

Chesterfield Make Goalscoring Look Simple

TOWN DEFENCE AGAIN IN TROUBLE

Home Side Make Most Of The Wind

(By CHILTERN)

CHESTERFIELD 5
Clifton (2), Fisher, McMillen,
Bonass.

LUTON TOWN 2
Stephenson, Ferguson.

CHESTERFIELD: Moody; Millburn, Kidd; McMillen, Sliman, Weightman; Hughes, Clifton, Fisher, Ramage, Bonass.

LUTON TOWN: Coen; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Ferguson, Connelly, Vinall, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee: S. Hadley, Leicester.

If Luton Town are to retain their Second Division status, the defence must show a big improvement on its display at Chesterfield on Saturday.

Throughout the season, the rearguard has been the weak spot, and one does not need to be a mathematician or an ardent student of football to realise that. One glance at the League table will reveal this information.

When a side scores two goals away from home, it has every reason to expect a point, but two goals have not been sufficient in many matches this season.

After watching the match at Chesterfield on Saturday, I am forced to the conclusion that the main trouble is at full back, and that it is mainly a matter of positioning.

Apart from that, there is little understanding with the halves and the covering up was conspicuous by its absence.

AID OF THE WIND

Having the aid of the wind in the first half was a big help to the home side, but there is no doubt that they should never have scored four goals before the interval.

Luton had more of the play against the wind than Chesterfield did, and at times the forwards played some brilliant football. However, they came up against a defence that was more solid in every detail than theirs, and they could not score.

They were unlucky on more than one occasion, but bad luck does not count in this game. On the other hand, every time Chesterfield attacked, they looked like getting goals, and those they did get were simple affairs.

CLOSE RANGE GOALS

There was not a good goal among the five, and all except the fourth were scored from close range—ample proof that something was wrong with the covering.

It was disheartening to the forwards, for after they had had a spell on the offensive, the home forwards would move down the field, weave their way through the defence, and simply plant the ball into the net.

It was goalscoring made easy, and on the other hand, it was goals thrown away. A margin of 5-2 at the end flattered the home side to a great extent, but I had to admire the whole-heartedness of their play, the way they kept the ball moving, the way they fought, and the way they took their chances.

FIGHTING ALL THE TIME

As far as football skill was concerned, they were no better than the Town, but they never gave up from start to finish, and they were working and fighting for the ball all the time.

Certainly Luton fought back, but they had not that never-say-die spirit of the Chesterfield players, and teamwork was lacking in many respects.

What would have happened if the Town had had the advantage of the wind in the first half, I cannot venture to say. The forwards were always playing well enough to get goals, and they might have built up a substantial lead by the interval, just as Chesterfield did.

To face a wind of such velocity was a big handicap, and to attempt to wipe out a four goals deficit in the second half was heart-breaking.

BAD LUCK FOR VINALL

At one time it looked as if a point might be saved, and they might have had some reward had a pile-driver from Vinall found the billet instead of striking the underpart of the bar.

That would have made the score 4-2

midway through the second half, and would at least have given the Town a sporting chance of pulling the game out of the fire.

The game never rose to any great heights, for the wind and the hard ground made good football almost impossible. The wind played all sorts of tricks with the ball, with the result that mistakes were frequent, and the game often flagged.

Although Chesterfield began with the wind in their favour, Luton were the more sprightly in the early stages, and the homesters were lucky to escape when Stephenson made an opening and there was no one near enough to apply the finishing touch.

CHESTERFIELD LEAD

Again Vinall went close when he dashed up to connect with a nice centre from Ferguson. When Chesterfield took the lead after 12 minutes, it was against the run of the play.

The ball should have been cleared long before, for it crossed the goal twice. There was a scramble in the penalty area, and Ramage fell when attempting to pass. He touched the ball, however, and it went through Mackey's legs to CLIFTON, whose task from close range was simple.

There were appeals on the grounds of offside, but the referee had no hesitation in awarding a goal. To be in arrears as the result of a goal like that was bad enough, but worse was to follow.

CLIFTON AGAIN

Two minutes later, Hughes found himself out on the right wing with plenty of time to spare, and he centred finely to CLIFTON, who again had plenty of time to take the ball through and beat Coen easily.

It looked as if Chesterfield had grounds for a penalty too, Mackey took over the goalkeeper's mantle and dived full length to make sure that a shot from Weightman did not find the net.

It looked as if he used his hands to turn the ball round the post, but the referee awarded a goal kick despite the protests of the home players.

Chesterfield were almost completely on top now, and Hughes and Bonass, the wingers, were finding their way through with almost ridiculous ease. The latter made the third goal which came after 26 minutes. He was sent away on the left, and beating Mackey, centred for FISHER to dive full length and head the ball past Coen.

FISHER A WORRIER

That was the former Barnsley player's first goal for Chesterfield. He is a very useful man to have in a team, for he keeps worrying the defence all the time. What he lacks in inches he makes up for in energy and whole-heartedness.

It was after this that the Town began to show something like the form of which they are capable, and for five minutes or so Moody must have thought there was an air raid on. He had to save shots from all angles, and but for his agility and skill, the Town must have reduced the lead.

Connelly, Roberts and Vinall all tested him in quick succession, but he was equal to any emergency.

PROTESTS AGAINST FOURTH GOAL

However, Chesterfield were evidently bearing in mind the fact that they had to face the wind in the second half, for they set up another series of attacks, and six minutes from the interval they succeeded in adding to their lead.

There was some doubt about the legitimacy of the goal, but the referee was right on the spot, and I was too far away to doubt his decision, although it really looked as if there were some grounds for Luton's appeal.

