

Payne Scores the Only Goal Again

VISITORS A PLUCKY TEAM

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN 1, BOURNEMOUTH and BOSCOMBE 0

LUTON TOWN: Coen; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Hodge, Payne, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

BOURNEMOUTH: Mellors; King, Bellis; Smith, Pincott, Lawrence; Burns, Whittam, Riley, Chalmers, Parris.

Referee: G. T. Gould, London.

MAKING fullest possible allowance for the wretched conditions it must be confessed that LUTON TOWN did not fulfil the hopes of their supporters on Saturday apart from the fact that they got both points. It is difficult to describe what was wrong apart from the finishing. We have to expect a team like BOURNEMOUTH and BOSCOMBE, challenging for the leadership, to run the Town close, but from the aspect of team work there were periods when the visitors were better than the Town, especially in the second half. They were not more skilful, but they were more resolute in their efforts, and pulled together with a unity of purpose from start to finish.

ONLY IN SPASMS

The Town players were sometimes little better than a rabble, without understanding, with no idea of position play, and as far as the forwards were concerned, little combination. There were spasms in which they almost paralysed the opposition by their skill in finding colleagues, their merit in exposing weakness in the opposing rearguard, and their pace; then they would simply lose all that advantage by wretched shots.

IT WAS SURPRISING

The attack was never together consistently after the first half-hour, and that was all the more surprising after their opening, in which they seemed altogether too stylish for the Bournemouth defence. Whether failures in front of goal were responsible for a deterioration in the second half I do not know, but shortly before the end there were more persistent attacks and movements that had the opposition all hot and bothered, but the most obvious chances were missed, and so it was not until the final whistle sounded that the supporters were at their ease.

WISE TOM SMITH

Conditions were certainly very bad, and we quickly saw that neither defence was safe, but the packing of the Bournemouth goal was more solid than that of the Town, and their forwards evidently had a plan of campaign, which was to keep well apart and to swing the ball to the wings or drive it hard up the middle for the wingers or the centre-forwards to race the defenders. Well it was for the Town that Tom Smith was wise to this move early on, or the visitors might have gained a lead that would have won the match.

THE USUAL

The Town's goal was scored by PAYNE, and a grand effort it was. Stephenson made it possible by racing for a ball that looked like going out of play, and centring perfectly; Payne dashed through the crowd and headed into the net as Mellors came out to fist away. It was cut and thrust after this, and although the Town had longer periods of attack than the visitors, the Bournemouth raids were well executed, and but for their inside forwards playing too much the W formation they might have drawn level.

BACKS DO WELL

Coen made a magnificent save when Riley was clean through and shot grandly, and Smith's defensive work was brilliant. Frequently he sent his forwards to the attack after holding up the opposition, and although not so prominent, Mackey also had his moments, once clearing gloriously when Chalmers was right through. Another factor that upset the Town forwards was the offside strategy of the Bournemouth backs. They had the Town forwards held up again and again by shrewd moving forward as soon as the ball was cleared or if a Town player held the ball for a second longer than he should have done.

A NARROW ESCAPE

Just before the interval each goal narrowly escaped, for Parris once centred just too high for Riley to reach the ball

right in front of goal and no one to prevent him heading in. At the other end Ball drove in a very hard low shot which Mellors managed to turn aside when he leapt across goal. The Town crossed over with their bare lead.

ROBERTS' MISS

Roberts, who was doing great things in midfield, had a grand chance soon after the restart, but went close in and then lifted the ball high over the bar. The ball was rising as he shot, but more care in aim would have succeeded. Bournemouth developed attack after attack, and had the Town defenders on the run often, but there was more steadiness about Mackey, who headed or kicked clear coolly; Nelson blocked up the middle, and Smith was splendid. Coen had no severe test, but the visitors kept the crowd on tenterhooks by their forcefulness and resolute play.

THE LAST ROUND-UP

It was not until the last quarter of an hour and we had the Town attacking again as they had done at the start. Be-



fore this there had been a few attacks and both Hodge and Payne went close, but suddenly there came a series of efforts which provided gilt-edged opportunities. The Bournemouth goalkeeper saved his charge in brilliant fashion two or three times, and Payne was just wide with a tremendous shot.

The best chance came when Payne sent right across goal and Stephenson collected the ball only a yard or two from goal; he sent it against the goalkeeper's body, and Roberts failed to turn it through.

SHOULD HAVE HAD A PENALTY

There was one occasion just before this when Roberts dribbled to within three or four yards of goal, and was tripped; he kept his feet and the appeal for a penalty kick was ignored, though there was an obvious offence, and the foul just turned the scales in favour of the visitors and they cleared after a scramble.

Bournemouth were game to the end, and they forced a corner in the last few seconds, but the ball was cleared and was in mid-field when the whistle sounded.

DEFENCE SURVIVED

I knew Coen would not let the side down. He was safe as the Bank of England—perhaps safer. Mackey was not always happy in the first half, but played confidently in the second, and Smith again showed what a grand defender he is. Bournemouth backs were good, but had nothing on Smith, who made only one error of note in the match, and that was when he dribbled down from the corner flag and was robbed. Nevertheless he and Mackey placed the ball splendidly to their forwards.

Nelson played strongly though he ventured up the field rather a lot in the second half, and left something of a gap for Riley. Finlayson and Fellowes again were grand half-backs, and the former played probably his best game of the season. He seemed to have found a bit of pace from somewhere. Both he and Fellowes knew what to do with the ball.

FORWARDS

Roberts was the star forward from the view of constructive work. He was grand in all except his marksmanship, and of that the least said the better. If he could only shoot well he would be as valuable as any player, and he is certainly a grand worker. Payne was the most dangerous as usual, though at times a bit slow in getting the ball on the move; when he was near goal he was as quick as any opponent could want him to be. Ball roamed about a lot, and Stephenson faded after a hard first half, while Hodge was below his best. Conditions were a good excuse up to a point, but there will have to be other goal scorers besides Payne if the team is to retain the leadership.

THE VISITORS

Mellors was none too comfortable in the Bournemouth goal, although he made heroic saves. I liked King rather better than Bellis because he was a bit faster to the tackle. The halves were all triers, and Lawrence did many clever things, while Pincott was a tower of strength as a defensive half. The forwards made many nice moves, and Chalmers and Parris were a clever wing.