

Brilliant Forwards "Saints'" Defence

SUCCESS OF FERGUSON AND PARRIS

DAWES' BAD LUCK WITH HIS SHOOTING

(By CHILTERN)

SOUTHAMPTON 3
Osman (3)
LUTON TOWN 6
Roberts (2), Vinall (2), Ferguson,
Parris

SOUTHAMPTON.—Warhurst; Sillett, Roberts; Day, Affleck, Hill; Bevis, Parkin, Gaughran, Osman, Smallwood.

LUTON TOWN.—Dolman; King, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Ferguson, Dawes, Vinall, Roberts, Parris. Referee: W. E. Ross-Gower, Abbeywood.

During the second half of the Town's match at the Dell, a Southampton supporter sitting behind me asked his neighbour, "Why is it that this team is not at the top of the League?"

Well, that was the question most of the 20,000 spectators were asking long before the end, and no one could supply the answer. I could give several, but will content myself by saying that if Luton can reproduce this as their normal form, we shall have a team that is in the promotion category before the season is out.

That is not exaggeration, and anyone who saw the match must agree that Luton's display was worthy of a First Division side, and probably better than many teams in the top flight could put up.

BRILLIANCE AND CRAFT

Sheer brilliance and craft brought the Town's second away win and twice as many goals as they have scored in any individual match since the season opened.

Had they reached double figures, no one would have been astonished, for after Luton took the lead for the second time, there was only one team in it. The only time after the interval when the Saints did seem likely to make a fight of it was when they reduced the lead to 3-2. They did better then, but the Town quickly disillusioned them by going away and scoring again.

Poor Southampton! They had won their last three matches, and had ample grounds for expecting another victory in this match. When the Town took the lead after six minutes' play, the home supporters were not impressed.

"They all do that," they said, and I was informed with due smugness that most opposing teams drew first blood at the Dell, and then the Saints began to sit up and take notice.

DID NOT HAPPEN LIKE THAT

When the equaliser came, there was an "I told you so" look about everybody in the stand, and they simply sat back and waited for their side to begin and pile up the goals.

Well, it did not happen that way, for the Town went ahead again, and turned round with a goal in hand at the interval. No Southampton supporter was worried.

"Our team plays better in the second half," they said, but when Luton increased their lead again, they began to wonder whether they were dreaming or not.

Then Osman, who had a free transfer from Plymouth, and looks like making a star, slipped through and reduced the lead, and a roar with as big a volume as that usually heard at Tottenham broke out.

COOL AND UNHURRIED

The home players literally rolled up their sleeves, and prepared to show the Town the way home, but Luton simply carried on in their cool unhurried way, and soon had a two goals lead again.

After that, it was merely a question of how many times the Saints' defence would fail, and the so-optimistic supporters hoped that it would not be too bad at the end.

It was not too bad, due to a last minute effort by Osman, but to concede six goals at home is not an enviable feat for any team. To score six goals on an opponents' ground is certainly something to be proud about.

Luton have every reason to be proud about their display, and in this mood they would have beaten almost any side in the land. No other word than "wonderful" can describe the work of the forwards.

They were a brilliant, hard-working quintet, full of craft, and what is more always making ground. Each of the five shot whenever the opportunity offered, and Warhurst must have thought he had got on to a shooting range by mistake at some periods of the game.

QUICKER ON THE BALL

It was delightful to watch this much-maligned Luton team cut through the

opposition as if it was not there. The were yards quicker on the ball than the Saints, and scarcely a pass went astray.

The teamwork was great. Every player knew where to find the others, and the result was clever, pattern-work football that was never superfluous or unnecessary. After the first quarter of an hour, Luton always looked like getting goals.

The inside men were working like Trojans. Drawing the opposition, slipping the ball through here, slipping it through there, and giving their wingers plenty of scope.

The home defence simply floundered. They could not cope with this brilliance and Affleck could not hold Vinall, who looks the best proposition that Luton have struck in years.

The most improved part of the display



was in the finishing. Luton played good enough football at Coventry to have scored goals, but they did not.

SUCCESS OF THE WINGERS

On Saturday, they played even better, and got the goals, and after all, that is what counts in the game to-day. Another reason was that they had two wingmen who could carry on the attack, and make ground quickly.

Both Parris and Ferguson achieved fine success, and the wing problems that have been causing so much concern since the season began, are solved, for the time being at any rate.

The success of Ferguson was particularly pleasing, for with due respect to the other men who have been at outside-right, there has never been much danger from this point.

Ferguson played an eminently suitable game to the occasion. He disdained the frills, and only tried to beat his man when it was absolutely necessary.

For the most part, he lost no time in putting the ball into the middle, with the result that the inside men were provided with opportunities.

DELIGHTFUL CENTRES

He centred delightfully, and at least three of the goals came from him. It was a very satisfactory first display for Ferguson, and he has won himself a regular place now.

He is fast, too, and with Dawes in his best form, the left flank of the Saints' defence had something to go on with. Hill, the former Blackpool and Arsenal player, could do nothing to stem these two.

Dawes was a schemer de luxe. In the second half, he was doing very much as he liked. His brilliant footwork carried him through time and again, and he held the ball just long enough before making passes to Ferguson or to Vinall.

