

# COVENTRY CENTRE'S OPPORTUNISM

## LUTON RALLY WAS TOO LATE

(By CRUSADER)

**LUTON TOWN** failed badly at home in their game with **COVENTRY CITY**. During the first twenty minutes, the City took their scoring chances so well that they then had the game safe bar accidents, and their defence saw to it in the remaining play that the accidents were rare.

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**OPPORTUNISM BY LAKE** during a bad spell of the Town defence captured the Town goal four times in that first quarter of the game, and, in this period, there could be no question that the City played brilliant football against a defence that had not settled down at all.

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**LATER**, the Town had nearly all the play, though the City's raids were ever dangerous, and often tested Coen with serious trouble. Mainly, however, the Town forwards were dominating midfield, and the City defence had a gruelling time, but withstood the challenges in great style, and, for that reason, the City deserved their success.

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**FROM THE KICK-OFF**, Luton attacked, and Payne nearly scored in the first minute, but he was baulked, and Stephenson could not get the ball quickly enough when it rebounded from a defender. Straight from the clearance, the ball was lunged forward to **LAKE**, and he caught Nelson on the wrong foot, and went right through to beat Coen with a fine drive.

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**LUTON'S LEFT WING** paved the way for another fierce onslaught on the City goal, and Morgan lifted over the bar a centre from Stephenson. Play remained in the City area for some time but again the ball was sent well forward, and the City left wing bored through, and Lake shot hard, Coen making a grand save at full length.

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**AGAIN THE TOWN GOAL ESCAPED** in extraordinary fashion, Taylor's header sending the ball on to Coen's body, whence it rebounded, and two corners followed. The Town replied on the left, and Stephenson swept across a centre, and Ferguson got the ball under control, but, before he could shoot, he was robbed.

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**CITY'S FORWARDS** played brilliantly at this stage, and Roberts just missed with a fine shot. Then Nelson hurt himself in reaching for a ball that fell short, and, before he could recover, **LAKE** was away again, racing through unobstructed, and beating Coen as the goalkeeper came out.

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**THREE MINUTES LATER** there was a similar move, and Nelson was again unable to show any pace, and **LAKE** darted through to accept a pass from the left wing, and put the City three goals up.

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**LUTON PRESSED HOTLY**, and Ferguson shot in splendidly, but Morgan, at full length, managed to turn the ball round the post. Roberts was stopped by the handling of a City defender, but the referee was unsighted. The Town stormed the City goal, but all to no purpose, and Redfern failed when he had a good chance.

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**ANOTHER SHARP RAID** by the City brought quick, short passing in front of goal, and **LAKE** secured and managed to get the ball past Coen, and it struck the upright, and glanced into the net, putting the City four goals up at the end of twenty-three minutes.

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**LAKE** nearly added a fifth just afterwards, Coen saving grandly at full length, and shortly afterwards he was damaged when he went down at full length to gather a ball with Lake rushing in to intercept.

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**LUTON REPLIED** fiercely, and the forwards began to dictate the course of the game. Twice Payne was held up within a yard or two of goal, and Redfern had a shot turned aside from close quarters. The same player failed badly a minute later when Payne gave him a neat pass.

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**IT WAS NEARLY** all Luton now Morgan tipped over a shot from Stephenson, and then managed to scramble the ball away when Redfern shot in. The City defence had a tough time, but played valiantly, the goalmouth being almost packed with defenders.

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**WHEN THE CITY BROKE AWAY** again, Taylor missed a very easy chance from close range by shooting tamely behind. There followed another terrific assault on the City goal, and Payne and

Roberts, in turn, had hard luck with splendid efforts. Corner after corner followed, and the City goal escaped in miraculous fashion.

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**LUTON WERE AT IT AGAIN** as soon as the game was resumed after the interval, and after lively exchanges in the first minute with the City defence, they were awarded a penalty kick, as Metcalf was adjudged to have handled. **PAYNE** took the spot kick and scored easily.

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**APART FROM OCCASIONAL RAIDS**, little was seen of the City attack, and play was in the City half nearly all the time. Redfern missed very badly again by allowing the goalkeeper time to rush out and cover the shot when he had plenty of time and space at which to shoot.

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**MASON AND FRITH** together dashed at Redfern as the latter was dribbling, and they crashed, Mason having to be assisted from the field with a gashed forehead. Luton were right on top, but could do nothing right in front of goal.

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**CORNER AFTER CORNER** was forced, and with the defence playing better than at any previous stage of the game. The City packed their goal, and the Town forwards failed to make a direct and quick shot when the ball came their way, but it would not run kindly for them, and they had to retire defeated.

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**LUTON'S DEFENCE** was lacking unity in the City's brilliant spell. There were big gaps down the middle, and Lake was given far too much scope, especially after Nelson was damaged. The backs failed to give the necessary cover, and Coen, who played brilliantly and could never be faulted, was given no chance with any scoring shot.

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**CARTE'S INEXPERIENCE** was obvious in the early stages, but he recovered to play a very useful game in the second half. Lutterloch, too, was some time in settling down, but there was none better in defence after the interval, and if the first half had been marked with the same judgment and determination, the City would not have scored a winning lead so quickly.

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**NELSON SUFFERED BADLY** from the strain, and was at fault to the extent that he allowed Lake to get on the wrong side of him in the first half. In the second period Lake never had a shot at goal, and Nelson had him well covered, but the damage had been done. Finlayson and Fellowes were prominent in attack, but neither took particular interest in defence.

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**FORWARDS WERE LACKING** in combination for a time, but when they got together they were thrustful, and against a less resourceful defence they must have scored goals. Nevertheless, there was too much dalliance, Redfern especially being a sinner in this respect, though he conspicuous with good passing. What was of more importance was first-time shooting, and he had more opportunities than any other forward.

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**ROBERTS PLAYED** gallantly, and Payne was also a determined force, but they were usually running into a crowd of defenders. Ferguson and Stephenson did their parts well, the latter being dangerous more often than any other forward, but the finishing of the line as a whole was baulked by a resolute defence.

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**CITY'S SUCCESS** was due more to the strength of their rearguard than to the opportunism of Lake, invaluable though this was. Only a courageous and well-balanced defensive scheme could have withstood the fierce pressure launched against it for nearly an hour, and every man, Mason most of all, deserved high praise.

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**CITY'S ATTACK** showed great cleverness in the first half-hour, but afterwards simply faded out, and little was seen of it again. It was really an extraordinary change from what they had shown in about half a dozen raids, though at no time did they manage to sustain attack for a lengthy period.

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**COVENTRY CITY** ..... 4  
Lake (4)

**LUTON TOWN** ..... 1

Payne (penalty)  
**LUTON TOWN**.—Coen; Carte, Lutterloch; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Ferguson, Redfern, Payne, Roberts, Stephenson.

**COVENTRY**.—Morgan; Astley, Metcalf; Frith, Mason, Archer; Taylor, Roberts, Lake, McDonald, Brown.

Referee.—E. C. Carnwell, Lichfield.