

Town Forwards Do All But Score

(BY CRUSADER)

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS .. 1
W Charlton
LUTON TOWN 0

LUTON.—Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Lutterloch, Nelson, Fellowes; Rich, Dawes, Payne, Roberts, Stephenson.

RANGERS.—Mason (W); Barrie, Rowe; March, Farmer, Moralee; Lumsden, Lowe, W Charlton, Fitzgerald, M'Mahon.
Referee.—C E Argent, St. Albans.

For the fourth week in succession LUTON TOWN were at home, and for the fourth consecutive time they failed to win.

That three of the games should have been won must be agreed by everyone who witnessed the games with reasonable eyes. I exclude Blackpool because of their beautiful play in the second half, but Exeter, Sunderland, and most of all, QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS, were blessed by amazing luck.

Not for one moment would I diminish the honours due for the Rangers' magnificent defensive fight; if the Town had been in the same position they would have been glad to do just the same as the Rangers, and if they won points in that way we should think they had earned them. Yet even the most hysterical supporter of the Rangers would agree that in this game they were beaten in everything but goals—and pluck.

MASON'S SAVES

There are times when nothing will go right for a team, and this was the experience of Luton Town. I am no fatalist, and certainly no clairvoyant, but almost from the outset I could sense things going wrong for the Town. Why it should have been so is more than I can tell, but of one thing I am convinced, and that is that if there was a thing that could go wrong it did so.

Mason made many saves that he himself never expected to make; the Town forwards missed openings that they would hate to miss even in a practice game; the referee gave the Rangers a goal that a linesman said was offside; the referee disallowed a goal for some reason that was not clear to thousands of the spectators.

I am not running down Mr. Argent. I know him well enough to be sure that he would do only what he thought was fair, but if he saw the linesman's flag go up when the Rangers made the raid that brought their goal I wonder why he ignored it, for he was a long way from the actual scene of operations. If he did not see the flag then the Town players were remiss in not calling his attention to it, as they had a right to do.

SPORTSMEN ENCOURAGE

It was bitterly disappointing to see the Town forwards miss so many chances, but why some of the spectators should carry on in the way they did passes my comprehension. Hundreds of them have yet to learn that the trait of true sportsmanship is to encourage, not to deride players who are not doing well, especially when, as in this game, they were straining every thew and sinew to win.

The Town showed the better formation in the openings, but we soon had a glimpse of the fighting spirit of the Rangers, who quickly turned defence into attack, although there was seldom a sustained effort by their forwards. Generally there were about three players well up, and the rest were more concerned with defence.

RAGING ROUND RANGERS' GOAL

Dawes from point blank range sent the ball flying yards too high when he must have scored had he taken deliberate aim; Mason made grand saves from centres by Rich and Stephenson and a shot by Roberts that seemed certain to reach the net.

Play ranged for long periods round the Rangers' goal, but the defenders were determined and fought with every ounce of energy and no little skill. Even so they could not beat off the attacks, and there was evidently more danger to be apprehended from the fleeting raids of the Rangers than from the assaults of the Town.

It was difficult to say why, except that the Town forwards were too hurried in their efforts, and Dawes was again at fault when he shot wide after racing right through the defence.

THEIR UNDOING

The Town defenders were playing well up, and this was their undoing, although it should not have been. Dolman had to make good saves to prevent goals on two or three occasions, and play became scrappy, long kicking and fast running without that rhythmical combination that we have come to expect.

For a time the Town flank halves could do little right, their control was poor and they were hanging to the ball when a shrewd pass would have served better. The men behind them, Mackey, Smith and Nelson were playing strongly, and giving nothing away.

Then the Rangers scored. The Town defenders were well up the field when there was a big kick that sent the ball out to the Rangers' left wing. A pass forward found CHARLTON, and the linesman flagged, but the referee allowed him to go on, and with a beautiful low shot he had Dolman beaten all the way.

Things went badly for the Town in spite of the fact that they were still doing the more pressing. Rich had many chances to get going, but he was hesitating, and Rowe was right on him before he had made up his mind what to do. Lutterloch made a lot of mistakes, but once he sent Rich away with a clear field, but the centre went right into the safe keeping of the Rangers' defence. Just before the interval the Town made terrific onslaughts, but the visitors stood up to it well, and Mason earned the gratitude of his colleagues for his splendid work. Through him they were able to leave the field one goal ahead.