He was the only forward not to score, and yet he might have found the net on two or three occasions had he had a little more luck with his shooting. He probably had more shots than any other member of the forward line, but kept on missing by inches.

DAWES UNLUCKY

He was particularly unlucky just before the interval when he crashed in a terrific drive from outside the penalty area. Warhurst was hopelessly placed for it, but to his relief, it passed just the wrong side of the far post.

He was very unselfish, and this was true of every member of the team. The spirit was remarkable. Every man was playing for the good of the team, and after all, it does not matter who gets the goals as long as they come.

Vinall is one of the hardest-working centre-forwards I have ever seen. He was on the go from start to finish, and played fine football. Affleck, former Orient player, was totally unable to hold him.

Vinall held the line together finely, and was an ever-present danger in front of goal. Ever ready to take a chance, he was here, there and everywhere, helping on the ball, flicking it to his inside men, or hooking it out to the wings.

ROBERTS AMONG THE GOALS

Roberts distinguished himself by scoring twice, and he would have had a "hat-trick" but for an astonishing full length save by Warhurst. Still, he did

a lot more than score twice, for he and Parris linked up in grand fashion, and were as dangerous as the other wing.

He was always working and grafting, and finding openings in a defence that was well out of its depth before the end. I was glad to see him finding the net, and his first goal was the best of the match.

The second was a terrific header, and the ball landed in the net at as fast a pace as if he had kicked it. Roberts has never had a lot of luck with his finishing, but if he keeps plugging them in as he did on Saturday, he will be well up in the goal-scoring list at the end of the season.

PARRIS AT HIS BEST

Parris, in the second half, reached the form that earned him an International cap. Before the interval he had little of the ball, but afterwards, ably fed by Roberts and Fellowes, he made a hack of Sillett, and kept centring the ball beautifully.

His speed and flashing footwork drew applause time and again, and it was not often that he wasted anything. There was a tendency to be a little too elaborate at times, but it came off, and Parris had as big a share in the success as anybody.

There was an unusual number of shots from just outside the penalty area, and if the forwards will keep doing this, they must get goals.

In rhapsodising over the play of the members of the front line, we are apt to forget the splendid spadework put in by the men behind them.

CREDIT FOR THE DEFENCE

To the defence goes the credit of a difficult period in the first half, when the home side might easily have taken the lead.

It must be understood that Southampton were no mean opponents. The forwards played clever football, and in the first half, were often really dangerous. They might easily have taken the lead at one stage, but the defence gave nothing away.

Had not Dolman been at his best, Parkin would have put them ahead, but although his shot was going for the far corner of the net, the goalkeeper dived quickly, and reached the ball with the tips of his fingers. It was an astonishing save.

Well as the Saints played at times, they had not the same dangerous look about their attacks, and the Town were always the better finishers.

OSMAN WAS DANGEROUS

However, they had one forward in Osman who always had to be watched closely, and when he went to centre-forward in the second half, he caused one or two uneasy moments.

His sharpshooting brought him three goals, and the first two came as the result of canny through passes by Hill.

King and Smith were not at their best in their kicking, but they took no risk, and whenever there was any pressing danger, booted the ball into touch.

Both kept their wingers in subjection, and there was not much danger from this point. Their covering was good, and their tackling always keen.

Nelson held Gaughran finely, and even found time to aid the attack. His head was an asset, and he always had the centre of the field well in his pocket.

FINE WING HALVES

Finlayson and Fellowes played no small part in the success of the men in front of them, for they continually brought the ball through, and provided some grand material.

They were hard-working halves who never relaxed for a minute, and did quite as well in defence.

Dolman's task was not a heavy one, but he made several grand saves. He had no chance with the shots that beat him, for all three were clean cut goals, and the results of clever movements.

HOW THE GOALS CAME

Luton went ahead in six minutes when Ferguson worried the Southampton Roberts into losing the ball, and made a shot that Warhurst could only deflect. VINALL was lying handy, and he beat two defenders to the ball, and rammed it into the net.

The equaliser was the result of a long throw-in by Parkin, and a neat pass by Hill to Osman. The movement caught the defence unawares, and OSMAN easily beat Dolman.

ROBERTS put the Town ahead when Vinall flicked the ball through as Affleck came in to tackle. The inside-left took the ball to the edge of the penalty area, and then let fly. It was an unstoppable shot, and landed plumb in the corner of the net.

Six minutes after the resumption, good work by Parris and Dawes left FERGUSON with a chance. He headed in, and the ball came back to him. He turned quickly, and rammed it past Warhurst.

Southampton reduced their arrears when OSMAN took a pass from Hill and scored with a similar shot to that with which Roberts succeeded.

THREE HEADERS

However, Ferguson placed a corner nicely, and Vinall headed on to ROBERTS who gave Warhurst no chance with a fast header. Then PARRIS'S head also bobbed up to send the ball into the net when Dawes made a good cross.

Even then, the scoring was not ended, for VINALL jumped high in the air to nod in a centre from Ferguson. To give them their due, Southampton were plucky fighters to the end, and OSMAN put on their third goal four minutes from the end when Gaughran cleverly back-heeled the ball to him.