. The trouble spread somewhat, and as Bryce and Fraser each got in the wars it was not a matter for wonder altogether that the Town's bigger men took a turn.

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The Town were just about value for their success, though the City had good ideas and no lack of energy. There were about three occasions when the City should have made a mark on the Town's score sheet, but they failed. Against that the Town not only scored two very good goals, but M'Nestry got a goal that was ruled off-side, though there was some quibbling about it on the terraces, and he hit the post. In addition, Rennie hit the post, and Brown missed a great chance after a thrilling run, similar to his first goal, while Bryce also missed a very easy one.

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The two goals came within five minutes of the start, and both came from passes from Bryce. In the first instance he sent forward at the right moment for Brown to take the ball in his stride, burst between the backs, and shoot hard and low. Allen managed to get down to the ball and knock it aside, but BROWN continued his run and shot into the net to culminate a fine individual effort that would have done credit to a more experienced player. The second goal, following quickly, came when Bryce beat the defence and centred to the right, and M'NESTRY seized and rushed through to shoot hard; a goal was certain from the shot, but Allen dived to the end as the ball was deflected from a defending leg to the other.

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The City missed two fine chances, the first early in the game, when Ball got through with the Town defenders appealing for off-side, but he sent well wide of goal. The same player and Lake might well have scored in the second half during a fierce assault by the visitors, but they failed, Harford having no difficulty in accepting the shot as it came straight and slowly into his waiting hands. Now and then there were hot scenes in either goal-mouth, and, on the whole, play travelled very rapidly from end to end.

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The ground was almost like a polished floor, except that it was not slippery. It appeared to be in perfect condition, but there were other elements that spoiled many fine attempts. The ball was light, and was often the play-thing of a capitious breeze that came in pronounced gusts, and sometimes faded away altogether. After the very heavy and treacherous grounds we have had, it was not a matter for wonder that the players found conditions rather difficult to overcome, and this probably accounted for the many errors that were seen in the middle lines.

Neither trio seemed comfortable, though all six played their hardest, but on the whole I preferred the manner in which the Town kept the ball on the ground when feeding their forwards. McGinnigle is not a player for a light and fast ground, and he did not do nearly so well as in previous games. His best work was in defence, especially in the first half, for he seemed to tire a lot after the interval. He has played very much better on the heavy grounds. Clark did good things more often than otherwise, and I like the way he takes a nip through to accept a pass forward from Heslop. Fraser played finely, and he had something to hold in Richards and Alsop.

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The Town backs were in splendid form again, and Hodgson was quite the best defender on view, though, on the other side, Crowna put up a polished exhibition. Hodgson's thoughtful tackling and sure kicking was a feature of the match. Kingham proved a fine partner without always touching his very best, and Harford completed a rear-guard that was safe and capable, though the goalkeeper had some luck.

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Without a doubt Rennie was once more the potent factor of the attack his beautiful passing and general work in opening out an advance for his forwards being responsible for more than half the movements. I wish he would close in a bit more, though he did so several times in this game, and had very hard luck with fine drives. M'Nestry has settled down as an inside forward, and I trust he will not be moved. His speed and quick thinking are responsible for upsetting the intentions of defenders, and he is a constant menace, especially when he takes a bee-line for goal.

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If the standard of the Town's play was not of the very best, it was good enough to annex the points, and both Heslop and Bryce had their share in the success. Bryce was again on the extreme left, but he was not consistent, and only gave of his very best in patches, but, then, Crowna is a great back. Heslop has also done better, but he is fast and elusive, and does not lack grit. The combination was below that of some of the games we have seen, but there was not much the matter with the team as a whole.

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The City have a fairly good side, but they could not force home their assaults, and owed much to Allen for his grand goalkeeping, and to the backs for their steady resistance under heavy fire.

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LUTON 2.
COVENTRY nil.

LUTON:—Harford; Kingham, Hodgson; Clark, McGinnigle, Fraser; Heslop, M'Nestry, Brown, Rennie, Bryce.

COVENTRY:—Allen; Crown, Tilford; Stokes, Baker, McNab; Richards, Alsop, Lake, Ball, Bowden.

Referee: — Mr. W. J. Lewington, Croydon.