

Snap Goals Against Unsettled Defence

VISITORS' DEFENSIVE SCHEME AN EXAMPLE FOR LUTON

(By CRUSADER)

COVENTRY CITY 4

Lake (4)

LUTON TOWN 1

Payne (penalty)

LUTON.—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.

Without hesitation I say that this was a freak result on the run of the play. Reason is that I have asked myself what difference could I or anyone else have done from what the Town players endeavoured to do in the circumstances.

All that one can say about it is that for that mad period of half an hour everything went the way that Coventry wished. They were supposed to have reached the stage when the gland treatment they have had during the last three weeks would take effect. I confess that when they had scored four goals in twenty-three minutes I began to wonder when the effects of the gland treatment would have worn off.

But it was not the gland treatment that made the difference. I am going to say that as a side taking the game through the Town were the better in nearly all except the matter of co-operation in defence.

That is the only fault I am going to find with the Town team. Over and over again I have tried to emphasise the weakness here, and just as on previous occasions I hold that it was not so much the failure of the individual as the failure of the system, or the lack of system.

AFTER THE INTERVAL

What happened to the City in the second half? They were not half the team they had appeared to be in the first twenty minutes, and the man who had scored four goals off his own bat and seemed to be in a fair way to creating a record never had a shot at goal worth calling a shot in the second half.

Because the defenders found a better way of resisting attack, and the whole trouble was that they did not start their game in that fashion. There were wide avenues all down the middle of the field, and once Nelson was passed there was none who had attempted a cover of him.

While Nelson was well beaten by Lake for the first goal—only because the ball bounced awkwardly for him—in the subsequent play he was handicapped because he had striven to collect a pass from Lutterloch and had pulled a muscle or in some way hurt his thigh, and he had not the pace to cope with a nimble-footed player like Lake.

LACKING IN RECOVERY

Lack of power in recovery was the worst feature of the Town's defensive play in this shocking period, and it continued in more or less degree until half-time, for Coventry might well have had three or four more goals if they had taken easy chances, or Coen had been less efficient.

It is this absence of cover that has resulted in the Town having so many goals against them this season. Players reach a certain position and then stand and watch the tackle of a colleague instead of hastening back to cover the line of fire. I noticed this again and again in the first half, but in the second we saw Lutterloch come across at top speed and frustrate an attack that had managed to elude the centre-half.

There is so much reasoning to be done in the game, and so much that could be avoided with the exercise of a little more intelligent co-operation. Gland treatment may be good or not, but another brand new set of glands could not beat practised co-operation, and until there is a better development of

understanding in the Town rear the goals will be piled up against them.

COVENTRY KNEW HOW

The Town attacked the Coventry goal quite three minutes for every one minute that Coventry were at the other end. Look at the persistent efforts in the second half especially, and when you have recalled them, think what Coventry did to disarm the attack. When a defender was beaten he was covered, sometimes by a flank half, sometimes by an inside forward, very often, indeed, and there was more close concentration in the City penalty area than there was in that of the Town.

So I am not going to "run down" Carte or Lutterloch. I think the former lived up to his best form with the Reserves, and the latter went even better. They kicked well, and Lutterloch often tackled splendidly, while his speed in recovery was notable, and I will only say of Carte that if his timing of tackles were as good as his timing of kicking he would not be out of the Town team. That should come with experience, for he keeps his eye on the ball very well.

Maintaining their customary game of preferring attack to defence, Finlayson and Fellowes were slow in recovery, but both did good work for their forwards. They should be considered in this question of co-operative scheming for the defence. Neither gets back quickly enough, and I daresay each knows it.

FORWARDS PLAYED WELL

The forwards played really well, though I was somewhat disappointed in Redfern. He had the skill, but he does dally so much when he has beaten a



man, and he was also at fault in failing to take chances quickly. Roberts played a stout game all through, and because he played the same sort of game as the City forwards at times he had his name taken.

Ferguson was able to get the ball across, but now and then he dallied when the centre was required, but Stephenson had a fairly good game without being in luck with his finishing, and Payne was the best of the line, showing plenty of dash and courage as usual, and making great efforts to land a goal.

A SOUND DEFENCE

The City's defence deserves all the good things said about it. Morgan was a safe custodian, and his backs, without being anything out of the ordinary, kicked and tackled well. They also had a capital understanding with Mason, who was a big stumbling block, and the Town forwards might well have shifted the point of the attack more often. However, he kept so close in goal that he was always thereabouts at the crucial moment.

Frith and Archer worked hard all the time, and did more in defence than in attack. The inside forwards were very active, for they were half-backs as often as they were forwards, and they kept up the pace very well. McDonald was clever, sometimes too clever, and Roberts made neat moves. Taylor was not in evidence a great deal, but Brown was a power in the first half, and less so in the second.

Lake was always a danger, and always has been to Luton, whatever he has been elsewhere. He has speed, and he kept his head well when he had a chance. Luckily for him he found open spaces that never fell to the lot of Payne.

To say that the Town should never have lost the game is correct on the run of the play, but the City took their chances better, and to that extent they merited their points, but I cannot see them beating Aston Villa for premier honours, and I should rate them as something in the same class as Burnley.

THE SCORING

Luton opened with a strong attack, and Payne went close, but Astley managed to prevent Stephenson shooting from close quarters. Then came a big kick up the field, and Lake and Nelson had a tussle in midfield which the City forward won. LAKE raced through, and

wound up with a shot that gave Coen no chance.

This was after three minutes' play, and during the next few minutes there were hot assaults by the Town followed by swift raids by the City. Coen brought off a great save, and his goal escaped luckily twice. Then came another fatal error. Lutterloch had the ball in mid-field near the touchline, and tried to pass to Nelson; the centre-half had to stretch for it, and obviously injured himself. A City player promptly hit the ball into the middle, and Nelson could not hold LAKE, who had an uninterrupted course to goal, and shot through as Coen came out.

Three minutes later there was a like move, and again LAKE dashed through the space and took a pass from the City left wing to score the third goal.

Luton's attacks were persistent, but the City defence was now playing with great confidence, and with the Town forwards muffing their chances Morgan kept his charge intact.

Then at the twenty-third minute came another goal by LAKE, who secured after close work by the visiting forwards, and gave Coen no chance.

From then to the interval the City's raids were fraught with danger, but Luton's attack pressed hotly, and in the last few minutes before the change of ends the City goal escaped again and again, and Morgan saved finely.

PAYNE'S SOLITARY

Straight from the kick-off on the restart the Town attacked, and within a minute they had been awarded a penalty kick, although I do not think that Metcalf intentionally handled the ball as Ferguson kicked it. PAYNE made no mistake from the penalty spot.

For the rest of the game it was nearly all Luton. The City raided at times, but they never showed up in the same fashion as in the first half, and Nelson and his backs held the line well.

On the other hand so did Mason and his co-defenders hold the Town forwards, and the game ended without further score.

Attendance 17,200; receipts £981 11s. 6d.