

THEIR PLAY DID NOT MERIT A POINT

Kept In The Game By Burnley's Missed Chances

By CHILTERN

BURNLEY	3
Miller, Hornby, Rayner	
LUTON TOWN	2
Vinall (2)	

BURNLEY—Adams; Robinson, Chester; Gardner, Johnson, Bray; Taylor, Rayner, Brocklebank, Miller, Hornby.

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

Referee.—E. V. Gough, Stoke-on-Trent.

History repeated itself at Turf Moor. Last season, the Town lost by the identical score as on Saturday, and in each case, a goal in the closing minutes decided the issue in favour of Burnley.

However, there was one big difference, and that was that last season Luton deserved a point, but this time, they themselves would have been the first to admit that they had been lucky had they managed to escape defeat.

Yet, they should have come back with a point, for they were on level terms five minutes from the end, and it looked any odds on a draw. Then a free kick for hands which was far enough out to look harmless, was the direct means of the Lancashire side getting the deciding point.

BURNLEY DESERVED THE POINTS

There was no doubt that Burnley deserved to win, for they were by far the more enterprising side. The Town's display was unlike the one they put up against Sheffield United as chalk and cheese.

In that match they touched the heights, and in this, they frequently reached the depths. The most surprising thing was the lack of fire and life in their play.

Even in the second half when there was always a chance of snatching an equaliser, they could not find any of their old spirit, although the way the home side threw away their chances should have heartened them to some extent.

PLAYED LIKE A BEATEN SIDE

They played like a beaten side for more than half the game, and when the equaliser did come, it was the most surprising thing in the whole of the ninety minutes.

I had given up hope of another goal long before, for the forwards could not make ground, and the defence was being pierced again and again by one of the cleverest forward lines the Town will meet during the course of this season.

The Burnley attack was made up of five very good ball players, and Miller, in particular, made the ball talk. Yet it was a half back, who more than anyone else, contributed to the Town's defeat.

I refer to Gardner, who was the moving spirit behind the home attack. With his prompting, Taylor simply had to play a good game.

GARDNER—MAN OF THE MATCH

Gardner made this 19-years-old youngster look the goods, for time and again the ball was served up to him in beautiful fashion and it is to the winger's credit that he made excellent use of his opportunities.

I should say that Gardner was the man of the match, and much of the anxiety the Town defence experienced could be laid at his door. Time and again, especially in the first half, the right-half brought the ball through to draw the defence out of position before parting with it.

It might have paid the Town to have set a man to watch him, but then, on the other hand, had this been done it might have meant a further upset, and things were going badly enough as they were.

TOWN'S LACK OF DETERMINATION

It is difficult to account for the Town's poor display. First of all there was not the spirit and determination that was such a feature in the last home match.

Playing away from home should not make all that difference to a team, but part of the reason might have been that they allowed the Burnley forwards to get on top and stay there.

For long periods the home attack dominated the play, and that their victory was left in doubt until the closing minutes of the game was entirely due to weak shooting and a penchant for trying to walk the ball into the net.

Had Burnley scored a handful of goals

no one would have been surprised, and they certainly should have scored more than three judging by the chances they had.

DEFENCE HAD A GRUELLING

The root of the trouble is not easy to discover. The defence might justifiably point to the fact that the forwards could not sustain their attacks, with the result that the ball was always coming back quickly.

The defence really had a gruelling time, but I think that part of the trouble in this match was poor positional play by the rearguard. At least two of the goals could be put down to this, and the last was a palpable case.

There was never a solid look about the defence, and they played fifty per cent. worse than they did against Sheffield United. It may not be quite



fair to compare the two matches in this fashion, but the contrast between two displays was so great that it simply must be referred to.

FORWARDS FELL AWAY, TOO

There was an equal falling off among the forwards who although not getting a quarter of the support that the home attack received, showed little signs of being dangerous consistently.

The only times that Luton did not play like a beaten team was in the first half when Brocklebank was off the field for ten minutes having a cut head attended to, and in the closing minutes of the game immediately before and immediately after they gained the equaliser.

Despite the fact that Burnley had far more of the play, it was a curious feature of the first half that Luton had as many, and probably easier, scoring chances.

CONNELLY'S BAD MISS

They might have been ahead very early in the game, for Connelly had one of the best opportunities of the match when he found himself clear of all opposition, and with only Adams to beat.

It looked a certain goal, but as the goalkeeper came out, Connelly obviously tried to lob the ball over Adams's head into the net and merely succeeded in placing it weakly into his hands.

A bad miss, this, but it did not seem quite as serious when Luton took the lead after 17 minutes. A clearance by Dunsmore was diverted for a corner, and this, Stephenson placed into the goal-mouth.

Ferguson had come in, and headed it goalwards. There was a rush of players, VINALL got there first, and headed through as Adams went to grab the ball.

