

Luton Town Vanquish Aston Villa 3-2

DASH AND DETERMINATION TRIUMPHED

Goals for Dawes, Payne and Hancock

LUTON TOWN 3
Dawes, Payne, Hancock
ASTON VILLA 2
Maund, Massie

LUTON TOWN.—Coen; King, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Hancock, Dawes, Payne, Roberts, Stephenson.

ASTON VILLA.—Biddlestone; Callaghan, Cummings; Massie, Allen, Iverson; Phillips, Haycock, Broome, Starling, Maund.

Referee: A. A. Horwood, Walton-on-Thames.

Before a record crowd of over 30,000, Luton Town made a brilliant home debut in the Second Division last night. In a match more thrilling than a Cup-tie, they beat the mighty Aston Villa by the odd goal of five.

Encouraged by a goal scored by Dawes in the first half minute of the game, the Town played courageous and plucky football against a team studded with famous names.

The result was in doubt until the last seconds of the game, but Luton's fighting spirit carried them to victory.

As far as football skill was concerned, the Villa were superior, but lacked punch forward, and here Luton held the advantage.

Lovely short passing and brilliant footwork was all part of the make-up of the visitors, but the Luton defence was in no mood to tolerate frills, and their dogged work always disconcerted the Villa front line.

Quicker on the ball, and playing more artistic football than has ever been seen on the Luton ground, the Villa cut through time and again, but in front of goal, their skill seemed to leave them.

TOWN SCORE IN HALF-MINUTE

Stephenson lost the toss, and Phillips elected to defend the Kenilworth-road end.

Payne kicked off and the Town left wing made progress, but the ball was kept in the air. Payne and Roberts each tried to head, and the latter managed it.

Callaghan returned the ball and as it fell DAWES hit it hard and low. Biddlestone was beaten as he groped for the ball at the foot of the post.

This success was greeted with tremendous cheering, but the roar was subdued when Phillips raced past Nelson and got the ball across; but Fellowes had fallen back and cleared safely.

A return visit by the Villa left wing threatened, and when the ball came across Phillips had a try, but Coen had no difficulty in getting the ball away.

There was more menace in the next attack by the visitors, but the referee missed an obvious case of handling by Phillips as he raced in and shot tremendously hard but just wide.

Allen used his hands on the edge of the penalty area to beat down a centre by Dawes, and following the free kick Stephenson headed over the bar.

A YARD WIDE

The Villa flank halves were working nicely with their forwards, and a quick dash in which Haycock was prominent looked dangerous, but Smith headed away.

A very fine bit of work by the Town right wing beat the Villa defenders, and Dawes wound up with a shot which flew across the goalmouth a yard wide, as Biddlestone dived full length.

Hustled by Payne, Callaghan only half cleared, and Dawes met the ball on the run but sent it just too far ahead to recover for a shot. Then Fellowes drove across well, but the ball was cleared.

Payne unfortunately overran the ball as he broke clean through with a clear space. A moment later he fell, and Cummings put back for Biddlestone to clear safely.

Smith had to concede a corner following a neat move by Broome and Phillips, and then Fellowes was penalised for a trip on Phillips just outside the penalty area.

VILLA EQUALISE

King headed away grandly, and then Payne, operating near the right corner flag, swung in a shot which Biddlestone caught.

A misunderstanding on the Town left wing negated a promising movement, and straight from this escape the Villa got away and in three kicks from goal to outside left had equalised.

The ball was sent to MAUND, who was just out of the reach of King, and he raced in and beat Coen with a sharp drive just inside the post.

The Villa were a trifle quicker on the ball than the Town, but otherwise there was little in it.

Offside tactics by the Villa looked like being successful, but a moment later Hancock burst clean through, and with a hard shot brought Biddlestone to his knees.

Iverson fouled Hancock badly a moment later, and the latter had to receive attention.

BAD DEFENCE TACTICS

Finlayson placed the free kick well, but it was headed clear, and there followed some bad kicking by the Town defenders who, instead of clearing, indulged in crazy-work passing within their own penalty area.

Broome was only just frustrated in time when Coen punched the ball wide.

LIVELY ENCOUNTERS

Some strenuous defensive work was required by the Town after this, and then Fellowes was pulled up for bundling over Phillips in unceremonious fashion. The free kick was cleared.

Following a fine centre by Hancock, Callaghan headed away. Then the Villa showed that they could be other than clean when Haycock raced across and took Fellowes off his feet.

The Villa then had to gather round their citadel and find touch several times.

Nelson came right up the field to take part in the attack, but as a result of a bad pass he jeopardised his own goal, and King had to boot the ball behind his own line for safety.

Starling had a chance after some lively work on the Villa left wing, but he hit wildly at a moving ball, which finished nearer the flag than the goal.

VILLA QUICKER ON THE BALL

Biddlestone had to pick up but did not find it difficult when Roberts sent across goal.

Undoubtedly the Villa's quickness on the ball gave them an advantage at this stage.

Payne was shouldered off by Cummings as he tried to force a way through, and Roberts' handling nullified another threat by the Town left.

PAYNE IN RIGHT PLACE

Nelson raced over to the right and

foiled Maund, and a moment later got the ball away from close quarters.

A flashing rush on the Town left wing found Dawes in position for a shot.

