Forwards Again a Great Disappointment

NO REPLY TO UNITED'S FIRST HALF GOALS

(By CHILTERN)

SHEFFIELD UNITED 2
Leyfield, Gardner

LUTON TOWN 0

SHEFFIELD UTD.—Smith; Hooper, Cox; Jackson, Johnson, Stevens; Leyfield, Gardner, Dodds, Eggleston, Jones.

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

Referee: E. Gamson, Kidderminster.

It is evident that very soon there will have to be forward changes in the Luton Town team. The front line gave another disappointing display against Sheffield United at Bramhall-lane, and had their finishing been half as good as it was last season, I am confident that a point, at least, would have been saved.

It was not that they had not the chances, for the ball was in the United penalty area more times than it was in Luton's, but there was a complete lack of punch near goal.

The Sheffield forward line was by no means brilliant, but each and every attack was to the point, and always looked like bringing something tangible

DAWES'S EFFORT

The same could not be said of Luton, for it was only on rare occasions that Smith was really tested, and good shots were few and far between. The best effort came from Dawes in the second half, when he made Smith go full length with a smashing shot from 25 yards out.

Dawes was the best of a mediocre line, and in the first half served up quite entertaining football, but received poor support from his partner, Hancock.

Hancock was very weak in finishing, and seldom made any real progress. Cox had him covered almost as well as Cummings had at Villa Park, and the outside-right had a lean time.

Once or twice in the first half he made good runs, but his centreing was poor, and he could never quite get the better of Cox.

PAYNE BLOTTED OUT

Even after due allowance for the bad passes he received, and the way he was marked by Johnson, Payne was far below his best form, and was never a danger.

Johnson simply blotted him out and must have been surprised at the ease with which he did it. There is no doubt that Payne should have put the Town ahead in the opening stages when he was sent through with a clear field.

He had only Smith to beat, but blazed over the bar. Had he been steadier then, the whole course of the game might well have been changed, for the United's only advantage over the Town was that their forwards put more bite and dash into their work.

ROBERTS OUT OF FORM

Roberts is bang out of form, and one can feel sorry that such a whole-hearted trier is doing so badly. Things simply won't go right for him, and, of course, the going is all against him.

Perhaps when the heavy grounds come we shall see some of his old style play, but he showed very little of it on Saturday.

Stephenson, too, was mediocre, and seemed often out of position when the ball was sent across to him. He showed flashes of his former brilliance, but invariably finished badly.

It is hard to understand what has happened to this line. The loss of form of Payne perhaps accounts for part of it, but the whole five seemed to lack lustre, and there is no fire in their play.

NOT MAKING GROUND

In midfield they did quite well, and combined as accurately as the United, though one or two players had a penchant for taking the ball back instead of making ground.

It was in the all-important finishing that the chief weakness was displayed, and several quite useful chances went astray.

The defence is having a trying time these days. With the forwards off colour, the ball is continually coming back to them, and the wing halves especially were run off their feet.

They did not get a lot of help from the inside men, and were on the go most of the match.

Both did finely under the circumstances, though Finlayson was at times slow in getting back. He provided one or two bright spots of footwork, while Fellowes stuck to his task grimly, and did best in defence.

NELSON HOLDS DODDS

Nelson again opened shakily, and made one or two mistakes with the bouncing ball in the early stages, but settled down to play another grand game.

Dodds, the home leader, was full of dash and determination, but met his match in Nelson, and was never given a chance of opening his account.

In the second half we had the unfamiliar sight of Nelson in the home penalty area, and actually testing Smith from ten or twelve yards up. Perhaps he was trying to show the forwards that shooting was possible.

Smith was as good as any back on the field, and his work was sound in every detail. In the first half, especially, I noticed him doing sterling work, and he saved very nasty situations.

SMITH IN STUBBORN MOOD

He was opposed to Leyfield, the former Everton winger, who, with Jones, I classed as Sheffield's best forward, but he got little change out of Smith, who was in his most stubborn mood.

Smith does not often let the winger come inside him now, and by eradicating this fault has improved his game immensely.

Jones, perhaps the fastest forward on the field, kept King busily occupied, and there were keen duels between these two. Honours were about even, and King gave little away. His quickness in recovery stood him in good stead, and he never spared himself in a tackle.

Coen had more to do than Smith, though he was never overworked. He had no chance with either goal, and was always safe and confident. Twice he saved shots that looked booked for the net, and I have no grumbles in this department.

DEFENCE NOT BLAMED

To my mind, the defence can carry no blame for the defeat. To concede two goals away from home is no disgrace, and there was not much wrong with their display.

Some added quickness in tackling is needed, but this is nothing to the faults forward.

The positioning of the defence was much improved, and the kicking all round was good.

SCRAPPY FIRST GOAL

The first goal was of a scrappy nature, and the ball crossed the goal twice before it eventually landed in the net.

The movement began with a pass by Dodds to Leyfield. He centred and the ball went right across to Jones, who returned it rather weakly along the ground.

It missed everybody in the goalmouth. Two United players tried to kick it and missed, and Nelson also failed to clear. It found its way across to LEYFIELD and his was an easy task to score.

This was after twenty minutes, and up to this point the Town had had an even share of the game, though the United forwards always looked the more dangerous.

Luton continued to hold their own in midfield, though the United were a shade quicker on the ball, and Stephenson saw a header drop on top of the bar and bounce over.

GARDNER INCREASES

Towards the interval, the United exerted considerable pressure, and were more on top than they were at any stage of the game.

A series of free kicks outside the penalty area brought some anxiety, and then GARDNER took a ball from the left, veered in the inside left position, and was allowed to go on several yards before beating Coen from short range.

There is no doubt that Gardner should have been tackled, though I admit the chance was taken very cleverly.

The second half was an uninteresting affair. The football shown was much below standard expected in the Second Division, and Sheffield were almost as big culprits as Luton.

COULD DO NO DAMAGE

If anything, the Town had more of the play, but they were driven back time and again before they could do any damage. There was too much fiddling in the penalty area, and they seldom looked like scoring.

The United swept down the field quite often, and the forwards, though better together than the Town's, could not break down the defence.

The game as a whole must have been a disappointment for the 20,000 spectators, and in the last half-hour, especially, the fare served up was very poor.

The pitch was difficult and the ball was always bouncing awkwardly, but the exchanges never proved very exciting. I saw one man carried off by stretcher bearers, but it must have been the sun that had affected him; he certainly could not have swooned because of excitement.

The United deserved their win, but they will have to show a vast improvement if they are going to reach the limelight this season. They were not in the same street as Aston Villa, and it might for all the world have been a very ordinary Third Division match.

I am sure that had the Luton forwards struck anything like their best form we should not still be looking for our first away point in the Second Division.

There was a point for the taking. The opportunities offered themselves, but it just happened that the Town could not take them. Luton can play much better than this, and they will have to, or they will be hovering near the bottom of the League table this season.