BURNLEY PREVAIL : LUTON TOWN FAIL IN SECOND HALF

DEFENSIVE ERRORS

(By "CRUSADER")

BURNLEY 3
Smith (C.), Hancock, Brown (G.)
LUTON TOWN 1
Stephenson.

BURNLEY.—Scott; Richmond, Waterfield; Brown (J.), Smith (W.), Robinson; Hancock, Brown (G.), Smith (C.), Hornby, Downes.

LUTON TOWN.—Coen; Smith, Thayne; Brown, McGinnigle, Fraser, Crompton, Bell, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee.—Mr. H. N. Mee, Nottingham.

LUTON TOWN were dismissed from the F.A. Cup Competition for this season simply because of misfortune. To BURNLEY must be given full meed of praise for success, but there will never be any doubt in my mind that the misfortunes suffered during the last three or four weeks were a much bigger factor than the skill of the winning side.

If Luton Town could have fielded the side that did duty at Chelsea, or even the team that conquered the "Pensioners" in the replay, I feel sure they would have won through.

It must not be misconstrued that I do not appreciate the wholehearted efforts made by every player, but there was lacking from the rearguard just that spirit, so difficult to define, which can turn the edge of the fiercest attack, and marshal a side effectively.

If I say that each of Burnley's goals should have been prevented, I do not detracting from the effectiveness of the winners. Coen, who has given such brilliant service, was largely responsible, but I think there was a general uncertainty in the rear that reacted upon him more than any other, shaking his confidence almost from the start. He had no more and not such difficult work as he had at Stamford Bridge, but always gave the impression that he could not rely upon the men in front of him, which was completely in contrast to what we saw at Stamford Bridge, and, indeed, in all the hardest games we have seen.

STRANGE REVERSAL

It was strange that the team should hold its own so splendidly for half the game when conditions were all against them, and wheat, as certainly appeared at half-time, they seemed all set for success, fail to assert even equality with a side they had kept almost subdued.

These distractions, however, make the game, and to Burnley must go full marks for their courage and determination to pull the game round; accomplished largely by a change of tactics, and the ability to take advantage of the cracks in the armour of the opposition.

Just how far the conditions of the first half handicapped the Town team would be difficult to estimate. They faced a wind that chilled to the bone, and, on the strange and heavy ground, very heavy, indeed, they did magnificently to stand level at the interval.

So finely had the Town played that everywhere behind the scenes, as well as among the crowd generally, the opinion was held that they were going to win easily.

Evidently, the Burnley players were lectured wisely during the rest, for they came out determined to dictate the course of the game, and did it successfully.

GIVE AND TAKE

Crompton and Bell were early prominent, but Waterfield cleared, and the home right advanced, and two or three times the ball was dropped near the Town goal, but Thayne and McGinnigle were quick to get it away. The Town right again made progress, and Ball raced over to the wing and centred splendidly right across goal, Stephenson missing the ball as he rushed in for a first-time shot. Richmond was troubled by Stephenson, but Burnley were much in earnest when they got going, and C. Smith sent wide when he had an opening, though Coen had the ball covered. The Town challenged again, Stephenson and Roberts being clever, and Ball was active in drawing the defence.

FIRST GOAL

Thayne, by fine positioning, prevented G. Brown from shooting, and Tom Smith would not let Downes through on the other flank. C. Smith, however, was a big lump of a fellow, and there was always anxiety in the Town rear when he tried a rush. Ball and Bell took advantage of clever work by Billy Brown, and Scott had to handle quickly. A return visit was stopped by Richmond, who lunged the ball well down the field; it was helped on by Hornby, but there would have been no danger had the Town defenders been watchful enough of C. Smith.

Coen, Thayne, and McGinnigle appeared to leave the ball to each other, and C. SMITH dashed among them, got there just before Coen could pick up the ball, and, throwing out a leg, screwed the ball past the goalkeeper, and it trickled over the line into the net. The goal came because no Town player was paying the attention to the home centre-forward that was his due.

THE REPLY

Burnley, having tasted success, went all out for more, and their right wing made energetic thrusts, with G. Brown feeding Hancock with neat passes. Thayne, McGinnigle, and Fraser did grand work, and the last-named player paved the way for a move by Stephenson. The latter was checked, and G. Brown swept the ball over to the left, but Tom Smith held up Downes.

Crompton then nipped inside, and swept the ball over to the left; Stephenson gathered and dribbled inside and onwards; there was a rush for him, and a mix-up, in which Stephenson was dispossessed.

Bell got the ball, only to be tackled immediately; it went back to STEPHENSON, who took it in his stride, and swept in a glorious shot which gave Scott no chance, and landed high in the net.

TOWN PLAY WELL

Once more the Town defence was taxed, and Coen had to save two or three times, and once snatched the ball from C. Smith's head just in time. The Town replied strongly, and the home goal was in danger. Crompton was stopped by Waterfield, and, in a rush to the other end, Coen once kicked the ball against the energetic centre-forward, and the ball swerved right across the Town goal. Had any Burnley player been at hand, there must have been a goal, but Thayne got there first and cleared. Crompton and Bell again made play, and, with Bell helping, the home goal was in danger; but Scott cleared. They came again, Ball and Stephenson making the play, and the centre-forward passed for Roberts to shoot hard, Scott saving grandly.

WORST FOUL

Stephenson was doing bright things, and, from a free-kick, taken by Fraser, he slipped through, and put the ball across the goal; Bell snapped it up, and tried to rush it through, but he was checked within three yards of goal. McGinnigle took care of C. Smith in another desperate effort by the home inside forwards, and Coen cleared from Downes and Hancock. Two or three free kicks were given against each side, and Stephenson accepted a pass from Roberts, and, with the home defence scattered beat Richmond easily, but the latter brought the winger down with a very bad foul, the worst so far of the match. Had the referee seen it, he would probably have taken much more drastic action than a free kick, and, as it was he consulted the linesman, who, apparently, was unable to throw light on the affair, though thousands of spectators could have done so.

