

LUTON'S BRIGHT DISPLAY AT WATFORD

NELSON'S MASTERLY GAME

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	3
(Crompton, Roberts, Ball)	
WATFORD	1
(Lane)	

WATFORD — McLaren; Brown, Lewis (J.), Findlay, Woodward, Davies, (J.), Jones, Davies, (W.), Walters, Dean, Wright, Finlayson, Crompton, Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Crompton, Martin, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson. Referee: L. Boulstridge, Tamworth.

TO say that everyone of the three thousand followers of LUTON TOWN who made the journey to WATFORD was delighted to draw it mildly. They gave vent to their happiness in no uncertain voice, and they had the greater satisfaction of knowing that there was not the slightest fluke about the victory. It was fully merited in every way, for the Town were the better side fore and aft.

A LUDICROUS DECISION

There were two flaws in the game from a critical point of view. The first was a ludicrous decision when they had scored their third goal, and only six minutes remained for play. It might have proved fatal in conjunction with the ludicrous decision of the referee in awarding a penalty kick against Mackey. Happily the penalty kick failed and that was only poetic justice, for it should never have been given. At about the time Referee Boulstridge recognised a feature on which the F.A. laws are very emphatic — namely, that a player should not deliberately clear a shoulder charging such as Mackey gave. There was neither push nor violence about the charge, and I shared the opinion of the Town players in regard to this incident and one of two other decisions.

The game began at a pace that was bound to tell on the players, and after half an hour the tempo was so high that it was no matter for wonder that several of the players appeared to have had enough midway through the second half, and that they could hardly sustain a gallop, but all stuck it splendidly, and the last ten minutes were as full of incident as any phase of the game. The Town won the excellence of their general understanding. Team spirit and team work combined with much brilliant footwork kept the home team busy on defence for most of the game, and the general play in each half was with the winners.

WATFORD GAME

Watford played hard enough: some of their players showed skilful control, and the passing, considering the deceptive state of the going, was good. Moreover, they were quick on the ball, and there was much merit in their approach work, though they could not give Coen a tithe of what he felt to be his own.

Before the ground was cut up at all the ball skidded along the surface very sharply, and, in the opening stages, Ball twice tried to give his right wing a boost, but the ball slipped off the pitch at great pace, and travelled over the goal-line. There was an early thrill when clever work by the Town right wing brought a good centre by Martin, and Ball flustered the defence. Stephenson closed in, and the ball eluded him as he tried to shoot from close range. But it stole past the upright, with McLaren awkwardly situated.

CROMPTON'S GOAL

Mackey was prominent with fine clearances when the home side attacked, and Nelson also was very busy. The centre-forward would have gone through. Martin was very lively, and he and Crompton were causing trouble, but Lewis prevented with a big kick. Woodward closed up the middle against Ball, and then a rush on the Town goal brought a free kick which Fellowes got away nicely. The ball came over to Roberts, who brought it out to the right for CROMPTON to take in his stride, and a beautiful left-foot shot from just inside the penalty area had McLaren beaten all the way.

CLOSE THING

Wright caused a diversion by neat work on the home left, but Nelson cleared well and Coen handled neatly in another advance. Long passes from wing to wing

by the Town kept the Watford defenders in trouble, but Brown kicked strongly, and Woodward played his customary hard and honest game. A characteristic burst by Stephenson took him right through, and within a yard or two of the post, he turned the ball across, but Ball could not hit it properly, or there must have been some other cause for the clear.

Watford fought back gamely, and Jones forced corners, for he had too many guns for Smith, and Nelson had to run across and intervene two or three times. Coen punched away in great style one flag-kick, but the ball remained in the vicinity of the Town goal for a little while, though there was no opening for a close-range shot. When the Town travelled to the other end, Crompton pushed the ball forward, and Stephenson was discovered in the outside-right position. He beat two men, but was held up by a third.

"HANDLING" MISSED

Big kicking by the home backs was well countered by the Town defenders, and an early deliberate handling of the ball by Findlay was immediately the referee thought that it was accidental, and so the offence, which evoked roars of approval from the spectators, went unpunished. From the escape, Watford got clean away on the right, and Walters niddled well, but W. Davies turned the ball back. The Town defence had to be alert at this stage, and Nelson showed the Luton followers by his superb work in extricating his side from difficulties, and driving it forwards on the attack. However, the interval came without further score.

LUTON TOWN	1
WATFORD	0

The Town restarted strongly, and for some minutes the home goal was constantly in danger. McLaren saved well after Brown's goal, and the Town defence did not let Stephenson, who was very active. To this the Watford right replied with a strong assault, in which Jones was the main factor. The Town defence was an excellent one. Town goalmouth, and only the stout defensive play of Mackey, Nelson and Fellowes averted a score. Two corners were conceded, but as there was no field, and as Crompton had some fun at the expense of Lewis, who fouled the winger.