The goal came as the direct result of a corner and some fiddling about in the penalty area when the ball should have been kicked away. It bobbed about for some time until McMILLEN gained possession near the edge of the penalty area, and sent in a hard drive.

REFEREE DECIDES AGAINST LUTON

Coen was beaten, but Smith had fallen back on to the goal-line and kicked away. The referee immediately awarded a goal in spite of the strong protests. Another point in favour of goal judges.

That brought us to the end of a dis-

appointing first half from the Luton standpoint, and all we could do was to hope for better things after the interval.

However, somewhat to everyone's surprise, Chesterfield began where they left off, and if they had had a penalty when Nelson pulled down Fisher, no one could have grumbled very much.

Chesterfield continued to have more of the play, but the Town gradually came more into the game, and when they reduced the lead after nine minutes the crowd began to prepare for squalls.

BEST GOAL OF THE MATCH

This was without doubt the best goal of the match. It needed only two kicks to send the ball from midfield into the net, and it showed conclusively the value of the wide flung pass. Play was in midfield when Connelly suddenly swung the ball out to STEPHENSON, who hit it first time, and it sped into the far corner of the net like a bullet.

Then came Vinnal's bad luck, and the game slowly lost interest until 15 minutes from the end when FERGUSON brought a spark of hope to Luton by shooting through from close range following a well placed free kick by Finlayson.

The whole of the Town team was in the home half now, but they could not score again, and Chesterfield made the issue safe with another goal eight minutes from the end.

BONASS CLINCHES

A cross pass by Ramage to Hughes found Smith too far away from the winger, who centred across the goal to BONASS. The outside-left, although marked by Mackey, scrambled the ball through.

On the whole, it was a bad day for Luton. The loss of both points means that they have joined the clubs who are fighting to keep their places, and there will have to be improvements in several positions if the Town are not going to have some anxious moments before the first week in May.

The defence must take major blame, and Mackey and Smith never got a grip on the home wingers. The speed and skill on the wings was the main factor in Chesterfield's success, but throughout the game they were given too much rope, and Hughes, particularly, often had a dozen yards in which to get the ball under control and prepare for his pass.

RAMAGE'S CROSS PASSES

The cross pass from Ramage to Hughes continually had the Town defence in a tangle and the former Derby County forward used all the

shrewdness that has come with his years of experience.

Luton had no inside forward with the ability to open out the game like he did.

Smith fell into his old habit of playing too far back. Even when the Town were attacking, he was lagging back in his own half. The result was that he had some yards to go whenever Hughes got the ball, and he was never near enough to him.

If he had played a similar type of game to that he played at Blackburn all would have been well, but he simply would not come up the field. His kicking, too, was not always good, although allowances could be made for this in view of the wind. It was the positioning that was wrong.

MACKEY OFTEN BEATEN

Mackey could never match Bonass for speed, and he was beaten time and again. He was slow in turning, too, and it is evident that the light grounds do not suit his type of game.

There are not two better clubmen than Mackey and Smith, and I am sorry to have to criticise them, but the facts stick out, and it is no use ignoring them.

Coen had little chance with any of the shots that found the net, for they were all from close range. I do think, however, that he should have come out more, for there were balls within the goal area that he could have got easily had he come out immediately. Still, there can be little blame attached to him for the defeat.

NELSON HAD TO COVER UP

The halves were a hard working trio. Some people were inclined to blame Nelson for some of the ineffectiveness of the rearguard, but I did not, for he simply had to be on the go all the time.

He was continually going out to the wings in an effort to cover up mistakes, with the result that he could not look after things in the middle as well. Fisher he found a rare worrier, but he made a good job of holding him, and the centre-forward did not get a lot of chances.

FELLOWES HAS A KNOCK

Finlayson and Fellowes did not go up with the attack as much as has been their want, and they were both working hard all the time. Finlayson was the more successful, and he was as good as any player on the Town side. His footwork always stood out, and he made some grand clearances.

Fellowes had quite a successful match,

although he was sometimes troubled by Clifton, who was always a dangerous number. Just before half-time, Fellowes received a hard blow on the hip, and for the rest of the game, played pluckily under a handicap.

Luton were not as strong on the wings as were Chesterfield, but I am not blaming Ferguson. In the first quarter of an hour, the right winger was given plenty of the ball, and he showed that he has the measure of Kidd. He got the ball across finely, but afterwards for some obscure reason or other, he was left almost completely out of the game.

For long periods, he was standing idle, a fact that evoked many comments from the Chesterfield supporters, who had early noted the right wing as likely to cause some trouble.

STEPHENSON WELL HELD

The right wing is often left out in the cold these days, and neither I nor anyone else can give an adequate reason.

Stephenson had much more of the ball, but he could make nothing of Milburn, and was beaten time and again. It was only on rare occasions that the winger managed to beat the sturdy right-back, and the best thing he did was to score his goal.

Milburn was easily the outstanding defender on the field. He gave as good a display of positional play as I have seen this season. The ball seemed to come to him, and that is the hallmark of a good back.

Vinnal showed a marked improvement on his recent displays. It is mainly confidence that is lacking in his case, and he is dead out of luck with his shooting. I liked the way he kept the line going, and his flicks to the wings were good to see.

WHAT ABOUT THE CROSS PASS?

Roberts is not at his best with the lively ball, but he contrived to do much useful work, and he refused to give up the struggle. There were occasions when he tried to do too much, and I should have liked to have seen him use the cross pass more.

I cannot quite make up my mind about Connelly. His football ability is undoubted, but whether he is the type to fit into the Town front line remains to be seen.

He is clever and shrewd, but keeps the ball close, and is inclined to hang on, with fatal results. On Saturday, however, he pulled out some brilliant work at times, and it looks as if he is gradually settling down.