

Team Work Was Missing

INJURY TO NEW PIVOT A BIG HANDICAP

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN 1
Ferguson

SOUTHAMPTON 3
Osman (2), Parkin

LUTON TOWN. — Coen; Smith, Lutterloch; Finlayson, Lewis, Loughran; Ferguson, Redfern, Vinall, Roberts, Stephenson.

SOUTHAMPTON.—Warhurst; Henderson, Roberts; King, Affleck, Hill; Bavis, Bates, Parkin, Holt, Osman.

Referee: W. E. Ross Gower, Abbey Wood.

Just about the poorest game we have seen at Luton this season. Indeed, many of the supporters freely and emphatically expressed the view that it was the poorest game they had seen on the ground for several seasons.

I wouldn't find fault with that, either, but what I would fume against was the attitude of sections of the crowd who couldn't admire even the spirit of the players who were doing their utmost, however badly awry with their intentions, when things were going all against them from the start, and when they were labouring under a very severe handicap.

People who do this sort of thing should take a look at all-in wrestling and learn something about sportsmanship, for they would learn more even there than they already know.

From the purely football aspect Luton were the better side in the matter of control and scientific effort, but team work was missing again, even such as could be expected when reduced to ten men. Tactics or trying to dribble, dribble, dribble through a compact and hard hitting defence was largely responsible for the failure to collect points.

ODDS AGAINST

Southampton were the poorest football side I have seen this term.

When I said that I gave an opening for the retort, which duly came: "Well, what about Luton?" Which showed me that the people who asked that could not appreciate the difference between a team of eleven and a team of ten.

Not only was it a loss of strength, and that in a quarter where it was most needed, but it meant that the attack was reduced to patchwork, and combination made much more difficult. These are the things that those who have never kicked a ball overlook, and even some who have kicked a ball quite a lot forget their own experiences.

Individually the Town were more skilful. They were pressing for something like four-fifths of the game, and even with ten men they had so much of the play that they should have won.

DEFENCE LOST CONFIDENCE

The defence lost a lot of confidence through that first ridiculous blunder, and one hardly knows whose was the fault.

Smith was neglecting Osman, Lutterloch went for the ball and for some reason made only half an attempt to play it, and apparently left it to Coen, who left his effort too late, and as OSMAN was quick the ball was scraped into the net.

It seemed to me that the trouble was that we have so often seen in the defence—sheer lack of understanding. Lutterloch should either have gone for the ball or attended to the man and left Coen the ball, but it seemed to me as if he tried to keep an eye on the ball and an eye on the man and in the end he lost both.

I do not know if either asked the other to take the ball or leave it, but I can imagine that if Dolman had been in goal we should have heard him tell Lutterloch what to do. But in any case there should be no need for stentorian yells as to what a player should do; it should be known almost without thinking whether the ball belongs to the goalkeeper or the back.

THE WORST MISHAP

Then there came the mishap which caused Lewis to leave the field. Just how it occurred was difficult to see, but apparently he got a crack on the shin which laid him out.

He returned with a very bad limp, and just in time to see the Southampton right wing best the Town defence by sheer strength, because some defenders would not boot the ball hard out of danger, but must keep tickling about and trying to outwit three or four players in the space of two or three yards. Very pretty when it comes off, but silly when it does not, and once again none thought that OSMAN was worth attention, for he had heaps of room all to himself.

After this there could be no quibble about the manner in which the Town players went about their business. They worked tremendously hard, every man pulling out to the last ounce, and Fred Roberts went to centre-half and worked like a man and a half. Lewis was hobbling at outside left, but it was clear that he was in great pain, and was not of much use.

Chances there were for the Town forwards, for Southampton had to concen-

trate on defence, and with any good fortune at all the Town must have equalised. The ball would not run for them, or if it did they were so surprised that they could not do the right thing in the quickest way. Of course, if Redfern had scored when his shot hit the bar the supporters who were jeering would have changed their tune to a different key.

Redfern should have scored then, and Vinall and Redfern should have scored two or three times if they had shot instanter instead of persisting in dribbling against players who were too big and strong to be beaten by embroidery.

So we passed to the second half, and again there were long bouts of pressure in which individualism marked the efforts, and although very much clever work was seen the need was for effective and forceful measures, and very few good shots were essayed by the Town forwards.

Finlayson and Loughran joined in many assaults, and both did much brilliant work, and spoiled much also by their clinging to the ball until they had lost it. This was seen again and again, players not being content to draw a man and pass the ball, but waltzing round a couple and then trying to do it again, because the Saints were fairly quick in recovery, and every man was intent upon holding the lead established.

