

LUTON'S RALLY

EARNED A POINT WHEN GAME SEEMED LOST

Lack of Team Work

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	2
Ball, Finlayson	
CARDIFF CITY	2
Diamond (2)	

LUTON.—Coen; Kingham, Smith; Finlayson, Fellowes, McGinnigie; Crompton, Beresford, Ball, Stephenson, Turner.

CARDIFF.—Leckie, Bassett, Everest; Godfrey, Mort, Smith; Pugh, Roper, Diamond, Riley, Roberts.

Referee: G. Dutton, Warwick.

THIS was just about the worst match we have had this season on the Luton ground. Both teams worked hard, but with little idea of employing the finer arts of the game, and for the most part it was a kick-and-rush affair, with little constructive football, and the cleverer team being rattled and worried because they could not overcome a rugged and determined opposition.

It is a long time since Luton gave such a crude display, and after their splendid fight at Reading it came as a great disappointment to the followers. It was painful to see the ineptitude of the forwards, while the defenders were evidently in constant fear of what might happen. There was almost an entire absence of understanding between the departments and the middle line, if not failing badly, seemed slow in defence, and the assistance they gave the forwards—chiefly by Finlayson—was generally wasted.

POOR CONSOLATION

The only consolation the Luton followers had was in the fact that the City were no better: indeed, they were worse in most respects, for, with the exception of the wing forwards, there seemed no conception of the usefulness of keeping the ball down, and big kicking and lusty charging, quite legitimate, were the main features of their play.

Undoubtedly the injury to Kingham had an ill effect on the home team, but even before he had to leave the field there had been enough mistakes in defence and attack to make us fearful of the result.

Early play was even, the ball going rapidly from end to end because the defenders went in for heavy booting, and it was the strength of the returns by Bassett and Everest that kept play so much in the Town quarters. For a little while there was a possibility of offside tactics spoiling the game, for the City backs kept well up, and when the Town defenders retaliated, all the players were parcelled in the centre of the field. Each goalkeeper had to handle quickly from long range efforts, though Ball might have done better had he had the confidence to slip through the gap that was offered, but he shot too soon and without strength.

FINLAYSON SHINES

Finlayson was prominent with skilful coaching of his forwards, and from a nice centre by Crompton the ball was headed just wide by Beresford. Stephenson roamed across to the inside-right position, and when Ball cleverly back-heeled the ball forward, the inside-left dribbled well in, and a very good shot just topped the bar. The City were hard pressed at this stage, and gave away a lot of free kicks, but they repelled all efforts.

Cardiff's raids were dangerous, the wingers getting the ball over nicely when they were given the chance. Turner did not do so well when he was given opportunities of shooting, though now and then he centred well. Crompton was much better in this respect.

In a collision with Roberts, Kingham was injured, and had to be assisted from the field. During his absence the City scored. The Town defenders were never well placed to meet a lunge into the goalmouth by Godfrey, and DIAMOND rushed through and headed past Coen as the custodian came out.

STRENUOUS DEFENCE

The Town asserted themselves to some purpose, and Crompton, especially, did good work, getting over accurate centres. Ball shooting over and heading wide with neat efforts. Strenuous defence prevailed, however, and there was danger at the other end when Pugh was given a fine opening, but he completely failed to shoot true. Crompton took a nice pass from Stephenson and appeared a likely scorer, but his shot travelled just wide. Another centre by Crompton was headed over by Ball, and Kingham returned, but was clearly unsafe, and the City nearly went further ahead owing to his weakness. He went to outside-right, but there was nothing very exciting before the interval.

CITY	1
TOWN	0

On the re-start Kingham was again at back, but Turner and Stephenson exchanged places. The Town began to press, but there was no method likely to succeed against defenders so much in earnest, and when the City had a turn, they gave the Town rear-guard much worry. Pugh and Roberts did not see a lot of the ball, but made the most of the chances that came their way.

DIAMOND'S SECOND

Gaps in the Town defence were all too plain, and Pugh took advantage when he had beaten Smith rather luckily, the ball rebounding to him from the Town back; the little winger swung the ball into the goalmouth and DIAMOND raced in to forestall Coen and kick the ball almost out of his hands into the net.

The Town played harder than ever, but it was of little avail, because the ball was held too close, and, though Leckie was tested several times by Ball, the shots were not difficult.

It was Finlayson who began to play the City at their own game. He shot the ball forward for his wing man or Ball to race the backs for it and, after two or three tries had failed, one brought success. Finlayson sent the ball forward quickly, and Beresford headed it onwards. BALL took it in his stride, and drove in a beautiful shot which had Leckie beaten all the way.

IN DIRE STRAITS

The City defenders were now in dire straits, and kicked anywhere and anyhow to keep the foe out. Several corners were forced, and Leckie saved well. Again and again the Town tried to rush the ball through a mass of defenders, but could not find the opening. There was a dramatic escape for the Town following this assault. Pugh again outwitted his opponents and centred, and Diamond sent in a grand shot which had Coen well beaten, but the ball struck the foot of the upright, and swerved out.

Kingham was far from safe, and could hardly kick or head the ball, but he stuck to his job. Stephenson and Turner looked like equalising when they gave the best bit of combination of the game to that point, for they quite beat the defence, and, if Turner's shot had been better aimed, the scores would have been level.

ALL SQUARE

Luton attacked fiercely, and the visitors fell back on defence, the goal area being

crowded. From a free kick against Bassett, Stephenson middled the ball among the crowd of players; it was sent out, but FINLAYSON had closed in, and his shot went through the crowd and into the net.

The City were not done with, and Coen was rather lucky to beat Pugh for possession at close quarters, but the Town came again, striving desperately to secure the lead. There was another nice movement by Stephenson and Turner, the former just failing to get the final pass. Finlayson nearly gave the Town the lead with a very fine shot, which just missed, and again and again the Town closed on the City goal, but could not succeed.

SHAKY REAR

I thought there was just a trifle of hesitancy on the part of Coen when each of the City's goals was scored, but I would not state that as a fact. In any event, he had enough anxiety by the indifferent work of the defenders in front of him to have upset his confidence. Smith did not have as good a match as usual, but he got a kick in the face, and Kingham was never himself again after his mishap.

Fellowes also got a very severe blow. These hurts certainly made some difference, though I do not think the defensive lines were ever really confident against the shock methods of Diamond and his colleagues.

McGinnigie was working in top gear all the time, but the only defender to keep his head and his balance consistently was Finlayson, of whom the more one sees, the more one likes him. There is a thoughtfulness in all his work, and he has clever feet and head, and, if he were only a little quicker about it, he would be good enough for the best in the country.

FORWARDS RAGGED

The forwards were a ragged and unconvincing lot. Energetic always, but there was little understanding; it was just a heiter-skelter. Ball and Crompton were best, and it was good to see the former try a shot. Why doesn't he do it more often? I know he has not had much support in the way of the through pass, but he could shoot much more often. Crompton played very well, indeed, but Beresford still overworks himself without making the best use of his clever footwork. His colleagues should have the benefit of it, but he rarely gives a pass to the opposite wing, or opens out the game. Stephenson made a few nice passes in the first half, but Turner had anything but a successful afternoon, and, when they changed places, Stephenson proved much more effective.

The team, as a whole, played with little understanding, and there was no teamwork.

Cardiff had few clever players, but compensated by their eagerness and thrustiness. The defenders never wasted a moment in getting the ball away, and the halves played like full-backs, too. There was little combined effort among them, and their chief assets were speed and determination, both in defence and attack.

There were 11,949 spectators, and the receipts were £644 9s. 6d.