

Thrilled Crowd See Luton Town Master Newcastle

Burst Of Scoring After Goal Shyness By Both Teams

If a football crowd wants thrills and incident then Luton Town's struggle with Newcastle United last night must have satisfied the 17,000 spectators to the full.

There was not a dull second during the ninety minutes. That there could have been better football is true, or perhaps it would be better to say that the scientific phases might have been sustained for longer periods, but that would perhaps have minimised the excitement.

There was good football from both teams; brilliant individualism, and not a few bright periods of combined effort; there was probably more dash and zeal, but this was chiefly noticeable among the defenders.

Newcastle's backs and halves did not live up to their reputation for polish; the long boot first time was the order; safety first. The forwards could be given more marks for skilful distribution and for unity of effort, but there was so much big kicking by the United backs and halves that the Town defenders generally contrived to secure possession before the ball was properly under control.

Finlayson suffered an injury that caused him to move to outside-right, in the second half, with Roberts falling to the middle line, and Ferguson moving to inside-right. But for this change I think the Town would probably have reaped a bigger margin of goals, since the attack was dislocated just when getting the upper hand.

NELSON MAGNIFICENT

We could not be other than pleased with the improvement in the Town defence. Nelson was again magnificent. In the early stages there was a tendency to hang on to the ball too much, but this was dropped, with the result that quick passing to the forwards enabled the team to dictate the run of the game, and after the first twenty minutes the balance of attack lay with the Town to a considerable extent.

The only other fault one could find with the defence was when Newcastle scored. The same fault was evident several times last season. We then saw the whole of the defenders in full retreat with none attempting to arrest the progress of an opponent who was wise enough to hurry along with his possession and finish with a great shot that deserved a goal.

IMPROVED DEFENCE

Apart from this, one could give only praise to the Town's defence. Every man stuck to his job against opposition that fought as grimly as could be imagined. Dolman was safe in goal, and Smith played one of his brightest games since he donned a Luton jersey. His tackling was prompt and timely, and his kicking clean and sure. Dunsmore had a stiff task, and Birkett showed some mastery early on, but subsequently the Luton back was the master, and he has certainly come to stay.

Finlayson played on gamely after receiving a painful injury in the first half, during which period he touched his best. Loughran emulated Smith by putting in all he knew, and though he occasionally faulted, his recovery and his support of the attack were features of the game. Nelson held the defence together grandly, and the attack was not often pulled back into the rear.

THE ATTACK

Vinall did not shine until he began to wander away from Denmark, but when he did that the Newcastle defence was in trouble, for he drew the pivot after him. One would like to see the centre-forward shoot more often, and to halt the attack less.

Connelly was frequently applauded for his brilliant footwork. Again and again he outwitted opponents, and his scheming frequently enabled Stephenson to progress. Indeed, these passes, from inside-right to outside-left were a big factor in Luton's attacks. The inside-right, however, must take his chances more quickly. That done, and the occasional lapse into over-deliberation will be forgiven, for he will score goals.

Roberts played hard and strongly as ever, plying Stephenson with shrewd passes, and as a wing they gave an immense amount of trouble. Stephenson was very near his best, and Ferguson, if not so successful as Stephenson, was always the genuine trier.

NEWCASTLE'S BEST

For the United, Ancell was the cleverest defender, though Richardson also did very well, and Swinburne gave nothing away. Denmark was a power at centre-half, and the flank halves showed skill in their support work.

Clifton was the shining light in attack, and Park strove his hardest to get his attack moving in unison, though not with much success, once Luton had a grip of the game.

Attendance: 16,824; receipts: £2971 13s.

Nelson won the toss and set Newcastle to face the sun.

Dunsmore was badly in error in trying some fancy stuff against Birkett, who nipped through and blazed the ball across an empty goal, for Dolman had run out. The ball went out of harm's way, however.

CONTRAST OF STYLES

Nelson was the next man to hold on too much, and he was robbed. Mooney got the ball across, but Loughran accepted and cleared.

Quickly we had seen a difference in the style of play. United were business-like and brisk, and were giving the ball quite a lot of boot, whereas the Town were hanging on in defence.

Consequently play remained in the Town half for some minutes.

INTO THE STREET

Then Connelly opened out the game with a nice pass to Stephenson, and Denmark had to race out and boot the ball hard—into the street.

The Town came again on the right, and Ferguson beat his man and dropped over a centre which Swinburne grabbed as Vinall came in.

A hot attack all along the Town forward line brought a lot of desperate kicking by the visitors, and to their credit they never hesitated but plugged the ball every time there was the slightest danger.

Loughran and Dunsmore were caught clean out of position when a long kick forward went out to Birkett, and with the Town defenders running back instead of going into a tackle, Birkett was allowed practically a clear course for nearly 20 yards.

Then he drove in a terrific shot which skimmed the bar.

The Town struck back again hard, but the visitors defended gamely and skilfully, and all that Swinburne had to do was to take a low shot from Connelly, which he handled all right.

FROM UNDER THE BAR

Vinall compelled Denmark to run the ball behind for a corner, and from Stephenson's flag kick the ball was knocked out of Swinburne's hands, but Denmark booted away from under the bar.

Another sweeping movement by the Town left wing gave Roberts a chance, but he drove the ball a foot wide.

Clever passing on the Town left wing saw Roberts holding back his centre too long so that Denmark got in the way.

However, the Town persevered, and from a back pass by Vinall, Finlayson came up full tilt to drive very hard but very wide.

SIDE NET TWICE HIT

Another terrific assault by the Town found the ball cross and re-cross the Newcastle goal until Stephenson made a full-blooded drive which flashed into the side net.

The Town had livened up now to some purpose, and were giving as good as they received.