Raids by the Saints also caused many a flutter among the Town defenders, and the uncertainty and the poor judgment in kicking—Fred Roberts was an exception—showed how much need there was for a level headed organiser in defence.

When Parkin was unlucky with a fine drive which hit the bar there was almost a panic among the Town defenders, and shortly afterwards the best movement that we had seen from the Saints enabled PARKIN to score the third goal with a fine shot. Coen having no chance.

THE ORPHAN GOAL

FERGUSON, who had all along been a live wire, though overdoing the dribbling just as much as the others, reduced the lead when he snapped up a loose ball, veered into the centre, and after dribbling round a couple of men he stopped the ball and did it again before shooting.

Warhurst parried the ball as he came out, but it spun over his hands and entered the goal. At least, the referee was certain it had, but the "Telegraph" photographer and three or four others assured me afterwards that the ball was not over the line at all.

The referee said it was, but taking the opinion of the people close at hand it was not the only mistake he made by any means.

There was no further score, and so the supporters went home talking about how much Joe Payne had been missed, and what a calamity it was that he had been allowed to go, and what would have happened if he had been there, and how soon the Town would be at the bottom of the table, and that we should be asking for re-election to the Third Division in May, 1939

Which all goes to show what a very human lot we are. The Town have played worse—not much—and won matches. They can play a lot better, and I have not met anyone who would admit that man for man Southampton were better, but the visitors knew the value of team work, and they were to that extent value for their success, if

TURF GOSSIP



WOLVERHAMPTON

- 1.45 **FRIAR'S RUM**, with Plain Polly a place.
- 2.15 **THORNDOWN**, with Swindle next best.
- 2.45 **AFRICAN SISTER** to win from Khushi.
- 3.15 **KNOCKMAROON** should win from (2) Foxfield and (3) Ruddington.
- 3.45 **TEME SAND** may win from (2) Bryan O'Linn and (3) Perfect Part.
- 4.15 **MEDOC II**, should win from Hill Song.

Nap: **KNOCKMAROON**.

Double: **KNOCKMAROON** and **MEDOC II**.

Tote Double: **AFRICAN SISTER** and **TEME SAND**.

SPECIAL SYSTEM SELECTION:
ASCETIC'S PRIDE, if abs., Muezzin to win the 1.45 race.

we always remember that they were eleven against ten.

I won't let you forget that

THE DEFENCE

Coen does not easily regain confidence once it has been bruised as it was when the first goal was scored. I am not blaming him for either of the other two goals, though he must take his share of the blame for the first. Smith gave to the very limit of all he had, and despite the fact that Osman scored a couple of goals, it might have happened if there had been half a dozen backs there.

Osman's luck was in, though one must always give him the credit for being at home to opportunity. Smith kicked well and tackled strongly, but he remains what he is, incurable as a wanderer from position, and in this game there was some justification for it after the first goal.

Lutterloch also suffered again from that first goal. His kicking was not so good as usual, and he was uncomfortable in his tackling, lacking the fire he had previously shown. He will get over that all right.

ROBERTS WAS GOOD

What Lewis would have been like one can only imagine, but it is just possible that if he had been present the Saints would not have scored more than their first goal. I think the defence would have been compact in similar fashion to that of the winners. Fred Roberts played grandly all through, and, really, if he would play at flank half as he played at centre-half the Town appear to have a ready-made half-back, though for my part I shall still think that Kidd's turn is overdue.

Finlayson worked might and main and Loughran the same. Both showed a control that could not be imitated by Southampton, but how one wished they would be content to spoil an opponent and then to serve their forwards. They could not, for again and again they embarked on sinuous tours which often ended abruptly and with loss, and, what was worse, their loss meant gain to Southampton in a positive way, for the visitors' raids were made easier by the lack of opposition.

Ferguson and Stephenson both played earnestly, and made many good runs, and quite a lot of centres, but they, along with the inside forwards, Vinall and Redfern, were prone to hang on to the ball when the game should have been opened out. What was lacking more than anything else was the prompt shooting and the thrustfulness at close quarters.

On the whole the Town players gave off their best. They made a lot of tactical mistakes, fore and aft, but luck was dead against them from the start. They can do better, and will do better.

Southampton's defence was about the best part of the team. Warhurst kept goal very well; his backs were of the safety brand rather than polished, and Affleck played a strong defensive game.

The flank halves did a lot of running about, and were often easily beaten, but were facile in recovery.

The forwards were fairly good; they did not have the opportunities that fell to Luton, but they knew better what to do with them, or how to take them, and that was their big advantage.

Attendance: 14,265. Receipts: £765 14s.