

FORWARDS WITHOUT A SHOT

Defensive Tactics Always Paramount At Luton

(By "CRUSADER").

LUTON TOWN 0
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR .. 0

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

TOTTENHAM.—Hooper; Ward, Whatley; Spelman, Page, Buckingham; Sargent, Hall (G.W.), Morrison, Hall (A.E.), Lyman.

Referee: H. N. Mee, Mansfield.

This was one of those games which makes the old stager hark back to his youth and recount to his auditors how football was played in his day. He had an illustration mournful enough for any purpose as he left the Town ground, for he had seen twenty-two professors whose value in the aggregate would be placed at £100,000, engaged in a chopping and stopping struggle, with science the last concern of any individual except the man with the whistle.

The referee was the most impressive figure on the field. He at least refused to be flurried or hurried, consequently he missed a great deal that others saw. Nevertheless, he exercised the rule of forbearance, and considering what a slap-dash party he controlled, it was perhaps just as well that he was not too sensitive to breaches of the law.

When people talk to me about certain London teams and their idealistic football I get very sick or very cynical, and particularly so with the Spurs. Their players knew far more apish tricks than Luton, and they began very early. There were such trivial little things as kicking the ball away from a player when he was about to pick it up for a throw-in, sticking a fist in an opponent's back, and a lot of ankle jabbing that would have defied an expert to detect and watch the ball too.

OFFSIDE TACTICS

The crowd showed their hatred of the adoption of offside tactics, but I blame no team for that. It's all in the game, and if players are not wise enough to counter that's their look-out. It was only the irritating infringements that riled me and many others, and in these I have seen no team more proficient than the Spurs, although the London writers will not say so. They are hardened to it.

If the Spurs are a promotion side then Luton should move up with them, but I should be sorry to see the Spurs up at all unless they earned it by different methods. They infringed so often that it became no matter for wonder that the Town players began to retaliate, and so we had a few passages that were really unpleasant, whereas from the reputations of the two teams for skill and ability generally we could rightly expect something very much better.

DULLNESS ALL OVER

Dull the day was, and dull the game, so much so that this job of mine is very much like a post-mortem, or would be if there had been a fatal result for either side.

Luton were the more aggressive and the more progressive team. Now and then I thought we were going to see from the Spurs a few moves of their traditional style, because they had the pace for it, but half of them were more intent upon salvation than upon demonstration, and so the struggle developed into a tit-for-tat business with Luton doing the more titting and the Spurs a tattoo now and then.

On the balance of play Luton should have won. They also had chances such as never fell to the Spurs, but the forwards were not of a goal scoring turn of mind. There were not three respectable shots during the course of the game, and it was in the irony of things that the best chance of the match came immediately after the start, and that it was missed by the one Luton forward who was worthy of the title professor.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Had Vinall taken that chance successfully there might have been a very different result, but he failed, and in spite of the fact that Luton had about seven-tenths of the game they rarely looked like breaking down a defence that had resolution and courage in plenty. Time was when I liked the Spurs' attack

best of all their team, but they have changed a lot, and on Saturday's showing they have fallen far from the graceful heights of their speedy combination of a few years ago.

To almost every Spurs attack of two minutes the Town replied with one of four or five minutes, but the slowness in taking chances and the monotony with which they fell into the offside trap had to be seen to be believed.

PAINFUL WITNESS

It was painful to see players holding the ball time after time and then parting with it to colleagues after the 'Spurs' defenders had dashed forward and left them offside. This happened not once, but half a score of times, and only on one or two occasions was there a forward sharp enough to attempt to go through on his own, and then he usually lost the ball or shot badly.

The Town defenders adopted quite the reverse methods. They would retreat en bloc and leave an opposing forward to dribble on and on until within shooting range. Fortunately there were few of the 'Spurs' forwards that could find a shot.

As I have already said, I have no complaint whatever to make about these offside tactics. They are legitimate, and the only flaw as far as I am concerned is that the Town defenders cannot adopt them with equal success, or the forwards find that bit of artfulness necessary to defeat the tactics.

MUCH CRY—SOMETIMES

There were many roars of excitement, but usually they ended in a moan, and at last the spectators refused to be deluded into cheering without cause. To my view it was a poor match, and not comparable with the Sheffield United game in any phase except the efficiency of the defences.

Vinall led his line with plenty of dash, and was the most unlucky forward on the field. Roberts put in all he knew as usual, without knowing enough to overcome the opposition. Connelly was, well, Connelly, with less success for his artistry than usual. He made one or two admirable moves, but generally failed at the finish. The wingers were no better and no worse than usual, though they looked worse at times. Patchy is the best description, though both tried to the bitter end.

THE STALWART SKIPPER

Finlayson and Loughran worked splendidly throughout, and gave the forwards plenty of the ball. I cannot see so much wrong with Loughran as some do, and I thought he was as good as any flank middleman in the game. Nelson was again the stalwart in defence, and Morrison could make nothing of him at all, not even by infringements that passed without penalty. Smith had a very good game; Lyman got little change out of him. Dunsmore flattered at the start, but later allowed the 'Spurs' right winger too much scope.

Dolman may have earned two weeks money at Burnley, but the club owe him nothing over this match except an attendance fee.

'SPURS' DEFENCE

Hooper had much more work, but it was not of a severe nature. He was lucky to see Whatley head out when a header had beaten him in the second half. I liked his handling of the ball, and he certainly looks the fully prepared custodian.

The International Sproston could not have played better than his deputy, Ward, for the former Bradford man rarely put a foot wrong, and his kicking was sound and clean. Whatley was up to the same standard, but the man to whom the 'Spurs' owed most was Page, who equalled Nelson by his skilful interception and all round excellence.

Buckingham was a more polished flank half than Spelman, although the latter did very well.

Of the forwards I thought Hall (G) was going to be best, but he faded out. Then I thought Hall (A.E.), but he also deteriorated. Lyman was good in snatches, Morrison seldom did anything useful unless he came right back to do it, and Sargent was the most dangerous of the line.

Attendance: 21,060; receipts £1,274 9s.