

MILLWALL MASTERED

BRILLIANT DEFENCE BY LUTON

Forwards Rewarded With Clever Goals

(By "CRUSADER")

LUTON TOWN 4
(Ball (2), Roberts, Bell).
MILLWALL ATHLETIC 1
(McCartney).

MILLWALL ATHLETIC.—Yuill; Walsh, Turnbull; Newcomb, Hancock, Miller; McCartney, Alexander, Yardley, Larkins, Thorogood.

LUTON TOWN.—Coen; Smith, Mackey; Brown, Thayne, Fraser; Crompton, Bell, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.
Referee.—E. C. Carnwell, Lichfield.

FOR the first time since the war, LUTON TOWN beat MILLWALL ATHLETIC at New Cross.

It was an amazing victory, and though, along with a goodly number of supporters, hoping for a point, I did not dream of the outstanding performance of the Division.

All the followers of the Town who visited the Den will agree that the honours, in spite of the big score, were earned in the main by the defence. In no previous game this season have opponents pressed so fiercely and so persistently as did the "Lions" after the interval. For 25 minutes it was a struggle between the desperate mass attacks of the home team and the Luton defence, and every man heroically did his duty. The successful raid that immediately followed gave the Town defenders new heart, if they needed it, but it was not until the fourth goal that we could clearly envision victory.

REFEREE'S TROUBLES

One could have sympathised with the home team had they kept their heads, but several members of the side became so rattled by their failure to penetrate that they not only committed infringements behind the referee's back, but also expressed their dissatisfaction with the official himself in such a manner as to make one wonder why at least two did not receive marching orders.

One player would certainly have gone to the dressing-room had Mr. Carnwell seen him deliberately kick Mackey, and the official himself, while absolutely fearless and adamant when pressed by the home players on refusing to give a penalty kick, took far more pushing about than I expected.

Many referees, I am sure, would have faltered and given way to the clamour, but not he, and I should not be surprised if at least a couple of players are reported, for the official reached for his notebook, although in the dim light it was not easy to see what action he really took.

EARLY EXCHANGES

Millwall began in traditional style, the half-backs supporting the forwards to good purpose, but the Town opened out the game better, and were at once dangerous when they were on the move, and there was a cheer for Bell when he adopted the right policy on the slippery turf of trying a long shot, which slithered over the mud, and just missed the upright. Millwall showed great determination, however, and it required all the skill and alertness of the Town to frustrate their rushes. Invariably, however, the Town halves and backs cleared their lines so well that the forwards were able to reply, and, if not so assertive as the home line, they kept the ball on the move, so that either wing made ground. Once Crompton held on too long, when a centre might have brought an early goal, for Ball was waiting for the pass when Turnbull knocked Crompton off.

QUICK GOALS

This open play brought quick goals, for it kept the home defenders spread out.

Stephenson took the ball up on the left after splendid play by Fraser and Roberts, and the centre went right across goal to be beaten out. The ball went to Bell, who shot grandly, and it was a scorer all the way, but BALL leapt up, and the ball brushed his hair in its flight to the net, though whether he deflected it at all is difficult to say. Anyway, the centre-forward had played the ball, and was credited with the goal, though Bell merited the most hearty handshake.

Millwall at once endeavoured to make amends, and a strong rush was made on the Town goal, but Thayne and Mackey beat it off, and Brown sent his wing away. Crompton got through, and turned the ball inside to Bell, who promptly tapped it on to Ball, and Yuill was beaten by a terrific shot taken on the run.

MISSED "HAT TRICK"

The Town held their own well, and Crompton and Stephenson each gave trouble before Millwall started a series of desperate attacks. Yardley went through, but hung on too long, and Mackey blocked his way, and Coen cleared. The Town halves and backs had to concentrate on keeping their lines intact, but Coen was not severely tested, for the home forwards could not make chances, though they were pressing continuously. A bright movement on the Town left nearly succeeded, for Fraser went through, and Yuill clutched a high shot underneath the bar. Then Ball nearly completed his "hat trick" when Roberts cleverly piled the right wing, and, from Crompton's pass, Ball shot finely to miss by a foot. Just afterwards, the Town centre-forward missed a glorious chance; Crompton had the better of a hot tussle with Turnbull, and passed inside, and Ball slipped on the treacherous ground when he had the goal at his mercy.

MCCARTNEY SCORES

Millwall's right winger, MCCARTNEY, was very nippy. He dribbled well several times, and appeared to be getting too much rope, and he it was reduced the arrears. He took the ball through, and outwitted three opponents before shooting hard and low past Coen. This was the beginning of a further series of desperate assaults, relieved now and then by raids to the other end in which Crompton and Bell were prominent.

Roberts and Bell each fell back to the assistance of the defence, but Coen had to make many saves, and Smith, Mackey, and Thayne did a tremendous amount of work.

McCartney shot wide, and then headed over, and the Town goalkeeper was knocked out by the roughness of the home forwards when he had saved close to the upright. Thorogood headed over from underneath the bar, and a blockade of the Town goal was manfully resisted by a packed defence. Whenever the Town forwards got away properly, however, they were always threatening, and only a magnificent save at full length by Yuill prevented Ball scoring again.