EQUALISER SOON CAME

Thus, Luton might have been two up at this stage, even though, Burnley had been much the more impressive. They set about gaining the equaliser in workmanlike style, and it came after 21 minutes when Taylor swung in a grand centre and MILLER found himself unmarked somewhere in the region of the penalty area.

It was rather a high ball, but he got his foot to it, and sent it sailing hard for the corner of the net. Dolman made a very good effort to get to it, but was a fraction too late.

Then came Brocklebank's injury, and one of the Town's periods of supremacy. The attack was seen in a better light, and there were appeals for a goal when Connelly charged Adams who had caught a Ferguson centre.

It must have been a close thing, but the referee's decision was against Luton, as it was on several occasions both before and afterwards.

BURNLEY AHEAD FOR FIRST TIME

Brocklebank's return brought Burnley into the game again, but so poor were the forwards near goal that Luton had some justification to hope that they would turn round on level terms.

However, the home side took the lead six minutes from the interval, and Taylor

again provided the opening. Brocklebank's handaged head deflected the ball to HORNBY, who shot through from close range.

Even so, the Town might have retrieved the situation with a bit of luck, for Adams only just got down to a header from Vinall and Roberts hit the angle of the bar and the post.

Most of the second half play was fought out in the Town half and the Burnley forwards missed chance after chance through their disinclination to take a shot from respectable range.

VINALL SCORES HIS SECOND

One glaring case was when Miller, after getting clear of the rest of the defence tried to dribble past Dolman as well, but the goalkeeper tackled him and cleared.

After a lot of pressure on their goal, the Town began to show a little more fight about 15 minutes from the end, and with nine minutes remaining, they obtained their second goal.

It was a good goal, and it began with a neat bit of work by Ferguson, who passed inside to Vinall, took the return pass and centred finely for VINALL to dash up and head past Adams, who was late coming out.

TWO PLAYERS WERE UNMARKED

Four minutes from the end, Burnley regained the lead. Dunsmore was adjudged to have handled, but there was some doubt about the offence, and the Town players were sure that there was no infringement.

I must say that I thought there was, but it did not matter what anybody thought except the referee, and he gave a free kick. Gardner placed it well into the goalmouth, where Brocklebank, unmarked, jumped up and headed the ball down to the feet of RAYNER, also unmarked.

The inside right was only a few yards out, and he rammed the ball into the net, giving Dolman no possible chance. How it was that two players came to be unattended is a mystery, but it was an example of some of the bad positioning of which the Town defence was guilty.

INDIVIDUALS CANNOT BE BLAMED

No individual player can be blamed for the defeat; it was simply a case of a collective falling off, and as at Plymouth a fortnight ago, few of the Town players did anything to enhance their reputations.

No blame could attach to Dolman, for he had absolutely no chance with the three shots that beat him. He was safe enough, and had he not been, it is probable that the issue would not have been in doubt so long.

Smith and Finlayson were frequently all at sea against Miller and Hornby whose approach work was unimpeachable. Neither could find a way to stop this tricky left wing, and Finlayson did not improve matters by his slowness in recovery.

CONNELLY DID NOT HELP DEFENCE

Even so, some of the trouble began further ahead than the right-half position. I refer to Connelly, who was loth to come back and help the defence.

Smith had a very moderate match, and so did Dunsmore, who found Taylor a rare handful. I have referred to Gardner's part in the success, and Loughran was obviously caught in two mirds on many occasions.

He played his usual terrier-like game, but is inclined to be haphazard, and certainly cannot be described as methodical.

Nelson did as well as any of the defenders, and usually carried a card too much for Brocklebank. He stood between the Town goal and downfall many times, and put in some really sound work.

BAD POSITIONING THE MAIN TROUBLE

I am convinced that bad positioning was the beginning and end of the trouble, and each member of the defence was guilty in varying degrees.

The cleverness of the opposition was certainly something out of the ordinary run of things, but I could not help thinking that it should have been met with a sterner front.

Vinall was far and away the best of the forwards, and he more than anyone else deserved to be on the winning side. His two goals were rare pieces of opportunism, and he was a danger throughout.

The inside men hung on to the ball too long, but Roberts did much more useful work than Connelly, and was a lot more help to the defence.

SKILL NOT USED TO BEST ADVANTAGE

Two or three of the referee's decisions went against Connelly early in the game, and I suspect that he allowed them to get him down, and this had a bad effect on his play. He showed supreme cleverness at times, but he could have used his skill to a lot more advantage.

The wingers were far from being a dangerous attacking force, but Ferguson was the more successful, and showed more resolution than Stephenson.

The outside-right kept pegging away, and it must go to his credit that both goals came as the result of his passes. It was not until the near the end that Stephenson showed anything like his normal form, and until that time Robinson was well on top of him, and he rarely got the ball across.