

GAME SHOULD HAVE BEEN WON IN FIRST HALF

Goal That Brought a Transformation

By CHILTERN

BOURNEMOUTH AND BOSCOMBE 2

Rowley, Whittam

LUTON TOWN 1
Stephenson

BOURNEMOUTH & BOSCOMBE.—Mellors; Marsden, Cooke; Smith, Pin-cott, Lawrence; Redfern, Whittam, Riley, Chalmers, Rowley.

LUTON TOWN.—Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Hancock, Sloan, Dawes, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee: G. T. Gould, South Norwood.

Luton Town should have scored sufficient goals in the first half of their match at Boscombe to have made the issue safe, and to have avoided dropping even a point.

They made the homesters look like novices, and their work was brilliant until they reached striking distance: then there was no forward able to round off the attacks.

It was decided not to risk playing Payne, but he was badly missed, and I am sure that had he been in the team he would have materially added to his goal-scoring record before the interval. All that was needed was an opportunist to take some of the grand chances.

BOSCOMBE OUTPLAYED

Had the Town been five up at the interval, they would not have been flattered, for Boscombe simply could not get going, and gave quite the worst first half display I have seen this season. Their forwards had not an ounce of confidence, and their feeble efforts broke down long before they reached Dolman.

Indeed, the only time they looked likely to score was three minutes from half-time, when the referee awarded a penalty for hands against Nelson. There is no doubt that the offence was unintentional, for a hard centre struck the tall centre half on the hand.

The ball was diverted from the goal-mouth, but the referee was in no position to see what had happened. He allowed play to proceed for a few seconds, but the linesman signalled, and after consulting him he awarded a spot kick.

DOLMAN'S PENALTY SAVE

Even then the home side could not take advantage of it, and Dolman made a brilliant save from Riley's kick. The Town had taken the lead seven minutes earlier, when a brilliant movement begun on the right, and carried on by Roberts, gave STEPHENSON an opening.

He took the ball in his stride and shot hard and low for the far corner of the net. Mellors had no possible chance of saving. This success was much delayed, for the Town had had quite 90 per cent. of the game.

Three absolutely open goals were missed and how first Dawes, then Sloan, managed to bungle a perfect cross by Stephenson was a mystery. Dawes did score, but the point was disallowed for offside. This must have been a close thing, but the referee was well up with the play at the time.

At the end of the first half, Dolman had not handled the ball more than half-a-dozen times, and Mellors had not been kept as busy as he should have been. Neither goalkeeper had a direct shot to save in the first twenty minutes, and really the finishing was woeful.

BRILLIANT FOOTBALL

Roberts was at fault twice when presented with openings, but apart from the finishing, the work of every department was brilliant. The ball was kept low, and the home defence frequently did not know which way to turn.

This first half was more like an exhibition match than a struggle for League points, and it was impossible to work oneself into any degree of excitement. The crowd of 9,000 evidently felt the same way, for they picked upon Mackey to provide them with some, and booed him loudly every time he kicked the ball.

This was very harsh treatment, for all the full back did was to charge Redfern when he was in full sail for Dolman. However, it gave the crowd something to shout about, and they took it.

When the teams went off the field, I did not think that Boscombe would score at all, and certainly had grave doubts as to the Town's ability to add to their total. However, I never dreamt that Luton would be pointless, and do not think they would have been had it not been for an unfortunate mistake by Tom Smith, a minute after the resumption.

SMITH'S SLIP

A long ball from Marsden fell at his feet. There was no one within ten yards of him, and he had all the time in the world to clear it. He did not seem to know whether to kick it first time, or control it, and take it up the field.

Before he could decide, Whittam dis-

possessed him, and took the ball almost to the goal line before putting in a perfect centre. The defence was not in position because of the surprise element in the move, and ROWLEY, who was standing near the goal had all the time he needed to head through.

This goal brought about a startling transformation, and gave the Boscombe forwards the confidence of which they were sorely in need. They began a series of onslaughts that ended in another goal three minutes later.

BOSCOMBE LEAD

WHITTAM was again the thorn in Luton's side, and he obtained possession on the edge of the penalty area. He shot low for goal, and the ball miraculously found a way through the legs of the defenders, and ended in the back of the net. Dolman made a despairing dive, but was too late. He was probably unsighted.

