

TOWN FAR FROM THEIR BEST

DECISIVELY BEATEN AT VILLA PARK

(By CHILTERN)

ASTON VILLA GAINED AMPLE REVENGE for their defeat at Luton when the Town visited Villa Park on Monday, and were decisively beaten. There was never any real question as to which way the game would go, for the Villa were always the more methodical and more skilful side.

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PLAYING NEAT, FAST FOOTBALL, the home side revealed more punch forward than they did at Luton, but in at least two of their four goals, they were aided by faults in defence. They found their best form from the start, and there was a threat in each attack they made.

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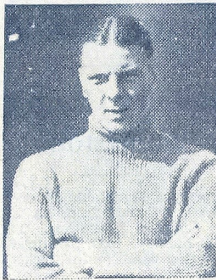
THEY STRUCK THE FIRST BLOW after six minutes play. Luton had opened quite as strongly as their opponents, but a quick throw-in and a centre by Starling gave BROOME an opening. He was unmarked, and found the net from close range. More evidence of the value of not wasting time in throwing in when near goal.

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FROM THAT POINT ONWARDS, the Villa were always winners. It was not that they penned Luton in. The forwards saw plenty of the ball, but they could simply do nothing with it. They seemed to be running up against a brick wall all the time. Stephenson and Dawes each had an opportunity which might have brought an equaliser, but both were off the mark.

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EVERY TIME THE HOME FORWARDS GOT GOING something seemed likely to



happen, but the second goal did not come until 29 minutes had gone. Starling again provided the centre, Nelson only half cleared, and the ball when to PHILLIPS, who had closed in. The winger evaded Smith, and coolly tapped it into the net.

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WORSE WAS TO COME, FOR BROOME gathered a through pass, swerved to the right, ran round King and Nelson, and Coen was beaten for a third time with a fast drive from close in. Luton were breaking away quite often, only to be sent back before they got to shooting range.

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HOWEVER, DURING ONE OF THEIR RAIDS, Callaghan miskicked, and left STEPHENSON with a fine opportunity. The winger steadied himself, and drove the ball out of Biddlestone's reach. Then just before the interval, the Town's hopes

were completely dashed by a goal direct from a corner taken by PHILLIPS. Nelson, Smith and Coen all missed the ball, and it found a billet in the back of the net.

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THE TOWN DID MUCH BETTER in the second half, when the Villa lost some of their brilliance, and especially in the early stages, they pressed hotly, without causing Biddlestone much concern. However, the home forwards were still a force to be reckoned with, but with the Town defence playing further up the field, they operated the offside trap with some success.

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A SERIES OF CORNERS fell to the Villa, but though the Town goal had one or two narrow escapes, there was no further scoring. Actually, the ball was twice put into the Luton net, but the points were rightly disallowed for offside. Stephenson gave Biddlestone his most difficult task of the afternoon, but he, Payne and Hancock missed chances.

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LUTON WERE FAR FROM THEIR best, and the Villa were quicker on the ball, and quicker thinking. The forwards were the most disappointing of the Town side, and there was not one who was outstanding. Stephenson was the best, and he showed a notable improvement on his previous displays this season.

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NEITHER INSIDE MAN WAS IMPRESSIVE, and few openings came from this quarter. They seemed disconcerted by the fast tackling of the home halves, and neither caught the limelight. Payne was held in a vice-like grip by Allen, but even after giving this due consideration, he did not have a good match. He seems to have lost a deal of his dash and determination.

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HANCOCK COULD NEVER GET THE BETTER OF CUMMINGS, and it was only rarely that he managed to centre. Finlayson and Fellowes vied with each other for the honours in defence. There was not much to choose between them, and both played wonderfully well against a brilliant set of forwards.

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NELSON WAS NOT THE FORCE HE WAS ON SATURDAY, and he was frequently beaten by Broom, especially when the ball was on the ground. When it was in the air, Nelson was usually first there. The main fault with King and Smith was in the first half, when they were frequently drawn out of position. Both put in some heroic work, and did well to keep the score sheet blank after the interval.

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COEN WAS NOT AS CONFIDENT AS USUAL, and I thought that had he come out of his goal, he might have saved the first and the third goals. He made several spectacular saves afterwards, but faulty positioning by the men in front of him, may have unsettled him.

ASTON VILLA 4
Broom (2), Phillips (2)

LUTON TOWN 1
Stephenson

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

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

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