

TOOTILL'S GOALKEEPING

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	4
Payne (2), Dawes, Vinall.	
FULHAM	0

LUTON.—Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Dawes, Payne, Vinall, Roberts, Stephenson.

FULHAM.—Tootill; Hindson, Keeping; Warburton, Gibbons, Tompkins; Worsley, O'Callaghan, Rooke, Finch, Arnold.

Referee: L. E. Gibbs, Reading.

WHEN there is a victory so pronounced it is usually the winning side that gets all the kudos, and the losers are almost forgotten.

As a spectacle the match was the most one-sided we have seen at Luton this season, but the Town, while hitting the high lights in a manner that warmed up their supporters, are not entitled to all the praise.

Yesterday I read reports that almost suggested Luton players should collect and pay the Fulham goalkeeper a very substantial percentage of their bonus.

MERITED THANKS

Tootill was supposed to have presented Luton with three goals. I am more disposed to think that only his brilliance prevented a record score against the London side. If there was one individual on the field that merited the thanksgiving of his colleagues, it was the Fulham goalkeeper.

If Luton Town forwards and halves could maintain this determination and understanding there would be few teams escape with fewer goals against them.

Only one of the goals the Town scored could be regarded as any fault of the goalkeeper. That was the first, and it must be remembered that Tootill had already brought off half a score of thrilling saves, and at least three efforts when goals seemed certain.

The goalkeeper did not catch cleanly Mackey's free kick, and as the slippery ball escape him, Payne, as usual, happened to be all set for the unexpected, and took toll.

NONE COULD HAVE STOPPED THIS

The second goal by Payne no custodian could have stopped had he been octopus and centipede combined, and Vinall's was a delightful effort which the goalkeeper did the only thing he could do to prevent, for had he stayed at home Vinall would have run close in and scored, so he came out, and the Town centre-forward carefully glided the ball past him.

Dawes' goal was a surprise shot, for with conditions as they were and Dawes in the position he occupied, something more than average intelligence would have anticipated a shot; even so Tootill made a desperate effort, and managed to get to the ball, but it was like trying with greasy hands to hold an eel.

FULHAM'S FAILURE

Tootill earned the applause received; he kept goal magnificently, and if he could be regarded as weak in any way, then what good things could one say of any of his colleagues?

Somewhat slow, Gibbons nevertheless contrived to hold up the Town attack many times by sheer judgment, and with Hindson also doing very good work, and Keeping kicking well until injured, the Fulham defence deserved something better than censure.

Fulham's failure was in the attack; the forwards could not make any headway, and apart from Finch none of them seemed able to shoot. The tightening up in the Town defence was apparent, and it was good to see the ball banged up to the forwards persistently.

The Town adopted the right methods in the circumstances, and although in the second half it must have been very hard work to make the ball travel, clogged as it was with snow, they were much stronger all round than the opposition.

KEPT BALL MOVING

Much credit must go to the Town forwards for the manner in which they kept the ball moving along the line; they rested their own defence, and kept the visiting defenders on the run until at the end they could hardly raise a gallop.

Indeed, judging by the frequency with which Keeping addressed the referee, the Fulham players wanted to retire just after the change of ends, but the official would have none of it. After all, football is a winter game, and it would be surprising if there were no worse Saturday than this during the season.

The nearest of the abandonments was at Northampton, and the snow arrived at Luton some time after it had begun there. If Luton's game had been abandoned it would have been the only one in the south.

SOUNDLY BEATEN

Fulham were a soundly beaten side, and on this showing were the poorest team that had been seen at Luton this season, yet one could not overlook the fact that they had won against the Forest at Nottingham a fortnight ago, and not since the first match of the

season had four goals scored against them.

That betokens some improvement in the Town team, and I believe that the side has only to be kept together to climb gradually to somewhere near the top within the next two months.

The return of Mackey synchronises with the advent of wintry conditions, and we all know that he is as reliable as any player when the going is rough. Smith probably enjoyed himself as much as any player, and neither spared himself in his determination to get things done quickly and advantageously.

NO ANXIETY

Result was that Dolman saw very little



of the ball. In the first half he had little to do; not more than three shots, apart from the penalty kick, that could cause him the slightest anxiety, and when it comes to comparison I am not sure that a goalkeeper would not rather have to deal with a shot such as Rooke made from the penalty spot than such an awkwardly arriving ball as that with which Dawes succeeded.

Nelson had the mastery of the Fulham inside forwards. He just took the ball from them, and apart from one instance in the first half he missed nothing, and did not dawdle in making clearances.

