

Luton Town's Two Victories: Brighton Take Revenge

Well Among Promotion Candidates

(By "CRUSADER")

Saturday, at Luton—

LUTON TOWN 4

(Bell, Crompton, Ball 2, 1 pen.)

COVENTRY CITY 0

LUTON.—Coen: Smith, Mackey, Brown, Thayne, Fraser, Crompton, Bell, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

COVENTRY.—Pearson: Brown, Blsby, Mason, Davison, Bodla, Birley, Lauderdale, Bourton, Jones, Liddle.

Referee.—Mr. G. C. Denton, Northampton.

At Luton on Christmas Day.

LUTON TOWN 4

(Bell 3, Ball, penalty)

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 0

LUTON TOWN.—Coen: Smith, Mackey, Brown, McGinnigle, Fraser, Crompton, Bell, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

BRIGHTON.—Thomson: King, Jones, Darling, Mooney, Walker, Jepson, Farrell, Brown, Smith, Wilson.

Referee.—I. H. Wright, Derby.

At Hove on Boxing Day.

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 4

(Wilson (2), Brown, Smith)

LUTON TOWN 1

(Ball)

Brighton team as Christmas Day.

LUTON.—Coen: Smith, Mackey, Brown, McGinnigle, Beck, Crompton, Bell, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee.—Mr. I. Wright.

THE end of the holiday programme leaves Luton Town very much as they were. Grand victories over Coventry and Brighton put them in a splendid challenging position, but defeat at Brighton on Boxing Day pegged them back a trifle. The recent performances have had their effect on support, and on Saturday a big day generally because of the proximity of Christmas, nearly 10,000 were delighted in a manner in which Coventry were beaten.

On Christmas Day was the latest gate of the season, nearly 13,000 paying for admission, and once more the display of the side evoked tremendous enthusiasm.

Unhappily, these achievements were not gained without cost, for Thayne was injured on Saturday, and Fraser on Christmas Day, and at the moment the injury to the side is somewhat problematical.

The main factor in these victories has been the most effective forward play we have seen for a few seasons. Goals attract the crowd as well as leaving an impression on the League table, and in this respect Luton forwards have done well during the last month.

THE defence, in spite of the absence of Reece, has played splendidly. Coen made no mistake until the game at Brighton, but, unluckily, he was the first man hurt, and it was immediately after his mishap that the Albion were able to score. Smith has made a really magnificent debut for Repton, his kicking and positioning are unexcelled by any player, but his kicking needs a considerable improvement. Mackey has played up to his best, and been at his best.

In the first two games Brown played brilliantly, but at Brighton he was suffering from a headache, and was below his best, naturally. Thayne was hurt in the match with Coventry, and up to that stage was in grand form. McGinnigle did very well and was a great help, but not so strong as Thayne. Fraser had a great game against Coventry, but was hurt during the match with Brighton, though still putting up a good game. He did much good work in his game at Brighton, though lacking in pace.

Bell has been the star among the forwards, and in every game played magnificently, and deserved his goals. Roberts' more proved that he is a fine acquisition, and Bell has led the attack with zest and skill. Stephenson played his best game against Coventry, and did very well against Brighton, but was not right off colour at Hove. Crompton probably played his best game at Brighton, and if he maintains his improvement the Town have made a really fine capture. He is gaining confidence, and some of the combination of the right wing in his last match was as good as anything we have ever seen at Luton in recent seasons.

COVENTRY CITY were thoroughly beaten in a game that was enjoyed by the crowd from first to last kick. After a quiet opening, in which both sides showed good football, the score developed, a persistent attack which had the visitors all at sea.

The brilliance of the left wing led to something like a debacle of the City defence.

STEPHENSON, cleverly led by Fraser, Ball and Roberts, paved the way for a grand goal by BELL after 12 minutes, and very quickly afterwards Stephenson gave CROMPTON a centre from which the right-winger headed a fine goal.

ENCOURAGED by these successes, and keeping the ball on the move all along the forward line, the Town scored a third goal in twenty minutes, as the result of a glorious passing movement by Roberts and Stephenson.