He fired in at terrific rate, and the ball beat Biddlestone but struck the further post and rebounded.

PAYNE was on the spot, and although tackled got in a shot which was deflected right away from Biddlestone.

This was the sharpest bit of work that the Town forwards had done so far, and it merited success.

The next moment Callaghan had to kick into the crowd to foil the Town left again.

Broome cleverly headed in from a centre by Phillips, but Coen had the ball safe, and then the referee missed a case of hands which held up a Town attack.

Both Payne and Allen suffered in a collision, but were able to continue without attention.

Half-time:—

LUTON TOWN 2
ASTON VILLA 1

The Villa resumed at a great pace, and Coen had to run out and pick up when Broome tried to work through.

Fine rain was falling, and the ball was getting a bit greasy.

It travelled rather quickly from end to end but still the Villa's quickness in making use of the ball caused anxiety to the Town defence.

It was just this extra quickness forward that was the difference between the teams.

Dawes fiddled about and lost the ball, and this holding on just too long also spoiled forward play.

Biddlestone ran out and Payne tried to loft the ball over his head, but Biddlestone just managed to touch it over the bar.

Payne and Massie had words, and then the Villa got away, but could not get past the barrier of Town defenders. Eventually Maund was whistled offside.

HANCOCK IN PICTURE

After a spell of play in which the Villa was well on top, the Town had a turn in which the right wing was conspicuous. Dawes once got over the ball from the corner flag, and Allen headed away.

Another shot was hustled out, and HANCOCK, meeting a loose ball from 25 yards' range, hit it back at a tremendous pace, and Biddlestone was helpless to save.

SECOND FOR VILLA

The Villa forced two corners immediately after this, and then the Town goal had a narrow escape.

The ball was beaten out several times, and once came across the face of goal with no one able to put it through.

Then a rather weak clearance left MASSIE in possession, and from twenty yards' range he put in a shot and the ball skidded quickly off the ground away from Coen's right hand into the far corner of the net.

There was a rush down on the Town left from the kick-off, but Hancock, racing in to meet a centre with all the goal at his mercy, sent the ball over the bar.

Stephenson was given a ball with a clear run through to goal, and got it under control, but with only Biddlestone to beat he hit the corner flag.

The referee took Cummings and Payne on one side after they had had some bargaining between them, and had a talk with them, in which Allen joined in.

Twice the Town forwards were flagged offside, and then the Villa set up a mass attack, in which Nelson and the backs did yeoman work.

A couple of corners were conceded, the Town packed their goal, and the ball was eventually scrambled away.

At this stage the whole of the players were in the Town half with the exception of Biddlestone, and then a mistake by the Town defence let in Starling, but Coen saved in brilliant fashion.

Allen was penalised for a foul on Payne, and Stephenson placed the free-kick in the goalmouth, but it was headed away.

It was just a question of whether Luton could hold out in the closing minutes, and the crowd were very anxious for the final whistle to go.

SCENES REMINISCENT OF A CUP TIE

Thousands Unable to See Match

STREET AFTER STREET LINED WITH CARS

Scenes outside the ground were almost unbelievable. "Early birds" began to arrive soon after four o'clock, although it was not until half-past five at the earliest that the gates were due to open.

Gradually the stream thickened, and the turnstiles were kept busily clicking until it was found necessary to close the gates.

The Oak-road entrances were closed after six o'clock and the new Kenilworth-road entrances about twenty minutes later.

The ground, considerably enlarged since last season, was estimated to hold 30,000.

In this first home match in Division II. there must have been at least another 5,000 people who were unable to gain admission. Many of them had come distances, and were keenly disappointed.

When the Oak-road gates were closed hundreds of people who had been queuing there ran breathlessly to Kenilworth-road, but even then many were unable to get inside.

Most of them turned away, but others clamoured round the entrances hoping to follow the progress of the game from the cheers and signals of those spectators high up on the terraces. Some, bolder than the rest, climbed over the gates.

BEECH HILL LANE BLOCKED

Oak-road and Kenilworth-road were literally besieged, and the narrow road between the two, Beech Hill-lane, was blocked completely.

Soon after six o'clock a man in Kenilworth-road told a "Luton News" reporter that he arrived at the turnstiles and then decided not to go in.

"I could hear them moaning inside that they could not see, so I came back.

"I paid two bob to see the Sunderland match," added his pal "and I would have paid five bob to get out."

"We ought to have been here at six o'clock this morning instead of six o'clock to-night," said another. And yet another, who allowed his disappointment to run to acrimony, commented, "I hope they get licked 10—0."

The rush reached its peak about six o'clock, or even earlier.

The traffic must have been about the heaviest ever for a Town match, but it was handled remarkably well by the police.

Every road leading into Dunstable-road anywhere near to the ground, except at the junction of Dunstable-road, Leagrave-road, and Bury Park-road was used for parking purposes, and later even Dunstable-road itself was used on one side.

COACHES FROM ALL PARTS

Ash-road, Oak-road and Beech-road were full, not only both sides, but also down the centre. Among the vehicles there were coaches from all parts of the county, as well as from Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and the Midlands. Even Biscot-road was lined

One of the most convenient sites proved to be the remainder of the old Town ground in Dunstable-road.

One lesson stood out clearly, namely, that with any playing success the Town management can safely go even further ahead with plans for improving the accommodation.