

VALUABLE POINT DROPPED

BRISTOL CITY'S GALLANT DEFENCE

Town's New Player Shines

(By "CRUSADER")

LUTON TOWN	1
BRISTOL CITY	1
LUTON. — Coen; Kingham, Mackey; Brown, Thayne, Fraser; Martin, Bell (S.); Ball, Rennie, Stephenson.	
BRISTOL CITY.—Dolman; Bridge, Clipson; Gollidge, Pearce, Loftus; Hodge, Bannfield, Riley, Landells, Calney.	
Referee.—Mr. W. J. Lewington, Croydon.	

DISAPPOINTED though we were once more by the failure of Luton Town to overcome their guests from Bristol City, there was some consolation for the crowd of nearly 9,000 spectators in the performance of the new centre-forward, John Ball. He, at least, infused some life into the attack where others failed, and certainly justified the enterprise of the management in securing him. It was very unfortunate that the point should have been sacrificed by a blunder by Kingham, but it would be unfair to ascribe the loss of a point entirely to the Town right-back. Serious though his defect, the inability of the forwards to reproduce the form they had shown at Exeter modified the blame that was upon him for the City goal.

PRaise FOR CITY

We must, however, give all praise to the City defenders for their gallant fight against what, on the run of the play, seemed overwhelming odds. They never for a single moment relaxed their vigilance, their courage and their very valiant defence. From the outset they recognised that Ball was a man to be feared, and rarely was he allowed to move without an escort. The courageous tackling by the City halves and backs saved Dolman an immense amount of trouble, and the stamina they revealed, coupled with their resourcefulness, prevented the Town forwards taking advantage of many openings that were created by cleverness in approach, for which, not less than the forwards themselves, the Town halves deserved much credit. Had the forwards taken toll of their opportunities promptly, and swung the ball about in the way they did in the game the previous week, Kingham's mistake would not have stood out so prominently.

We must not overlook one factor that was of no help to the Town—the gusty wind. Control was exceedingly difficult, and while it may be argued that the wind was impartial, and just as bad for the City as for the Town, it hardly operated that way, since the greater handicap was always upon the attackers, and the City had precious little attacking. All allowances for the handicap, however, the Town failed to win because they could not master a rugged defence.

COEN LOOKS ON

So completely did the Town halves and backs master the opposition that over half an hour elapsed before any City player got in a shot that might have entered the net if Coen had not been there. Even that could hardly be described as a shot, but simply a kick towards goal, and Coen advanced to take it on the bounce. At the other end, the Town won many corners, and once had a series of four flag-kicks in as many minutes. Shots from all the forwards were close to the target, but when there was any pace on the ball it either travelled too high or too wide. Dolman's work generally consisted of taking headers, and in this phase Ball was frequently noticeable for the fine way in which he got up to the high centre and deflected it into goal. Once Rennie tried to get in a hot drive, but apparently the ball rose a trifle as he shot, and there was not much pace on it when it struck Dolman's outstretched leg and rebounded.

On another occasion Stephenson had hard luck when he raced into the goalmouth and headed in for Dolman to touch the ball on to the bar, whence it fell the wrong side. Two or three times the ball struck defenders and just missed, and yet again Martin headed over when close in after a desperate effort to get at the ball. Right to the change of ends the Town pressed, but the City held on manfully, being quick to challenge, and, when beaten, showing splendid powers of recovery.

LUTON	0
BRISTOL CITY	0

The City had been a long time finding Coen's position in the first half, but they very soon did so after the resumption. Riley put in a hard low shot all along the ground, and they returned spiritedly. It was a few minutes before the Town got going, and when they did there appeared to be a good chance for Sam Bell as he snapped up a fine pass from Ball and made for goal, but at the critical moment he slipped and the ball was lost. The City went to the other end, and scored. It was an amazing goal. There was a long kick up the field by Loftus, I think, and there was no forward anywhere near; Calney almost ambled in towards goal from the left as Kingham went to meet the ball, but the Town right back then called to Coen to come for it; meanwhile he turned his back on Calney and also went after the ball which was not travelling fast; Coen, seeing that Kingham was going for it, stopped in his goal, then Kingham hesitated and Coen came out; Kingham went on again and Coen stopped and Kingham screwed the ball to the inside of Coen, who was all at sea by this move. CAINEY had come up and all he had to do was to turn the ball into the net. The big fault of Kingham was that when he called to Coen he turned his back on Calney instead of barring the way and allowing Coen to come out and clear, as he very easily could have done.

BALL DOES IT

The City now had more than ever to fight for, and they redoubled their efforts. The Town, instead of swinging the ball about, kept it too close altogether, and though the ball was kept somewhere in the neighbourhood of Dolman, shots were few and far between. Dolman cut out the centres, and the City strengthened their rearguard, and tackled fiercely whether the ball was in the air or on the ground. Several free-kicks were given against them, but they covered up their goal well, and strive though they did with all their might the Town did not seem likely to find a way through the defence. Ball was playing with tremendous zeal, and it was chiefly through his perseverance that the equalising goal was possible. He gave the visitors no escape, and when he compelled them to concede a corner on the left there followed a turbulent struggle in the goal-mouth; the goal was packed, and two or three shots rebounded before BALL met one rebound, and, though he was falling, managed to drive the ball into the net.

ARTFUL CITIZENS

The Town strove harder than ever, and a fine shot by Ball just missed the mark. The City had recovered, however, and their halves and backs showed that they had made time-wasting a fine art. Loftus once walked with mincing steps a distance of forty yards for a throw-in, and the referee's gestures to hurry had no effect upon him. Moreover, the City kept the game open, and now and then made raids that threatened to succeed against a defence that had not overcome the effect of the

earlier error. Coen had a few shots to save. In the main, however, play was at the City end, and continued so to the finish. There was a great chance in the very last minute of the game. After neat play on the right the ball was swung into the middle; Ball headed it over the opposing defenders, and Rennie ran in to meet it with only the goalkeeper to beat; he attempted a first-time shot when he might have stopped the ball and shot, but missed the ball, and it went wide. That was the end.

THE PLAYERS

Coen had a lighter time than in any game this season. Apart from the one tragic blunder Kingham played as well as ever. Possibly the job had been too easy up till then, but he made great efforts to amend. Mackey was safe as ever, and is playing better now than at any time in his association with the club. All the halves were on form, and they gave their forwards plenty of opportunities. It was in attack that the team failed. Ball made a most successful debut; none better deserved the goal, and when his colleagues become accustomed to his play the line should be a really spirited attacking force. Now and then he surprised one or other by a very clever back-heel, leaving a colleague to run in with the defence drawn away, but the best was not made of such opportunities. This will come. Individually clever were Martin and Bell, but the left-wing pair had a poor match.

For the City Dolman showed nice anticipation; Bridge and Clipson played grandly throughout, and their half-backs were great workers and worriers. Loftus, who has always been a clever forward, showed that he had learned nearly all that a half-back needs to know, and he was a fine captain. Little was seen of the forwards.