The ball never touched a foot from centre to the goal area, the pair heading past the opposing defenders in wonderful fashion, and finally Ball received and shot into the net.

AT the end of half-an-hour a fourth goal came when Davison handled as the ball was headed across to Ball, and from the ensuing penalty kick BALL scored easily. Right to the interval the game was even, with Coventry making desperate efforts, and playing good football, but the Town were on top, and came very near adding to the score.

THE second half was more evenly contested, but the Town held the upper hand for most of the time, and two or three good chances were missed. Pearson made many fine saves, too. Coventry's efforts still held a good deal of menace, and they had him in a shot by Bourton hit the post, but Coen threw himself on the ball from the rebound, and held on to it.

A PENALTY-KICK was given against Mackey for "hands," but, to the chagrin of the visitors and their followers, Jones shot well wide of goal. Near the end, Thayne was injured, and had to leave the field, but Luton kept their lines intact and gained a meritorious victory.

CHRISTMAS DAY

IN a thrilling and hard-fought game, Luton mastered Brighton with precisely the same result as they had over Coventry. Brighton, however, stuck grimly to their task, and, instead of being overrun in the first half, they were hanging on and challenging right to the end. They were similar to Coventry also in the robustness of their methods, and frequently the defenders gave free-kicks away.

THE TOWN were without Thayne, McGinnigle occupying the pivotal berth, but Brighton were at full strength, and were keen to show that the defeat they sustained at home on Saturday, in the hands of Millwall, was all wrong.

The visitors won the toss, but there was little advantage, and, though the weather was gloomy, with an inclination to rain, the 13,000 spectators never wavered in their desire to inflict their defeat, and they were soon urging on the Town.

A RUSH on the home left was held up by King, and a free-kick for "hands" against Walker was sent wide by Stephenson.

The Albion right replied, and Farrell got the ball across cleverly for Smith to clear. Twice Stephenson was robbed when going through, and never play by the home right was failed by Mooney.

THE ALBION left had a turn, and Wilson swung the ball across, a first-time shot by Smith whizzing over the bar. Farrell forced a corner, and the home goal was in danger until Smith again cleared well. Luton soon came back, and Jones beat Crompton close in. The Albion came again, and McGinnigle handled just outside the penalty area, but Brown shot well high. McGinnigle then stopped Brown just in time, and Jones did the same for Crompton at the other end.

PLAY was fast and even, and a great run on the home right brought a centre from Crompton, Roberts heading over from close in. Luton maintained the attack, and the Albion goal narrowly escaped following a free-kick against King, several shots rebounding from defenders, and two or three corners caused trouble. Roberts as injured in a fierce attack, and Stephenson spoiled a chance by over-dribbling. Jepson forced a corner, and this was rushed away. King saving a desperate situation at the other end.

COEN made a clever save from Jepson, and a grand effort by the Albion Smith was as good as a goal, when he placed the ball full length from Wilson, who placed the resultant flag-kick behind. Bell raced through, and Mooney just managed to hold him. Luton maintained Stephenson and Bell each sending the ball across the jaws of the goal, and Thomson saved finely from Crompton.

MACKAY and McGinnigle foiled another effort by the Albion right, and a free Town attack was the result.

THE Town attacked on the re-start, and Ball shot a foot wide. The Albion soon responded, and Coen saved grandly. There was a sharp thrust by the Town left wing, and as the ball came across, Thomson could only knock it out at full stretch, but as Ball attempted to head he narrowly missed getting a defender's foot full in the face, and the goal escaped. The Albion rushed away again, and a shot was put in while the defenders were appealing against

kick against Darling was shot too high by Roberts. Mooney brought down Ball on the edge of the penalty area, but the victim shot wide.

After 42 minutes, Ball gave BELL a chance to sprint between the backs, and beat Thomson with a fast, low shot, the goalkeeper touching, but failing to arrest the ball.

