

RELENTLESS TACKLING HOLDS UP FORWARDS

Town Deserve Point in Hard Game

PAYNE'S GREAT EQUALISER TO SIMPLE GOAL

BY CHILTERN

SWANSEA TOWN 1
Pearce
LUTON TOWN 1
Payne

SWANSEA TOWN.—Moore; Wright, Emmanuel (T.); Warner, Leyland, Simons; Foreman, Lowrie, Pearce, Olsen, Millington.

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

Referee: A. L. Davies, Wincanton.

In past seasons, close games between Luton Town and Swansea Town at Vetch Field have been the rule rather than the exception, and another was added to the list on Saturday.

A draw was a fair result of a game in which defences were rather surprisingly on top to a marked degree. It is generally acknowledged, and usually true, that forwards have the better of the argument when the going is heavy, but on Saturday the defences of each side had a grip on the opposing front lines.

The pitch really was bad, and soon cut up and became something approach-



ing a mud patch. The result was that accurate, clever football was almost out of the question, and what there was was played by Luton.

FRILLS CUT OUT

The Swans played the desperate kind of game anticipated after their disquieting run of non-success. Their tackling was keen, and they cut out all frills, and kicked the ball good and hard.

Actually, the Luton forwards were not allowed to play football, for they were put off their game by the quick, relentless tackling of the home halves and backs. The small ground did not help them, and it was on few occasions after the interval that the visiting forwards caused Moore much trouble.

Territorially, play went in favour of the Swans in the second half, but for all their pressure, they rarely looked like taking the lead.

Their attacks were dangerous up to a point, but their finishing was atrocious. As a spectacle, the game was not a success, but the play was as keen and as hard as any I have seen this season.

TOWN'S FINE SPIRIT

It was fight, fight, fight from beginning to end, and Luton played with a spirit that was commendable. The defenders never knew what it was to be beaten, and it was this trait in their play, as much as anything else, that brought another away point.

They simply had to keep hard at it, and never gave away an inch, for Swansea were eager to put paid to their barren patch.

Had their skill been equal to their enthusiasm and robustness, then Luton might have had a bad time, but their forwards failed with some fine opportunities, and they were often not disposed to take a shot when an opening presented itself.

TYPICAL CUP-TIE

The game can best be described as a typical Cup-tie. Play was often scrambling owing to the bad conditions underfoot, and the spoiling tactics of the defences.

However, the grim resolve was there all the time, and if play was not spectacular, it was a great battle for supremacy.

If I were picking a team to meet in the Cup, it would not be Swansea at Vetch Field. They are far from being a good side, but they are triers, and if they can sign on an inside forward or two with shots in their boots, they will be a tough proposition for anybody at Vetch Field.

Their two new wingers, Foreman and Millington, made their first appearances and, judging by this match, the former will be the more useful.

Foreman was the most dangerous of the forwards, and his ability to hold the ball stood him in good stead. Millington was in rather more of a hurry, though he got in several good centres.

MACKEY IN FORM

He was unlucky in meeting Mackey on one of his best days, and the right

back gave quite his best display of the season.

I have seldom seen trainers required on the field so many times during a match, and yet there were very few bad fouls.

In fact, the vicious offences could easily be counted on the fingers of one hand. There was some bother between Stephenson and Lowrie towards the end, but this was quickly smoothed over, and the referee delivered a little talk to each.

Luton were the worst sufferers as regards injuries, and Nelson, Dolman, Stephenson, Fellowes and Payne all had to receive attention at some period or other.

Nelson had five minutes off the field, and played under the handicap of an injured leg through threequarters of the match. Dolman hurt his knee just before the interval, and had a decided limp for the remainder of the game.

Fellowes, apart from receiving a couple of knocks, was far from well, while Stephenson had a slightly pulled muscle.

Swansea had their mishaps, too, and Pearce broke a small bone in his nose in a collision with Nelson.

EARLY REVERSE FOR LUTON

Luton had the disadvantage of being a goal down in two minutes, and this gave Swansea the confidence they needed. It was a simple sort of affair, and when Lowrie lobbed the ball into the goalmouth there seemed to be no particular danger.

Nelson followed it, and appeared to have it covered, but it seemed to bounce awkwardly, or perhaps the wind made it swing. In any case, Nelson did not get it under control, and PEARCE, who was following up, ran round the centre-half and beat Dolman from two or three yards out.

Pearce was rather fortunate to score, for he blinded the ball at the yard of space that was between Dolman and the far post. It was a bad goal as far as Luton were concerned, and it certainly seemed as if either Nelson nor Dolman could have cleared.

It was just one of those misunderstandings that happen time and again, but it probably cost the Town a point, for I think they would have won otherwise.

LOWRIE'S BAD MISS

The early goal was worth more than the mere fact of being ahead to the home side, for it put them on their toes, and what would have happened had Lowrie connected with a pass when he was left with an open goal, I do not like to think.

As it was, he missed his kick altogether, and Foreman struck the angle of the bar when the ball went out to him. If Lowrie had scored the home side would have been two goals up in five minutes, but Luton began to settle down gradually, and after Finlayson had taken a pot shot that Moore just managed to scramble away, the equaliser came.

