

PICKING UP THE POINTS

LUTON'S BRILLIANT WIN AT BOSCOMBE

Ball Unlucky, But Leads Well

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN 3
(Brown, Stephenson, Martin).
BOURNMOUTH & BOSCOMBE 1
(Fletcher).

BOURNMOUTH—Mellors: Smith (G.), Farrow, Parris (W.), Pincott, Mortimer, Fletcher, Tait, Farrow, Parris.

LUTON.—Coen: Kingham, Mackey, Brown, Thayne, Fraser; Martin, Bell (S.), Ball, Rennie, Stephenson.

Referee: Mr. F. W. Mort, Mottingham.

LUTON TOWN returned to the form they showed at Esher when they took the lead at Dean Court on Saturday. They played just as well in mid-field against Boscombe City, but had failed to finish well, and during last week there was expectation of changes in the attack. Thank goodness they were not made. The team played a winning hand from the start, and they appeared likely to lose their grip in the late stages they did slacken off a little, hence Bournemouth's one goal.

It was a fitting result to a masterly display.

Bournemouth followers were still aglow with the success of their team at Swindon, and naturally the players felt that they were going to add another to their rather short list of victories.

At half-time it was generally recognised that the Luton side carried too many guns, and, barring accidents, there was little prospect of Bournemouth averting defeat.

The wind was troublesome, but the Town began well by keeping the ball on the move. There was no hogging of it, and with Ball very sprightly, it was not long before every forward had a try, and it was not long before the effect of the wind was felt. Very quickly we saw the effect of the wind, for Ball beat Pincott cleverly in getting up to the ball; down it was nodded to the Kingham found very puzzling, and there was a rasp from the crowd, but Richardson got in the way when Mellors would probably have seen nothing of the ball, but for the slight line for goal, travelling fast and low.

A terrier displayed too keen an interest in the proceedings, and to those who regarded his interference as an omens, duly noted that the Kingham found very puzzling, and wished they had marked their coupons for Luton to win away. Moreover, it was eventually run to earth by the Town wingers.

THE DUSKY WINGER

However, Parris, the dusky left winger of Bournemouth, had other ideas, and for some minutes was the one troublesome factor in the home attack. He had ideas of his own, and he was not averse to a little ball control was very good, but when the ball came into the centre, and Tom Tait strove as hard as ever he did in his life, either Thayne or Mackey barred the way.

The Town halves played cleverly to their corners.

There was another big thrill when Ball was up to the ball, but he had been in possession of every one of the Town forwards, and as he shot, Mellors was helpless, but the ball struck the foot of the post and went in.

This was a very narrow squeak, and there were others to follow, for the Town shot often and hard, but the goal area was well blocked, and several corners were cleared.

Twice dribbled through and then fired into the side net, with Coen all ready for the shot, but it was not in the compass of goal. The home team, however, were almost confined to raids, and with Kingham, Thayne and Mackey very much on the alert, they were not making more serious than take a few soft kicks.

At the other end there was far more excitement, and Rennie and Ball were constantly being kept by his colleagues, and Tait had all the defenders running the wrong way before he slipped the ball through for Stephenson to dash in, but as he cleared a shot, the Irish ball skidded off his boot and went well wide.

Rennie shouldered off W. Smith as the latter tested his weight, and then craftily slipped the ball out to Stephenson, the winger dropped the ball right in front of goal, and there was a sharp fusillade in which both Martin and Ball had low drives at the defenders, and when Martin rebounded on the run, he fired just wide.

Bournemouth's best effort in the first twenty minutes came through Parris and Tait. The former took a pass from Farrow and then lifted the ball well in front of goal, and Tait made desperate efforts to force a way, but after a robust struggle the ball was cleared.

Rennie, who was playing as well as ever in his career, served both wings, and Martin and Stephenson muddled well, with Ball and Bell always ready to rush the defence. Rennie was wrongly penalised when he charged over G. Smith and for a few moments the home left wing threatened to do things, but they were not allowed a shot that was likely to reach Coen. Mellors was frequently in action, and after he had saved two or three shots, Rennie just missed with a shot that travelled all along the ground and missed the post with Mellors groping for the ball.