The home side kept up the pressure, and had the Town defence, who had been far too strong for them in the first half, on the run. They began to swing the ball about, and also exploited the down-the-middle pass.

Riley had a couple of chances of adding to the score, but muffed them.

In vain, Luton tried to get going again, but they were struggling until the end, and I never had any real hope of them scoring again.

No sooner did the defence clear, than the ball was back again, and the halves had far too much to do to devote much time to their forwards. As a result, the front line became ragged, and it was only in spasms that they looked dangerous. They made the mistake, too, of keeping the ball close, and fiddling about.

MELLORS' ONE SAVE

These tactics simply played into the hands of a defence that now showed no sign of weakness, and every man played like a Trojan to keep the Town out. Actually I remember Mellors having to save only one shot in the second half.

That was from Dawes, and there was not enough powder behind it to cause apprehension. Dawes shot over when presented with a grand chance, and Hancock might have made better use of a perfect opening made by Stephenson.

Boscombe's first goal made all the difference to the game, and it turned the Town from a promotion side into a side of strugglers. However hard they tried, they could not get back into their stride, and the home side had more of the game in this half.

They were aided by the wind which Luton had enjoyed in the first half, and it became stronger as the game proceeded. It continually swept long passes back, and Roberts, who kept trying to find Hancock, frequently saw the ball land in the right half position.

Boscombe did not play clever football, but kept the ball moving, and the Town defence was on the run all the time.

THEMSELVES TO BLAME

It was a great pity that the points were lost, but Luton had only themselves to blame. However, I do think that if Smith had not made a tragic mistake the home side would not have scored.

In the first half, the home forwards were thoroughly cowed, and their efforts were crude in the extreme.

It is a long time since I have seen a team have so much of the play, and be so clearly superior as Luton were in the first half, and score only once. The finishing really was atrocious. No team can afford to miss chances if they have aspirations for championship honours, and the Town must not let slip many more opportunities like this.

We can always make excuses for an away defeat against a side with the home record of Boscombe, but there really was no excuse for failing to win.

The whole defence gave a perfect exhibition in the first half, and the home forwards were held in a vice-like grip. Mackey, Nelson and Smith were so far on top of their job that Finlayson and Fellowes were able to go well up the field to help the forwards.

DIFFERENT TALE

There was a different tale after the interval, and the wing halves had all their work cut out in defence. Smith's mistake was more unfortunate, for it was the only blot on an otherwise good display, and Mackey was as reliable as ever, though treated most unfairly by the crowd.

This had a slight effect on his play, but he did not allow it to upset him too much. Dolman did everything required of him, and made a magnificent save from the penalty. His other work was well up to standard, and he had no chance with either goal.

Nelson fell away in the second half, and let Riley through two or three times. However, the ball was bouncing very awkwardly, and this may have accounted for it. In the first half, Riley was completely blotted out, but afterwards did well in his duels with the centre-half.

Finlayson was a great attacker, and during the period of Luton's supremacy,

was the prompter in chief. When the home defence began to play the offside game, he tried hard to break through, and show some of the men in front of him the correct way to defeat such tactics.

Later, he had to devote most of his time to defensive work. Fellowes shone most in defence, for many of his passes were badly judged. Often before half-time he tried to send Stephenson away, only to place the ball too hard. Still, he did his fair share in defence, and was always difficult to beat.

LEFT WING SHINES

The left wing was the better, and it was from this quarter that most of the danger came. Stephenson soon had the measure of Marsden and was the only forward to whom we could look for goals. He paved the way for them, but saw his efforts wasted. Roberts was an admirable partner, and played beautiful football, even if remiss in his shooting.

The work of this pair was the feature of the first half, but they rarely got going after half-time, and Stephenson did not see half enough of the ball. Roberts kept plugging away, but lacked support from the others.

Dawes was not a success as leader of the forwards, and missed several chances. He fitted in well in approach work, and was conspicuous with some deft flicks and turns, but in front of goal he was innocuous, and was kept in a tight grip by Pincott.

FLASHING FOOTWORK

Sloan had his best time before the interval, when constantly catching the eye with brilliant things: quick tackle, some flashing footwork, and a neat pass. Little was seen of him afterwards, and Hancock, too, faded out.

The outside-right was not in such good form as he has been lately, and his centres could have shown much improvement. He could beat Cor' easily, and in a very small space, but seemed unable to make the most of the ball afterwards.