

Payne's Eleven Goals In Six Games

READING NO MATCH FOR LUTON

By A. J. Webb

Luton Town 4, Reading 0

EVEN four clear goals do not adequately express Luton's superiority. Frankly, their form was a revelation and Reading, never an easy team to beat, were simply run off their feet.

Therein lies one of the secrets of Luton success. They were yards faster all through and never gave any semblance of tiring. Not of that ridiculous dilly-dallying over a free-kick in midfield or indecision and time-wasting feinting over a throw-in for Luton.

They were there to crowd as much play as possible into 90 minutes. And did they succeed. Even the referee seemed astonished sometime at the speed in which the game was restarted after the many hold-ups.

Reading were the chief offenders and should have taken their hiding in better grace. It would have caused no surprise had someone been ordered off by way of an example.

Owen was on the visitors' left-wing with Glidden inside, but the change had little or no effect. In fact, so completely were Reading outclassed, that it is impossible to single out one player who showed consistently good form.

Watkins was best in attack, but only in spasms, and near the end forced Dolman to make a really fine save. The only other Reading shot of note was a praiseworthy long-range effort by Wright, which was tipped over for a corner.

Two Centre-Forwards

Luton's highlight undoubtedly was Payne, whose three goals brought his total up to 11 in six matches, which is pretty good going. Many First Division clubs would like to sign him on, but, as Ned Liddle, Luton's team manager, said after the match, "There is not a hope for anybody. In any case, they would have to talk very, very loud."

Payne's position on the programme is inside-right, but actually he is another centre-forward, which reminds me that Ball must not be forgotten. His unselfish scheming and drawing of the defence is the chief reason why Payne is so successful.

Roberts was good in midfield, but his shooting was deplorable. So was Ball's. The centre-forward missed two absolute certainties in the second half, once when the Reading defence obligingly opened out and allowed him a clear run down the middle. It was really too easy, and so, from six yards, Ball shot wide.

Stephenson was the better of the wingmen. He gave Robertson and Gregory a bewildering time. His goal, the second of the match, came from a free-kick just on the penalty corner for a foul on Roberts by Gregory.

Finlayson and Fellowes were wonderful wing halves, always well up the field and passing with splendid accuracy. Nelson was far too good for Allen and made it much easier for Mackie and Smith.

Altogether it was an interesting game from the point of Luton's skill but too one-sided to form any rash opinion as to Luton's prospects of promotion. But this I will say. They played some of the finest football that I have ever seen in a long experience of the Third Division.

Luton.—Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Hodge, Payne, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

Reading.—Whittaker; Gregory, Done; Robertson, Hayhurst, Wright, Watkin, McGough, Allen, Glidden, Owen.