The interval came with the Town holding a lead of a goal.

LUTON 2
MILLWALL 1
Millwall pressed hotly from the restart.

For twenty-five minutes there was not even a goal-kick at the Millwall end, Yuill handled the ball once, and that

was when one of his colleagues kicked the ball back to him.

It was all Millwall in attack, but, as they would, they could not master the resolute defence. Coen saved grandly, and was rushed by the home forwards, but got the ball away. Crompton once was sent away by Ball, who kept the ball out beyond the backs, but the outside-right fiddled too long, and Turnbull eventually mastered him. Stephenson also made one or two efforts, but did not get past Walsh, and the Millwall halves and backs kept plugging the ball along to the forwards, only to find them hindered and overwhelmed by the skilful positioning of the Town defenders.

A TERRIFIC DIN

Coen was knocked out again, and free kicks were blocked by the Town defenders lining up. There was a terrific din when Millwall appealed for a penalty kick for "hands" against either Thayne or Brown, but the incident was right under the eye of the referee, and he refused to give way in spite of the home players, lined on by the crowd, clinging round him. Walsh rushed up the field and joined in the claims almost boisterously, though what he could have seen better than the referee is beyond the imagination, and the referee adhered to his decision and gave a corner kick. The alleged infringement took place just inside the penalty area, and in line for goal, and Millwall carried on till the ball was out of play, but then set up their protestations.

NEW PLAYER'S GOAL

The hubbub was continued after the flag kick was cleared, and the ball came down field to Ball. The backs were wide apart, and the Town centre-forward raced well down the field, and as the backs closed on him he shot hard and low; Yuill had to go down to the ball, and it carried so much pace that he was glad to see it pass round the post for a corner. Crompton took the flag kick, and Ball headed the ball down for ROBERTS, who had wisely moved across to the inside-right position to shoot first time, and Yuill had no chance to stop the ball, which travelled in at great speed.

This further set-back did not dismay the "Lions," and the Town defence was again sorely pressed. Coen made grand saves, and the Town backs and halves fought every inch of ground.

Their grand resistance was further rewarded when the Town left wing got away, and Roberts darted through from Stephenson's pass and shot across goal. Yuill did the right thing when he came out of goal to beat the ball away, but he could not get it properly, and it went straight to BELL, who hit it first time, and before the custodian could recover it was in the net.

DEFENCE PREVAILED

Only a miracle could have beaten the Town now, but the "Lions" played for the miracle: the Town defenders barred the way, however, and Stephenson broke through, and a hard shot went right across goal to miss narrowly. Millwall came again, the left wing being prominent, and there were tough struggles with Thorogood, who forced two corners, but always the Town defenders prevailed, and when the end came they were moving to the attack.

GALLANT DEFENCE

No praise for the Town defence could be regarded as fulsome.

In the early stages I thought they were allowing McCartney too much scope, but after his goal the defence was keyed up, and in spite of the very big territorial advantage that lay with Millwall, openings were rare. Indeed, Coen would not have had so much to do but for the excellent understanding between him and his backs, for they allowed the ball to go to him while they prevented attackers getting too close to him. Not always were they successful in this, however, for Coen was severely bumped several times, and in the second half he was once badly knocked out. Smith and Mackey, mentally, were as cool as ice, though they had the hottest task of the season. They played gallantly, and the more I see of Smith the better I like him. The captain played at his best.

Thayne was magnificent, and fair withal. His positioning, like that of the men behind him, was splendid, and his headwork often brilliant. Brown and Fraser were just as good.

The whole of the six defenders could be parcelled together and given the highest compliments for their skill and their courage, and it needed not a little of the latter virtue.

FORWARDS

The Town forwards did not receive so much assistance from their halves as usual, but that could be understood in view of the strain on the defence. The halves did support when they could, however, and the forwards carried on well. Ball had better support than in any game in which he has played. Bell and Roberts, while they were able to do much for their colleagues in the rear, also kept well up, as was proved by the fact that they were able to take a part at close quarters, and a lot of weight was taken off Ball. The latter distributed the ball nicely, and it was good to see him shoot so well. Bell was as good as ever, and Roberts made a distinctly good impression.

On this showing the Town have a very useful acquisition, and when his colleagues become accustomed to his manoeuvres there will be good results.

He is strong and fearless, and though at times rather deliberate, he will overcome that quickly. Crompton, apart from a tendency to hang on a shade too long when colleagues were waiting, did remarkably well, and is evidently settling down, while Stephenson played a hard and assertive game.

MILLWALL

Yuill was blamed for the last goal, but he did the right thing in coming out to intercept the centre, otherwise Crompton and Ball would have had him at their mercy, and he had no chance with the shots that scored. Walsh played a cool and clever game, but Turnbull is inclined to rely upon his physique mainly. Newcomb was again the best player in the Millwall ranks, and Hancock did well. Yardley was a great trier, and McCartney and Thorogood were skilful wingers, with the same fault as Crompton, but in more marked degree, for they usually wanted to do it all.

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