THE ALBION responded vigorously, and forced a corner on the right. Farrell and Brown tried hard to force the ball through, but failed, and the interval came with the Albion attacking.

LUTON TOWN 1

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 0

IMMEDIATELY on the restart Coen had to run out and handle, and then Luton's right went through, Thomson saving from Bell, who, however, later shot over. Thomson twice got the ball away in a hurry, and the Albion goal had narrow escapes as shot after shot rebounded from defenders. Coen again saved finely when Jepson raced away and centred. Beautiful passing all along the Albion front line had the home defence in trouble, but Mackey cleared, and Luton went away.

THEN Crompton slipped a nice pass inside, and BELL shot a magnificent goal from 20 yards, the ball flashing into the net like lightning.

Thomson started splendidly in furious assaults, and then in a quick thrust on the Albion right Jepson centred and Coen made a marvellous save from Smith. Luton again saved grandly from Thomson again saved grandly from Roberts. The Albion right replied, Coen saving at full length from Farrell.

LUTON responded hotly, and when Crompton centred, Jones handled, and BALL scored from the penalty kick. Walker was injured and on the ground at the time of the handling incident, and Jones was lucky to escape another penalty just afterwards.

Wilson received a sweeping pass from Jepson and turned to shoot, but Coen came out and courageously spoiled him at the expense of a fruitless corner.

LUTON attacked hotly, and Thomson made great saves from Ball and Roberts, and then in a quick thrust on the Albion right Jepson centred, and again and again were very aggressive. When Wilson and Smith got away, they were beaten by Luton's Smith, and in a return shot Farrell put wide twice from long range.

THE pace had been terrific, but slowed down as the end approached. Wilson forced a corner, and Brown headed behind. Brown after he had beaten the Albion.

Then Luton forced a corner on the left, and after the ball had been twice beaten out, BELL scored his third goal with a terrific shot from 15 yards' range.

THE Albion raced away from the kick-off, Coen turning the ball in a splendid upright by a brilliant save at full length. Before the kick could be taken the whistle sounded the cessation of hostilities.

LUTON 4

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 0

ON BOXING DAY

BRIGHTON, able to field the side that had done so well at Luton, proved a different proposition on their own ground, but there would probably have been a different result if Luton had been able to field their strongest side, and if Coen had not been hurt early on.

BRIGHTON are evidently very much of a home side, and they set about their business without much of the spirit of goodwill. Play was very vigorous, and two or three of the home side, notably Brown and Smith, were intent upon doing their job successfully whatever happened.

IT was very unfortunate for the Town that they had to take the field without Fraser, who had the brown and black back played centre-half in a gruelling game the previous day, though it must not be inferred that he was responsible for the defeat. By no means, but against a forward line that produced the same degree of craft—and it was not small—as at Luton, and about ten times as much dash and energy, often amounting to roughness, the Town defence wilted badly. The forwards played well, especially the right wing, and the ball did not run too kindly for them.

WEATHER was dull, and there had been very heavy rain during the day, and the night. Although well-turfed, and apparently in splendid condition, the ground was very soft. Mackey lost the toss, but there was not much advantage. The first Albion player to touch the ball was the goalkeeper, who picked up from a long kick by Stephenson and cleared. The Town right made headway: Crompton was cleverly stopped by Jones, whom he beat nearly just afterwards, only to send behind. Jones and Crompton had three tussles early on, and the back showed up prominently with fine tackling.

WILSON made a chance for Brown, but the home centre-forward could not overtake a fast-moving ball Beck and his left wing made progress, but Mooney got the way of Roberts' centre. Coen had to save twice in quick succession, and Smith was conspicuous with good tackling. Then the Town right wing, who were getting a lot of the play, went away, and Thomson made a very good save high up from Crompton.

THE Albion rushed to the other end, and Coen saved a fast ground shot from Brown, and two corners followed, but the Town broke away. Beck and his wing did well, and Stephenson was given a chance, but sent well wide. A furious attack by the Albion brought Coen out, and as he saved, he was rushed by Brown, who was knocked out, sustaining also an injury to a leg. He resumed after attention, but was limping badly.