PAYNE SCORES A GEM

In direct contrast to Swansea's point, the goal scored by the Town was a gem. The movement began in midfield, where Fellowes passed to Finlayson, who pushed the ball through to Roberts.

The inside left headed it to PAYNE, who took the ball in his stride, and rammed it low into the corner of the net, well out of Moore's reach.

This was after 17 minutes, and ended the scoring for the day. Payne's goal was admitted by the Swansea people to be the best scored at the Vetch Field this season, and it was more like the old Payne than we have seen for many weeks.

Play began to favour Luton, and with the forwards and half-backs shooting at every opportunity, Moore was kept busy. Finlayson made one grand effort, but his drive finished a foot outside the post.

LUTON MORE IMPRESSIVE

Pearce had a chance for the Swans, and then Dawes shot hard across the goal. Stephenson looked a certain scorer when he and Moore had a race for the ball, but the goalkeeper got there first and cleared.

Play passed quickly from end to end, with Luton always the more impressive near goal.

In the first ten minutes of the second half, the Luton forwards played some grand football. It was their best of the game, and Payne and Dawes were particularly prominent.

One run by this pair left Payne with a clear opening not far from goal when Dawes passed inside instead of taking a shot himself. Payne took a long time to control the ball, and he was hustled off it.

SWANSEA DESPERATE

It was the best chance that fell to the Town in the second half. Then Swansea began to press heavily, and it was sheer

desperation that got them through time and again.

However, desperation did not make them shoot accurately, and several chances were wasted. The Town defence gave them little lassitude, and there was no hesitation in tackling.

The nearest approach to a goal came when Lowrie headed in a centre from Foreman, and the ball passed across the goal, struck the outside of the post, and went out of play.

Otherwise, the excellent covering of the Luton defenders gave them little hope of another point, despite the frenzied cheering of the crowd, which numbered fewer than 10,000. They made enough noise for twice that number, but even this did not have the desired effect on the Swans.

NO REAL DANGER

There were several scrambles in the Town goalmouth, but never any real danger. In the closing stages, play lacked interest, and was very scrappy. Luton made several menacing attacks, but they, too, found a defence that was giving nothing away.

Before the end, Payne broke clean through, and Moore turned his shot round the post. However, the whistle had already gone for offside.

To take a point from this match was a great performance, and the Town will probably not have a harder match this season. Hard graft and the fine team spirit earned a point, and chief honours must go to the defence for a magnificent display.

FEW HOLES NOW

There are few holes in the rearguard now, and it is a hundred per cent. safer than it was a few weeks ago. Mackey and Smith are playing with that understanding and determination which made them one of the best combinations in the Southern Section, and the former had a particularly good match.

He played well up, and gave Millington rather an unhappy time with his keen tackling. The positioning of the backs has improved immensely, though Smith was occasionally inclined to give Foreman too much room.

This was the only blemish on a grand display, and they were two hard kicking, hard tackling backs, who gave no quarter.

The return of Mackey has helped Nelson, who has far less occasion to go out to the wing to cover up. The centre-half is now able to devote his time to the middle of the field, and he held Pearce finely.

NELSON A GREAT FORCE

Nelson opened none too well, but he gradually settled down to play a strong game. Though he was handicapped by injury he was a great force, and in the second half, particularly, he blocked the way down the middle.

His head saved many a situation, and the centre-half is right back at the top of his form. Finlayson also played a wonderful game. He was always in the thick of it, and suited his tactics to the heavy going.

He tackled hard, and was continually bringing the ball through, and making use of it for the men in front. Fellowes completed a strong front line, and he gave little away. Once or twice in the second half he was inclined to dally when the ball was in the penalty area, but nothing serious resulted from this.

He, too, was playing under a handicap, but little of this was apparent in his display. Dolman did not have a particularly busy afternoon, and most of his work came from centres or from long passes down the middle.

DOLMAN'S SOUND JUDGMENT

Although limping badly in the second half he showed sound judgment in coming out of his goal, and his anticipation and positioning saw him through.

He made one save from a point-blank shot by Lowrie that brought the house down but, on the whole, he had few difficult shots to handle.

Vinall was quite the most artistic forward on the field in the first half, and some of his footwork was brilliant. He led Leyland and his backs a merry dance, but after the first ten minutes of the second half he received very little of the ball.

He was ever a worker, and he and Payne changed places to the consternation of the home defence. Payne is gradually coming back to his best, and his liking for hard work in making him a success as an inside forward.

ASSISTED THE DEFENCE

He was up with the forwards, and back helping the defence when they needed assistance. Dawes and he were more in the picture than the other wing, and although the outside man did not always get the ball across he was always a dangerous number.

The left wing was well in the picture before the interval, with Roberts doing any amount of foraging, but, with the rest of the forwards, they faded in the second half.

The main reason for this was that the halves concentrated on defence. Stephenson suffered a leg injury, but he is not yet back at his best form of last season.

He does not take the ball on in his old style, but he is a trier all the time, and made some fine centres. Roberts was always in the thick of the fight, and did some clever work at times.

Leyland was the big man of the home team, and it is surprising that he has been in the reserve team for so long. Warner was also a fine force, and both backs were difficult to pass.

The main weakness was at inside forward, and the approach work was spoilt by weak finishing.