

NEWCASTLE UNITED HUMBLED

Redfern Bags A Brace

(By Crusader)

LUTON TOWN 4
Redfern 2, Stephenson, Finlayson.
NEWCASTLE UNITED 1
Park.

LUTON.—Dolman; King, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Ferguson, Redfern, Vinall, Roberts, Stephenson.

NEWCASTLE.—McPhillips; Richardson, Fairhurst; Gordon, Denmark, Grundy; Rogers, Stubbins, Park, Bowden, Pearson.
Referee.—L. Dale, Sheffield.

Luton Town wound up their programme with a grand victory over a team that fought to the last gasp, and the splendid attendance must have left the ground more than satisfied with the entertainment they had received.

Many matches during the crises have been far less interesting; many have produced nothing like the skilful football when conditions were much more favourable than on this ground, which was still very hard, and made ball control very difficult indeed.

On the merits of the respective sides there was doubt for half an hour, but afterwards the Town always appeared to hold the winning suit.

To two players I thought the chief credit was due—Nelson and Stephenson.

In the first half hour Nelson clearly demonstrated that he sensed aright the danger point of the Newcastle attack, and he never allowed Bowden too much scope. That was well, for the old Arsenal man was the cleverest craftsman afield, and there was threat in every move.

Indeed, during that first half hour the United appeared to be potential winners, for they were making the ball do the work; they were nippy and very clever in the initiation of attack, and while there was not dire menace in all their work, there seemed to be more smoothness of method than in the Town attack.

IN SORE STRAITS

However, once the Town found their stride they had the United defence in sore straits, and the persistence of Stephenson was a big factor. The outside-left held the ball too long at times, perhaps, but he often had opponents running the wrong way, and got some of them sadly rattled, and it came as no surprise when he opened the score. None more deserved that.

But the team as a whole had then found their mettle, and had replied to the bright individual and close passing of the visitors with direct methods varied by close work, and even before the second goal was scored there seemed little hope of Newcastle pulling the game out of the fire, although they never relaxed effort, and contrived to keep the Town defence alert and sometimes in distress.

In several respects it was one of the best games we have seen this year, and much more than could be expected from a last match, in which there was only the faintest threat that one of the teams might suffer relegation.

NEWCASTLE'S DANGER

Newcastle, however, were much nearer relegation than was apparent, and that they knew the danger of conceding goals was clear from the manner in which they defended. I thought the Town should have had at least one penalty kick, but perhaps the referee was right in placing the ball dead on the penalty line when Redfern was brought down in the first half.

In the first half I thought the referee was doing showman stuff, but as the game proceeded it dawned upon me that he had sized up the situation pretty well, and that his lectures were necessary if some of the players were to be kept in hand, and one of the offenders got off very lightly—Richardson.

Still, all's well that ends well for both teams, and to the Town must be given credit for a very fine performance, since Newcastle were bent on making a desperate bid to avert defeat.

THE DEFENCE

Dolman has rarely had less to do, and there were not more than two or three good shots put in by the visitors. I

thought King played quite well, and was as good as Smith, and he certainly had a very much more difficult job, for the Newcastle left wing was much the better, and perhaps the craftiest wing of the field. Smith was apt to be erratic, and to leave the opposing winger with too much space, but, looking at the defence broadly, I am sure we can say that the cover for Dolman was far better than in many games.

Nelson played a great game all through, and picked on the right man to watch most closely when he selected Bowden as the danger point. The Town pivot showed fine judgment in robbing opponents as they tried to dribble through, and he was always master of the lot when the ball was in the air not less than when it was on the ground.

Finlayson was again in fine fettle, and there is some justification for those who think that with use he would be as good an inside forward as we have. That he can shoot as accurately as any we have had ample proof. Fellowes completed his association with the club by playing a bright and effective game in all respects. Stubbins had a poor time against him, while he was very useful to his own left wing.

FORWARDS

Redfern was very slow off the mark in the first half, but none would deny his ability, and as he found his stride and opened out the game more so he became more and more a menace to the opposition. He would probably have had a couple more goals but for bad fouls when he had beaten the opposition.

Ferguson again worked very hard, and if for no other reason than the fact that he is working hard all the time his retention can be an asset.

Vinall seems to have lost much of his craft, but this may be due to the change of going since he arrived. There is too much passing back and heading back, and any defence that is wise to the move immediately comes forward and operates the offside rule to good purpose. I am not saying more about his play, because I am hoping to see him back to his best at the resumption.

Roberts worked tremendously hard as usual, and was a good support to Stephenson, who, until injured, was quite the most dangerous player on the field. I fancy that if he had not suffered the mishap in the first half he might have

sent Newcastle into the Third Division. While he was sound none could master him at all, and Richardson and Company must have been glad to see the back of him when he did leave the field owing to his injury.

DEFENCE OVER-RUN

Newcastle's defence was better than it looked. The inability of the flank halves to stem the attack threw upon Richardson and Fairhurst a lot of work, and I think the real failure of the visitors was due to the flank halves and the inside forwards being unable to check the Town's attack.

McPhillips struck me as being a safe goalkeeper. He certainly had no chance with the shots that beat him, and Richardson and Fairhurst played very hard indeed. Denmark was also a worker, although not always scrupulous in playing the ball.

Bowden was the best forward, and Pearson shone at times by his control and speed off the mark, but the line as a whole did not play brilliant football, and the team generally was far below what one would expect from Newcastle United.

THE GAME

Fellowes was captain of the team, and won the toss because Richardson did not guess aright the spin of the coin. The gusty breeze as much as the opposition worried the Town players in the early stages, and Newcastle had rather the better of the exchanges.

Dolman was not unduly troubled, however, and as the Town found their feet and the pace of the ball they became more threatening. There was one escape for the Town goal when Stubbins got his head to the ball and sent it over Dolman's head, but it dropped on to the bar and fell behind.

Sharp, thrustful work by the Town forwards and halves caused more flutters at the other end, and several corners were forced. STEPHENSON was constantly menacing the goal, and after it had escaped two or three severe bombardments, he opened the score with a great shot from an acute angle.

The Town kept up the pressure, and REDFERN added a second goal with a neat header, gliding the ball downwards and right away from the goalkeeper when Fellowes had lifted the ball perfectly into the goal-mouth.

LEAD INCREASED

The Town's lead was increased to three just after the change of ends, when Redfern was very badly brought down within the arc of the penalty area. FINLAYSON scored with a terrific shot from the free-kick. Newcastle gave trouble now and then, but for the most part were kept on the defensive, and had Stephenson been sound they would have caught a heap of trouble.

Stephenson had to leave the field, and soon after he went we saw the Town defenders fiddling about instead of clearing directly, and a corner followed. From Rogers' flag-kick PARK scored. He had been unlucky previously with a shot which had Dolman beaten, but struck the upright.

The Town came again, and just before the final whistle REDFERN made position for a shot, and gave McPhillips no chance with a lovely drive.

Attendance 15,174; receipts £807/14/6.