CROMPTON forced a corner off Mooney, and placed the flag-kick well, but Thomson caught the ball and headed through a crowd of players to clear. Up to this stage, the Town were holding their own very well, and the home defence was hard pressed. More good work by Beck enabled Roberts to take a shot, but he was out of his reckoning by about a foot. Crompton broke through and centred splendidly, but Roberts' header was well saved.

THE Albion replied with a raid on the right wing, and when Jepson got the ball and swung it across, there were misses both by Luton's Brown and Smith, and as a result, WILSON bored in and beat Coen with a grand swerving cross-shot that set the terraces alight with enthusiasm. From was after 17 minutes' play, and the home team were spurred on to further effort, Brown breaking through to skim the bar with a splendid drive.

THE Town replied with a neat movement on the right, and from Crompton's pass, Bell shot in splendidly, the ball striking the upright to rebound wide. Luck was with the Albion when Brown raced after a loose ball on the right: it was well over the line, but the player retrieved it and centred, Coen let the ball slip through his hands, and Smith was so surprised that he failed to clear, and WILSON merely had to tap the ball into the net.

THUS the Albion were two goals up after 25 minutes, and they were eager for more. Coen saved from Wilson, and when the Town made a reply on the left, Stephenson failed to get the ball across. Smith made a clever clearance, but the Albion came back and Coen brilliantly saved from Wilson. The Albion were now on top, and the Town halves were unable to hold the opposition, Wilson, especially, getting a lot of liberty.

BALL had no help when he got away, and his effort from a difficult angle, went behind. McGinnigle saved the Town goal when the defence was scattered, and immediately afterwards Bell sent through a beautiful pass for BALL to take in his stride; he outdistanced the backs, and as Thomson rushed from goal, the Town centre-forward cleverly lifted the ball over his head, and it fell into the net for a fine goal.

THE Town came again, and Thomson saved twice in good style, but from a move on the Town left the ball was middle, and the Albion goal had a narrow escape as Bell met a running ball and shot hard and low past Thomson, but King saved with a foot, and the ball rebounded. The Albion returned to the assault, but were beaten off just before the whistle.

LUTON TOWN 2

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 1

THE Town attacked on the re-start, and Ball shot a foot wide. The Albion soon responded, and Coen saved grandly. There was a sharp thrust by the Town left wing, and as the ball came across, Thomson could only knock it out at full stretch, but as Ball attempted to head he narrowly missed getting a defender's foot full in the face, and the goal escaped. The Albion rushed away again, and a shot was put in while the defenders were appealing against

Brown: the referee ignored the appeal, and Coen was hustled by BROWN, who got the ball into the net.

STRAIGHTWAY from the kick-off, the Town went through, and Roberts dribbled through, only to miss by inches. He came again a moment later, and scored the bar with a fine effort, and Crompton did the same after a grand run, in which he tricked three opponents.

BROWN and Mackey were spoken to by the referee, and then Crompton broke clean through, but finished badly. Coen made another great save at full length, and Smith the Albion inside-left, was admonished for kicking the goalkeeper, who was on the ground. A very good try by Durling skinned the bar, and the Albion pressed hotly, and Coen saved magnificently, his colleagues failing to kick the heavy ball very far.

CROMPTON got through and forced a lowing fine play by Beck, the Albion goal had a narrow shave, the ball eventually being rushed away. They came again, and Bell rummied in an express drive, for Thomson to save brilliantly. To this the Albion replied with a goal, Jepson got well away and pressed, and their poor identity kicking was an advantage to the home forwards who still showed plenty of spirit. A rush by the Town followed, and Thomson saved a header from Bell, and then made a great save from the same player after a splendid bit of combination by Crompton and Bell. Then Roberts dribbled past three opponents and was clear for a shot when his legs were whipped from under him, but the referee refused the appeal for a penalty.

PLAY was very quiet after this, both teams having had about enough, and the next came with the Albion worth winners. There were nearly 13,000 spectators.