SCOTT'S SAVE

The Town began to hit back with the result that there were several free-kicks, and the Town goal was endangered. The Town set up another hot assault, and, following centres from each wing, a goal appeared certain, as Roberts and Ball rushed Scott, for the custodian dropped the ball, and Richmond booted it away from the line. Just afterwards Crompton and Bell, co-operating with Billy Brown, took the ball through, and Ball accepted the centre; as he was tackled, he deftly slipped the ball aside for Roberts to take it in his stride and shoot low for the corner of the goal, but Scott dived across and effected a great save. Hancock was racing through at the other end, when McGinnigle brought him down just outside the penalty area, but the free-kick was cleared with difficulty, and the interval came with the score:

BURNLEY	1
LUTON	1

In the first five minutes after the re-start there were half a dozen throws-in on the Burnley left flank. Hornby and Downes were persistent, and the Burnley forwards and halves showed that they had changed their methods, for they went in for first-time kicking and long passing. Coen had to handle several times before the Town forwards got in a really good move, and then Scott was not troubled. Bell picked up a loose ball and went hard for goal, but was fouled by Robinson, and Ball took on from the free-kick, but shot well over.

BURNLEY AHEAD

Burnley struck back strongly, and Coen was tested by G. Brown and Hancock. The Town left wing came again, and twice in quick succession Scott had to tip the ball over the bar. The home left then got through again, and Smith failed to get the ball away from Hornby, who sent it across goal; Coen went down for it, and seemed to have it secure, but in a scuffle he was dispossessed by C. Smith and G. Brown, and the ball rolled across goal for HANCOCK to kick through at close quarters.

The Town rallied, and Fraser worked brilliantly to regain equality. Stephenson was often prominent, and he ran through and dropped the ball squarely across goal, but the inside forwards failed to gather it, and Crompton was beaten by Waterfield when he took on. Again Fraser forced play and Bell accepted a pass and dribbled over to the left to try a hard drive, which passed right across goal, but there was none up to complete the effort.

BURNLEY'S THIRD

McGinnigle fell back, and his foresight prevented Hancock getting through, and then Fraser also got the ball away nicely. Billy Brown dribbled well just afterwards, but Crompton was forestalled by Waterfield, and play was returned. J. Brown was more successful for his side, for he made a move up the middle, and then sent the ball to the right.

Hancock drove over a centre, and Coen tried to fist the ball away; whether he touched it or not was not clear, but there was a scramble in the Town goal area, and G. BROWN promptly seized an opportunity to shoot into the net.

Burnley were now on top, and playing strongly, but the Town replied, and Roberts and Ball worked a good move, but Bell was not quick enough to outwit Waterfield. Crompton forced a corner, but this was got away, and then Roberts tried hard to bore through, but he was held off while Scott cleared. Burnley swept through again, and Smith and Thayne staved off a warm attack, and Coen saved from Downes and Hornby in quick succession.

TOWN'S RALLY

Luton rallied again, and Ball beat the defence and slipped the ball to the right, but Crompton's hard drive struck a defender, and a minute later the outside-right got the better of Waterfield and ran in, but the ball skidded off his foot and went behind. Burnley concentrated on defence, and Crompton forced another corner, but the flag-kick was cleared, and in another rush, Bell shot strongly, but just too high. There was a stoppage when both Tom Smith and Robinson had to receive repairs, apparently through heading the heavy ball.

When play was re-started, Crompton took hold and beat two or three opponents before smashing in a tremendous shot which Scott saved in thrilling fashion by diverting the ball just enough to send it against the bar, whence it rebounded.

Burnley gained a respite when their forwards moved up again, with G. Brown doing the donkey work, and Coen was fortunate to see the ball got away. The Town returned, but were well held, and the end came with the home team deserving success.

DEFENCE

I hesitate to say that Coen had an "off" day, although that is probably how most people would describe it, but the stability of the defence generally was shaken by the changes. Thayne by no means let down the side in his new position. Indeed, in the first half, he was a powerful factor in stopping the rushes of the home forwards. Smith tackled well enough again, but still his kicking was weak. Of McGinnigle, too, it could be said as of Thayne, for he played hard and well, and the fairest way to sum up the matter would be to say that there was a lack of collective confidence.

ATTACK

Brown and Fraser did splendid work, the latter made valiant efforts to recover the lost ground in the second half. They gave their forwards opportunities, although they had to do more work in defence than usually falls to them.

The Town left-wing pair have not played better since their first association, December 15.

Roberts played his best game, and some of his touches were classic; he was unlucky when he failed to score just before time, for the ball stuck between his feet in the mud and he had difficulty in getting a shot at all. Stephenson also played finely even after he had received a crack that crippled him. Ball led the line well, though he was shadowed very closely by W. Smith, but the work of the right wing was somewhat patchy. Bell was not so spry as usual, and Crompton had not a good day against his old colleagues.

BURNLEY

For Burnley, Scott proved himself a capable custodian. Richmond was a splendid back, but he was lucky to get away with it when he fouled Stephenson. Waterfield was reliable and cool. The halves were hard workers, with J. Brown the cleverest, and G. Brown was the craftsman of the side. C. Smith could not be claimed as a leader in the ordinary sense of the word, but he was always quick to seize a chance, and it was this disconcerting rush of his that brought the three goals, though he only scored one.

There was no personality on the field to eclipse the referee. He was firm without being showy, and though he may have been at fault once or twice, he was probably the best referee we have had for years.

The attendance was 26,727, and the receipts £1,497.