But just as much as Nelson, I thought the two flank halves were praiseworthy. Both Finlayson and Fellowes checked the Fulham forwards, and showed ability to make ground and part to good purpose; invariably they followed up, and assisted the attack to concentrate and repeat assault after assault.

STEPHENSON IMPROVES

Stephenson showed signs of coming back to his best; there was more confidence in his work, and he got the ball across better. Had not Tootill made one gorgeous save in the first half I fancy Stephenson would have been among the goals more than once.

Actually, however, there was not one forward that could be singled out as better than his colleagues. Every man played for his neighbour and for the team, and in these days it is better to have five forwards who come within the category of "club" players, than to have one "smasher" and four moderates.

Vinall led the line well again, but how much better it would be if the other forwards would anticipate better that head flick that beats the opposing centre-half. Vinall and Payne go up to the high ball better than any two inside forwards I have seen for many seasons.

DAWES' NEW POSITION

Payne and Roberts also gave some little help to the middle men when Fulham had the advantage of the conditions, which were worse in the second half. Dawes is proving as much at home at outside-right as anywhere, and he can get the ball across splendidly. I admit that I like him better as an inside forward, but would not now interfere with this formation, for every man puts all he has into his job, and when Fred Roberts has polished up his shooting a bit more there is a real goal-scoring attack.

THE GOALS

Snow sprinkler was at work when the game opened, and the bores grew bigger as the game proceeded, so that in the second half the flakes were thicker, and the ground was soon wrapped in a white mantle. The lines could be detected, however, and there was never any difficulty in that respect.

Payne dashed right through from the kick-off before a Fulham player had touched the ball, and could he have had the right direction, his shot must have scored. It missed very narrowly. Almost continuously Luton were attacking, but shots from all quarters were brilliantly saved by Tootill, and one began to wonder if he would ever be beaten.

Then came Mackey's free kick; the ball rattled into goal as Tootill came

LUTON POLICE DANCE

"I think the Luton police are just too marvellous," said a young lady to a "Telegraph" representative as she was about to be "arrested" at the Assembly Hall, Luton, on Saturday night.

It was the annual dance of the Luton Borough Police Athletic Club, and 300 people made things go with a swing, with the help of the M.C.s, Inspector J. E. Perkins and Detective D. Grant, and the Mayfair Dance Orchestra.

Among those present was the Chief Constable, Mr. George Scott.

forward; he failed to hold it, and it slipped from his arms and rolled out to PAYNE, who hit it straight back into the net.

Luton's furious attacks might have been more fruitful with a little more steadiness in front of goal by the Town forwards, but the chief obstacle was Tootill.

A GLORIOUS GOAL

The goalkeeper had no chance with the next scorer, however. Stephenson got clear on the left, and at the right moment rapped the ball into the centre; PAYNE, racing across, never hesitated, but let fly at the running ball, and it passed just inside the post to beat Tootill's frantic dive. It was a glorious goal.

Immediately Fulham got away and the Town defenders were in a tangle for the first time. Nelson should have cleared, but did not control the ball, and with the backs out of position, Dolman raced out of goal; he was beaten and went down, but Finch, instead of shooting promptly for the empty goal, dribbled about, and when he dropped the ball into the goal there were already three or four defenders clustered there.

PENALTY SAVED

I could not say who handled, but was assured that Smith did so, though it seemed to me that the ball could have been headed clear. Handled it was, however, and the referee had to award a penalty.

Rooke took the shot, and this reputable marksman shot hard enough, but the ball was only a little out of a direct line to Dolman, and the goalkeeper safely stopped the shot, and got the ball away.

And the cheers were still ringing when the whistle sounded for the interval.

The teams turned round without retirement, and Fulham opened out as if they would soon get on terms. Finch had a good effort well saved by Dolman.

DAWES AND VINALL

They were soon put back on the defensive, however, and Tootill had his hands full again and again. The Fulham goalkeeper saved half-a-dozen shots, three in wonderful fashion, before he was beaten by DAWES' shot from the wing.

Soon afterwards the Fulham defenders were completely beaten by the passing of the Town forwards and halves, and VINALL swept past the backs; Tootill came out, and the ball was carefully directed past him and found the net.

Fulham pluckily stuck to their task, but they were never able to make very close contact with Dolman, and if the Town forwards had shot better, Tootill could not have made so many fine saves as he did in the last fifteen minutes.

Attendance, 13,393; receipts, £783/7/6.