Pincott headed away when the goalkeeper was beaten, and the pressure was increased, and when the ball was forced again and again, but it was difficult to get much pace on the light ball. Once Ball forced through, and was in the act of shooting, when a desperate lunge by Richardson took the ball off his toe, and it went behind.

Then the Town centre-forward neatly flicked the ball past for Bell to take it on

the run and his shot struck Mellors, who knew little about it.

Next, Martin took a pass, and after outwitting Richardson, drove in a splendid shot, Mellors saving fairly close to the right. At this stage Bournemouth must have been glad they had signed the old Reading custodian.

The Town did not relax, and the Bournemouth forwards saw little of the ball. Mellors saved again and again, and the home defenders could not get a grip on the intentions of the Town forwards.

Corners were forced on each flank, and it was after a tense struggle, following a flag-kick by Stephenson, that the ball came out just beyond the penalty area. BROWN came up at full speed, and Mellors never got a chance to get near a shot that crashed into the net at lightning speed.

Bournemouth tried hard to amend, and when Thayne and Tait had a tussle, the Town centre-half was pulled up for a hefty charge, but Farrow's free-kick went well wide. The Town were soon at it again, and Martin and Bell, with Brown assisting, beat the defence; the winger, however, did not get Ball got up to the ball cleverly.

Three of the last line of defence tried to beat Ball to it, but the Town centre-forward got there and nodded the ball over them; it appeared to me as if it would have crossed the line, but STEPHENSON was leaving nothing to chance, and he raced in and scored easily.

Try as they would, Bournemouth could not get near Coen, and before the whistle sounded half the Town had attacked again, and shots by Bell and Martin went too close for the comfort of Mellors and company. Half-time.

LUTON BOSCOMBE
3 0

The second half was not so lively, though there was always incident, and some accident. Indeed, in the early stages, when the Town right wing was in evidence with sparkling work, the Town had centres kicked away almost from under the bar by G. Smith. Play was kept in the home half, and, although there was a lot of kicking by the backs and halves, the forwards were promptly tackled, and Coen was only called upon because Mackey allowed him to come out and take a loose ball.

Ball veered out to the right wing, and tricky work with Martin and Bell ended in the ball travelling over the left for Rennie to meet it on the move and shoot, but he had too much elevation.

Coen had been so little in action that he appeared to become excited when the ball did come his way once, and he fumbled it, and in the rush had to push it behind.

Two corners followed, but Mackey cleared, and then Brown put in one of his electric dribbles before turning the ball to Martin, who seemed certain to score, but he shot straight at Mellors.

Tait worked might and main to get his forwards moving, and through his efforts Bournemouth eventually put up a hot attack. The ball hovered about the Town goal, and a goal had never before seemed so probable against Coen as then, but Fraser finally nipped in to forestall Fletcher, and by a big kick staved off the danger.

However, Bournemouth were now making their big bid, and forced two or three corners. Thayne raced out to dislodge Mortimer when the winger was making a bee line for goal, but the home team, with their backs and halves slogging the ball as hard as they could into the Town goalmouth, pestered the Town defence, but Thayne and Mackey remained cool, and the danger was warded off.

Relief did not really come until Tait charged Coen before the latter could get a proper punch at a corner kick, and the referee had something to say to the centre-forward, but it was not a bad foul, and apparently Tait must have objected to the decision.

The Town then reasserted mastery, and the home defence had a tough time.

Stephenson should have made better use of a very good opportunity following better work by Ball and Rennie, but he sent wide. Then came more tricky work on the right wing, and again Smith luckily diverted a centre from Martin.

There was a brilliant attack, in which half-a-dozen shots were sent in; the backs got in the way of one or two; Mellors also saved, and Ball hit the post.

