

Forwards Fail In Finishing Skill

NEW PLAYER'S PROMISE

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN 2
Roberts, Connelly
SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY.. 2
Robinson, Fallon

LUTON.—Coen; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson Fellowes; Hancock, Connelly, Vinall, Roberts, Stephenson.

WEDNESDAY.—Smith; Westlake, Catlin; Ashley, Millership, Walker (F); Massarella, Robinson, Hunt, Napier, Fallon.

Referee: G. W. Jones, Nottingham.

Luton Town did something to maintain the reputation of Second Division football as the snag upon which so many prophets fall. They failed to fulfil expectations, and mainly because the forwards did not function well as an effective attack.

True they did most of the pressing, but they failed badly in the consummation of their approach work. It's not much good planting trees that will not bear fruit, and the Town forwards put in a tremendous amount of spade work to no purpose.

None would deny that they had by far the better of the run of play, and also that they had far more and easier opportunities than fell to the Wednesday. I fancy that if the attacks could have been reversed there would have been many more goals, or, as some of the crowd reminded us, that if Joe Payne had been there we should have won comfortably.

Impossible comparisons bring little consolation, however, and there were aspects of the game which led me to the view that we could be thankful for even half a loaf.

WEDNESDAY HAD UNDERSTANDING

Wednesday might well have won, but that would not have done justice to the Town's efforts, and it would have given the visitors a superiority that they could not rightly establish on the run of the game. Their defence had a very much harder task than the Town rearguard: their goal had many more narrow escapes, and if the Town forwards had been able to shoot well there would not have been any quibble about the better side. For all that, however, I liked immensely certain phases of the Wednesday's play.

In the first place they appeared to know better what they wished to do when they had the chance; their control was better, too, and careful reflection on the game leads me to the opinion that the main reason why the Town were not beaten was because of superiority at half-back.

The Town could not claim to be better in any other department, and it was well for them that the Wednesday halves could not give such fine support to the forwards. That was to be expected to some extent, for Ashley is a full-back and was rarely up far enough to back his forwards in the manner that Finlayson and Fellowes did their job.

A DOUR DEFENCE

Smith kept goal very well indeed, but I liked the cool and certain fashion in which both Westlake and Catlin went about their duties. There was little to choose between them, and the former, having his first game with the seniors, was not a whit behind the International partner. Both kicked cleanly and skilfully, and the tackling was crisp and clean.

I could not say the same about the tackling of Walker, and he and Fallon were the only two players on the Wednesday side that were inclined to kick over the traces. Millership was a plugger, sticking closely to Vinall when the latter remained in the centre of the field.

Robinson struck me as the best forward on the field. Napier wanted to do clever things, but required more time than Robinson, and I do not think the latter ever wasted a ball during the course of the match. Hunt was almost blotted out by Nelson, but Massarella needed a lot of watching, as also did Fallon, for both were nippy and knew how to cut in for goal.

TOWN DEFENCE

Making allowance for the trouble in controlling the ball on the firm ground and with a playful breeze causing peculiar things to happen during the flight of the ball, the Town team did not show up convincingly. The team seemed to lack balance and yet one could not say exactly why this was the case. The defence was shaky at times, and while individuals played well, the collective effort left something to be desired.

There were occasions when two or three players were chasing the ball towards the goalkeeper, and he did not know whether to come or stay. Surely it should not be difficult to make some proper arrangement so that the goalkeeper would know it was expected of him to take the ball, and this could be done if players would turn to face the opponent and keep him off while the goalkeeper acted.

SHOULD COEN HAVE SAVED

Three times Coen half-started and then halted, and then came on, and each time there was a colleague running after the ball and trying at the same time to keep an eye on an opponent.

Some thought that Coen should have saved the second goal, but I did not take that view, although in the ordinary way one expects a goalkeeper to prevent a ball going over his head. However, the

ball was lifted high enough to beat him, and it was a lob rather than a direct shot, and a very good effort, too.