RANGERS 1
LUTON 0

Immediately the game was restarted the Town were on the attack, and a great effort by Stephenson was closed by Mason running out and colliding with

the outside left, who had to receive attention for an injured knee.

There was no respite for the Rangers' defence, and they drew their forwards and flank halves right back into the penalty area to assist in the resistance.

Mason continued to make wonderful saves, one from Dawes at full length being an example of perfect anticipation and agility. The whole of the Town team, with the exception of one defender, came up into the Rangers' half, and there were desperate struggles in the Rangers' goal area, but there were not enough good shots to satisfy us, the forwards wanting to work close in before letting drive, as they usually found a pack of defenders waiting.

OCCASIONAL RAIDS

Now and then from a long kick the Rangers' forwards dashed away, the wingers lying well out, and Charlton well up, and once Dolman made a grand save from Lowe.



None worked harder than Stephenson during the strenuous efforts made by the Town. Again and again he forced his way through, with Roberts assisting. Payne was also fighting with all his strength, but try as they would they could not beat down the opposition.

Again there was a Rangers' raid, and Charlton headed in well, but Dolman got to the ball and saved at the expense of a corner, and the attack was renewed at the other end.

How anyone could fail to do other than applaud the Town for their splendid play now was beyond me. They besieged the Rangers' goal.

GOAL DISALLOWED

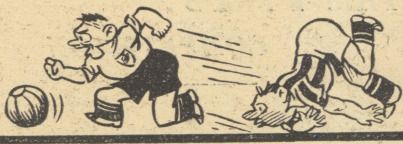
Then it seemed that the equaliser had come. The Town forced a corner and Stephenson's flag-kick sailed right into the goal-mouth; there was a desperate rush by all the Town forwards and halves with Payne leading them, and the backs and a ruck of players finished in the back of the net. Then the referee was seen pointing to the goal-line. He had given a free kick against the Town. Why he did so we could not see from the Press box.

From this good fortune the Rangers revived, and Dolman saved from Charlton again, but the Town went back to the fray as desperately as ever, and they failed gallantly and unluckily, and thus sustained their first home defeat in a league game this season.

DEFENCE SPLENDID

I am not going to say one word except in praise about the Town defence. They were splendid. It is true that they were often caught out of position by the Rangers' raids, but what were they to do; to wait and wait instead of helping in the attack when they were a goal down?

No, I think Mackey, Smith and Nelson played like champions, and they were all right, even allowing for the fact that Smith did leave the opposing winger a times. Dolman also did his part well.



Lutterloch was not comfortable in the first half, but that could be understood. While he plays usefully anywhere, yet cannot expect him to be immediately successful in any position. He improved greatly in the second half. To my mind, however, he should be kept at full back, and I would rather have seen M'Ginnigan or Martin in the position on this occasion.

Fellowes had a poor first half, but improved in the second, and tried hard as ever.

THE ATTACK

The right wing was not good. Rich has fallen away a lot. He allowed Rowe to beat him for possession again and again, and Dawes, working hard enough in the middle, had a bad day as a marksman.

Payne was fighting for all he was worth as usual, but I hope he is not going to sacrifice his brilliant shooting for the sake of clever things as a distributor. We want his goals.

Roberts was strenuous as ever, and it was good to see Stephenson putting all he had into the game all the time; both of them were fighting against hard luck, but they were by far the best wing on the field.

What the line needed most was a steady influence; a player who could hold the ball and find time to use it to advantage.

THE RANGERS

The Rangers' defence has always been a tough proposition, and never more so than in this game. Mason was the hero of the match, or perhaps the first hero, but his backs and Farmer played stubbornly; they eschewed the finer points of the game just to serve, and there is a lot of praise due for that.

March and Moralee were full backs as often as half-backs, and apart from occasional raids little was seen of the forwards, though enough was seen of Charlton to show that the Rangers have no need to worry about Cheetham, and the suggestion that the latter is being rested should not carry much weight.

Attendance, 13,376; receipts, £747 2s. 6d.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS to E. C. Dickens, hon. secretary of the Bedford County Bowling Association.