McLAREN THE MAINSTAY

The free kick was cleared, but the Town right came again, Roberts sending the ball over Coen, and Crompton's centre. Ball headed over, with McLaren a long way out of goal. McLaren made splendid saves from Stephenson who was playing right up to the hands, and the co-operation of Roberts and Fellowes while on the other wing, Finlayson and Martin were getting a lot of work out of Crompton. For a few minutes the defence all round, and the home halves were lost against the sweeping attacks, much work falling upon Brown and Lewis, while Woodward played strongly at third back.

Yet again McLaren saved his goal, following a delightful left-wing advance, in which Crompton was the main factor. Stephenson could not be stopped, and the ball was centred squarely by Roberts, for Ball to head in finely. McLaren accepting it skilfully, then he was an excellent goalkeeper, shot from Stephenson that nearly beat the goalkeeper, who managed to knock the ball over the bar. Nelson came well up to give his forwards a hand, and they responded well, Ball shooting just wide.

KNOCKED OUT

Watford came again with great spirit, and Coen was called upon several times, while Mackey and Smith kicked strongly, and Nelson barred the way when Walters and Lane tried to shoot. To this the Town replied, and Roberts took possession and drove in a terrific shot which struck Woodward on the head and ended him for the time being. He had to receive attention. There was danger at the other end when a miskick by Mackey let Wright through, but the full back for ROBERTS who had taken the resultant flag-kick.

ROBERTS ON THE MARK

Again the Town swarmed to the attack, and the forwards had the home defenders all dazed by the quick passing on the right, and when Crompton centred, Ball took the ball back for ROBERTS who had taken up the inside-right position, to crash home a tremendous shot that McLaren hardly

saw. Watford replied again with determination, and rearranged the attack, but the worst that came was an overhead kick by Walters, the Coen had plenty of time to field and clear.

The Town raced away again, and the third goal came unexpectedly. Stephenson was put through cleverly, and almost from close to the corner flag, he got across a beautiful centre. McLaren, Woodward and BALL all went for the ball, but it was the head of the latter that sent it over the custodian; one of the defenders seized it with both hands, but it was well over the line, and the referee pointed to the centre.

WATFORD'S SPIRIT

With six minutes to go, Watford were not doing as well as they never have been allowed to get through as they did two minutes after the Town had scored. There was slackness among the Town players, and the ball was centred from the right wing by the defenders all awry, and LANE took possession and beat Coen with a fast, low shot. Watford came again, and they had the Town goal for a moment. But at that moment when Jones raced up to take a pass, Mackey came across and foiled him with a perfectly square shoulder charge, and the referee pointed to the penalty spot to the amazement of the players and the crowd. Findlay took the shot, and sent well wide.

There was no further attack by Watford, for the Town pulled together, and took good care of the defence, and the play was well in the Watford half when the whistle sounded the call of time.

NELSON THE MASTER

Coen had very little to do — not three disturbing efforts from the home forwards — but he was cool and did his work with neatness and dispatch. Mackey again played a grand game, his kicking and tackling being superb, and he also went out for the ball and baulked the opposition. Smith did not have such a good day, for somehow he seemed to lack his usual confidence, especially in tackling, though he was opposed by a tricky player.

The halves played splendidly, and gave opponents little rope. Nelson showed up his very best game to date, and again and again won applause, not only for the sureness of his tackling, but also for the good use he made of the ball. He was the outstanding player at half, and that is saying a great deal, for both Finlayson and Fellowes played grand football, and were splendid both in defence and attack.

CLEVER CO-OPERATION

All the forwards did well, their co-operative work being fine. Not one could be said to be above his fellows, and although Ball found Woodward sticking very close to him in the first half, he found a way to lose his shadow in the second, and gave a lot of trouble. Very pleasing indeed was the wing play. Martin and Crompton, and Roberts and Stephenson, and though the cross-pass from the inside positions was not exploited too often, both the wingers swept the ball right across frequently, and had the defenders puzzled. The finishing of the forwards might have been slightly improved, but it was better than usual, not forgetting that the match with Newport was an exception.

WATFORD'S BEST

McLaren kept goal magnificently and saved his side from a heavy defeat, but he served Crompton rather badly when the winger charged him fairly. Brown was the better back, and played finely, though he had his match in Stephenson. Woodward was the pick of the middle men, though he confined himself wholly to the third back game. He did yeoman service. The forwards were often clever in midfield, but they had few chances to test the ability of Coen.

Attendance 14,704; receipts £282. 2s.