Again the Town forwards, brilliantly led by Connelly, swept clean through, and after Denmark had beaten out one centre, Stephenson again crashed the ball the wrong side of the post.

The United had to struggle hard. Finlayson was at fault in dribbling, but Nelson came to the rescue.

Then Ancell handled a centre from Ferguson right on the penalty line. Ferguson could have made much better use of the free kick, which was cleared easily, and Nelson had to hasten out to the right to frustrate Birkett.

NARROW ESCAPES

Park was spoken to for a rather wild charge on Dunsmore. No free kick was given, and then Nelson conceded a corner.

From this the Town goal had narrow escapes. Birkett and Cairns each had hard drives rebound from close quarters, and finally from close in Clifton shot over.

Back came the Town, and Ferguson swung across a square centre which was touched behind by a defender. Stephenson's flag kick was not so good, and was easily got away.

REFEREE HAS A FEW WORDS

Then we had an instance of the firmness of the ref. The Town set up a stiff attack, and Roberts had several tussles with defenders before he passed back to Stephenson, who centred for Ferguson to put wide with a first time shot.

Two of the visitors began to talk to the ref., and he promptly "ticked them off." He called Richardson over to him a minute afterwards, and had something to say to him.

CONNELLY HITS BAR

Connelly did a great bit of work, as a result of which the Town forwards

got clean through. The ball came back to Connelly, who had only to hit it for a goal, but he was too long over the business, and when he did shoot the ball hit the bar and came out.

Ferguson tried to plug it in, but it struck a defender, and eventually Swinburne managed to get it and cleared.

The Town were hammering away again, and Connelly was on the ball and running through as the whistle went for half-time:

LUTON TOWN 0
NEWCASTLE UNITED 0

Straight from the kick off the Town got through on the left, but Stephenson's centre was intercepted.

Connelly was fouled by Gordon, and then beat Wright in quick succession, and the ref. spoke to the latter.

From the second free kick Vinall made a great effort to head in but was wide.

Clever play by Stephenson brought a centre which Ancell just headed away, and then Ferguson was too long in getting the ball back.

PASSES GO BEGGING

There was dainty work by Connelly, and Ferguson responded well, a fairly strong attack being made, but there was no inside forward sharp enough to take advantages of passes into the middle.

The Town goal rather luckily escaped following a move on the United's right wing. The ball was slipped past Nelson and Dunsmore. Moody could get a foot to it, but Smith got there and cleared.

The United made raids, and Dolman caught a hard shot from the extreme right as he was charged by Park. The latter was pulled up and spoken to by the official.

Finlayson, who had been playing under difficulties for some time, went to outside right, Roberts going to right half, and Connelly inside-left, with Ferguson inside-right.

There came a terrific attack on the United goal, and a shot from Connelly struck the foot of the post and rebounded.

The next incident of note was a terrific shot by Roberts which was dead on the target, but a defender got in the way and took the pace off the ball so that Swinburne could pick up.

MYSTERY FIRST GOAL

Denmark was temporarily knocked out in tackling Vinall, and conceded a corner. The Town opened their account as the result of this flag kick. Stephenson placed it well, and Nelson, who had come right up into the attack, headed it goalwards.

There was a scramble in which Vinall, Connelly and Finlayson all tried to force the ball through. Swinburne saved twice, but the ball continued to bob about.

Eventually it was forced into the net. By whom no one knew, but inquiry afterwards elicited the information that the ball went in off GORDON.

This goal came after 73 minutes and a minute later the Town were further ahead. A pass by Connelly to Ferguson found the United defence spreadeagled.

STEPHENSON INCREASES

Ferguson centred neatly, and STEPHENSON, standing unmarked near goal, had merely to place the ball with his head past Swinburne.

However, the United fought back and reduced their arrears. Mistaken tactics by the defence in running back was the cause. CLIFTON took a through pass, and, with no one to challenge him, drove in a great shot from the edge of the penalty area. It rose into the far corner of the net, giving Dolman no chance.

After this, Newcastle crowded on all sail, and for a free kick against Loughran, all the United players, with the exception of Swinburne, gathered in the Town's half. Nelson cleared, and sent the ball up to give Vinall an open run through.

He kept ahead of his pursuers, and then shot straight into Swinburne's hands.

Stephenson raced clear and lifted the ball across goal. It was headed back, but Swinburne caught and cleared. The pace was terrific and both sides played fiercely.

Dolman had to save twice. The Town got away again. After some finesse in front of Newcastle's goal Roberts lifted the ball too high from 20 yards.

Vinall was given another chance after great work by Stephenson, Connelly and Ferguson, but he sent the ball over the bar from six yards.

Closing stages were fraught with excitement, but the Town held out.

LUTON TOWN 2
Gordon (own goal), Stephenson
NEWCASTLE UNITED 1
Clifton

LUTON TOWN. — Dolman; Smith, Dunsmore; Finlayson, Nelson, Loughran; Ferguson, Connelly, Vinall, Roberts, Stephenson.

NEWCASTLE UNITED. — Swinburne; Richardson, Ancell; Gordon, Denmark, Wright; Birkett, Cairns, Park, Clifton, Mooney.

Referee. — P. Snape, Swinton.

New County Councillor Opens Party

Mrs. G. Breed, the new woman member of Beds County Council, opened Slip End Women's Adult School annual garden party in the Village Hall grounds on Saturday. She was thanked by Mdlle. Weiss, and the Rev. G. Quinion, and little Miss Baldock presented a bouquet of gladioli.

Dancing displays were given by Miss Parkin's pupils, and also by the Slip End Dancers, organised by Mrs. Batchelor.

In the evening a successful social was held in the Village Hall. The Swing Trio provided music, and refreshments were served by members of the school.