MARTIN closed in to meet a rebound, and a hard shot went into the net; G. Smith made a desperate effort to stop the ball both with head and feet, but, though the ball brushed his hair, it made no difference except that it diverted slightly nearer Mellors than would otherwise have been the case; it was a winner all the way.

Bournemouth never gave up trying, and with a lead of three goals the Town appeared to slacken appreciably, especially in the attack. What happened, however, was that Rennie and Sam were working hard in practice, and it was good to see the former lifting the ball out of danger by dexterous kicking, and at the same time keeping out the danger of a strike by Bell or Stephenson. Still, it would have been better to have seen the game continue on the lines that had succeeded three times.

As it was, the home forwards came more into the picture. Tait was working tremendously hard all the time, and was responsible for most of the attacks. Once, Farrow dribbled through, and from just inside the penalty area shot a ball by Ball striking the post and rebounding.

Then Kingham and Thayne went for the ball together, and both failed, so Tait slipped in and sent across the goalmouth. The picture was a little better, but Coen, at full stretch, diverted the ball with his foot, and only strong work by Mackey and Fraser saved the goal in the subsequent scramble.

Then we had another taste of the Town's best. Fraser, Rennie and Stephenson completely beat the defence; Ball and Rennie each had a try to convert, and Mortimer fluffed the ball, and Coen did only just touch it aside; while he lay on the ground either Martin or Bell shot in hard, but Pincott had fallen back, and kicked the ball off the line.

Pincott made a great effort just afterwards; he dribbled the ball a distance of forty yards and then fired in a grand shot. Coen leapt up and just managed to touch the ball on to the bar, and it fell behind—a grand save.

The flag kick brought a tussle, but the ball was sent out; FLETCHER, however, took possession, and, shooting without hesitation, beat Coen as he came in the way.

There were only four minutes left for play, and the home side were not dangerous again.

It was a splendid win, and every man did his part. What was very pleasing was the confidence with which the Town approached their business. Right from the start they showed a mastery in combination. There was not a mistake in the team, and until the game was virtually safe there was no relaxation of effort. Coen has as little to do in the first hour as he had the previous week against Bristol. The occasion on which he fumbled was due to the fact that the ball did not bounce as high as he had expected, but kept low. His save from Pincott was a brilliant bit of work, and it was amazing how he reached the ball.

Kingham caused a little uneasiness, probably because he was over-anxious, but he had a very clever winger to meet in Parris. He kicked well, and his headwork was good. Mackey gets better every match. He was cool and yet resolute, seldom using his weight unless it was necessary, but positioning well, encouraging his colleagues, and placing the ball skilfully.

The middle line did great work all through. Fraser was at his best again, and shrewdly opened up attack after attack. Mortimer kept his rope from him. Brown was brilliant, particularly in his support to the forwards, and his goal was a long-deferred reward. Thayne blocked up the middle of the field, and Tait never had a shot, desperately though he tried.

The defence as a whole rarely looked like being beaten, and I think it was due as much to a slight slackening as the end approached, and the game appeared to be quite safe that Bournemouth did get through.

The forwards nearly, but not quite, touched the form they showed at Esher. Perhaps the most pleasing feature was the better shooting. They kept the ball low, and very few shots went over the bar; either they were just wide or gave trouble to Mellors, who was frequently on the ground. Unlucky not to score, Ball again led the line with great dash and per-

sistence, and his colleagues responded magnificently.

Every man had his share of the ball, and the understanding was good to see.

Both wings worked in harmony, and if Rennie was in the rear of his colleagues, Bell was up, and if Bell dropped to the rear, Rennie came up. The centres were accurate, too, and with a further improve-

ment in the shooting there will be a greatly-improved goal average.

Mellors kept goal well; his backs were overworked, for the halves, triers and worriers all the time, were beaten by the skilful passing of the Town forwards. Tait was quite the pick of the line, playing strongly, and if anyone deserved a goal it was he.

There were 6,000 spectators.