Mackey had a lot of tussles with Fallon, and did very well, and his kicking and heading were sound enough, even if he lacked something in pace. Smith was inclined to give Massarella more scope than was advisable, but he brought into the game plenty of dash and rarely could be faulted in his kicking, while occasionally he made a dash up the field that would have been less disquieting if players had dropped back to cover him.

NELSON ON TOP

Nelson gave Hunt precious little room, and it was good to see that he wasted no time in clearing when danger threatened.

Nelson gave no qualms at all in that matter, and so there were no yells from the crowd for him to kick clear. In view of the class of the opposition of Wednesday's inside forwards, I thought Nelson had a splendid game. Finlayson had no equal as a flank half, and Fellowes also was good, even if he was a bit leaden-footed at times. They served their forwards with nice passes, and Finlayson was frequently as good as a sixth forward.

THE NEW FORWARD

Of course, all eyes were on Connelly, and we wanted to see him do well. There were conflicting views about his play. One whose opinion I respect very much told me that he was not impressed at all. Others think that Connelly was the best forward on the field.

That he is a clever player is unquestionable, and perhaps I am biased about the old-fashioned type of football, but he struck me as generally content to be a forward, and disinclined to do a lot of chasing. I have never yet made up my mind to accept the theory that inside forwards must get back a lot.

There are times when it is very helpful to the middle line, but the main thing is that every player should know his job, and I prefer to see a man keep position. His colleagues then know as a rule where he is to be found, and that makes for effective combination.

Connelly has quite a lot of tricks, and his readiness to shoot was a valuable trait. I should like to see him exploit the cross pass more, and be content to draw a man, but generally I thought he was as clever an inside forward as Luton have had for years.

VINALL'S SHOOTING

Roberts played whole-heartedly as ever, and got through a lot of work. Stephenson had a very good first half, but fell away somewhat afterwards. Hancock did well up to a point, but shared with others the disposition to hang on when a pass would have been more profitable.

Vinall did not have a good match at all. He was working hard all the time, but was right off colour in shooting, and did not hold the line together well. His dashes to the wing were more spectacular than helpful because he would hang on to the ball, with the obvious sequel that by the time he began to do things the goal area was packed with defenders. No player works harder than Vinall, but quicker shooting and first-time distribution is essential from a centre-forward.

It was in the lack of good marksmanship that the forward line failed, and for that reason the Town had to be satisfied with one point only.

THE GOALS

Wednesday made a few raids, but for the most part the Town held the upper hand in the early stages, and should have had an early lead. Whenever the Wednesday made a move, however, they were the more dangerous, and Coen had to take an awkwardly dropping ball from Fallon.

In a sudden spurt by the Wednesday ROBINSON never gave the pass that the Town defenders expected, but went through solo and finished up with a shot that had Coen beaten all the way—a delightful goal, after 17 minutes' play.

The Town had not long to wait before drawing level. Finlayson secured after the ball had bobbed about a bit on the right, and he swiftly banged it right across goal; ROBERTS had sensed the move, and raced in to jump high and meet the ball squarely with his head, and it flew into the net at a great pace. This also was a grand goal.

For the rest of the half it was nearly all Luton, and there was a good deal of ill luck for them. Finlayson drove in a mighty shot which the goalkeeper tipped on to the bar, whence it bounded over. Stephenson later rattled the bar with a tremendous drive from a free kick; Connelly had several shots that went close or were well saved, and Vinall missed one or two chances.

CHANCES MISSED

In the first minute of the second half Connelly nearly scored, and at the other end Coen brought off a great save at full length from Robinson. The Town held the upper hand, and the Wednesday defence was given little respite, but chances were missed through dalliance and bad shooting, and if the ball was aimed aright Smith was safe.

Wednesday's raids began to show more liveliness, and eventually there came a period in which they had the Town defenders all at sea, and the goal escaped in extraordinary fashion when

(Continued in next column)