

HOW WEDNESDAY GAINED REMARKABLE VICTORY

Billington Scored His Usual

(By CRUSADER)

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 5

Hunt (3), Massarella,
Fallon

LUTON TOWN 1

Billington

LUTON.—Coen; Smith, Dunsmore; Finlayson, Nelson, Loughran; Clark, Redfern, Billington, Connelly, Stephenson.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY.—Goodfellow; Ashley, Lester; Russell, Hanford, Burrows; Massarella, Robinson, Hunt, Napier, Fallon.

Referee: W. P. Harper, Stourbridge.

Those of you who went and saw the picture, "Pygmalion," will recall that the heroine was pursued in her dreams by the words and phrases to be correctly pronounced. I could well imagine that the most ardent supporters of Luton Town suffered similarly in their sleep on Saturday night, and perhaps many a spouse discovered bruises on her limbs when she rose after a harassed night, in which she heard in fierce and jumbled reiteration —Hunt—Massarella—Hunt—three—Fallon—four—Hunt—Massarella—five—Fallon—Robinson.

Once upon a time, I admit, there might have been something of that experience on my Saturday night, but not these days, though it would not have been a matter for surprise if something of the sort had recurred on Saturday.

And why?

It is difficult to analyse a game in which a team had so much of the play and then suffered such a knock-out.

LOOK BEHIND RESULT

Many people, even if they have seen a match, merely stand by the result, and see no good whatever in the losing side, especially when there is such a wide margin as in this game.

I cannot quibble about the result at all. Not for one moment would I withhold from the Wednesday the fullest meed of credit for their victory, and I would go so far as to say that if the teams met again next Saturday the result would be the same or even worse if Luton Town defence failed as badly.

For unquestionably the defence must bear the brunt of the responsibility—nearly all of it.

True, the forwards did not play the right game in the mud. They held the ball too close against defenders who never knew when they were beaten, and they did not finish well, even if full allowance is made for the atrocious luck that pursued them throughout.

ATTACK OFTEN GOOD

Still, the attack provided much good football, and they had far more of the ball than had the Wednesday forwards, though they could not do so much with their service.

Billington again led the line exceedingly well, and I am sure he can only be displaced through injury. His leadership is good enough for any side, and he will reap greater reward than he is doing now when he gets the ball placed to him in the manner it was served up to Hunt, the Wednesday centre-forward.

Connelly, in my view, gave one of his best displays since joining the club. He was at fault now and then in hanging on too long, but generally he played an unselfish game, and initiated many attacks.

It was Redfern who was more disposed to hug the ball, and whilst his footwork was good as ever, and he did many clever things, he was not consistently of good use to his colleagues.

Stephenson was fairly good, but could have finished better, and the same may be said of Clark, who did as well against Lester as any Luton player ever did, for the Wednesday back was always a hard taskmaster to Luton in his Gillingham days.

MIDDLE LINE SAGGED

The Town middle line sagged badly. Finlayson, while playing well up to his forwards, was unable to move quickly in the mud, and Loughran, while doing

an enormous amount of work, was so often out of position that Dunsmore was made to look worse than he really was. Even so, Smith and Dunsmore were never happy, and the latter especially had a bad time against the mercurial Massarella. He was beaten for pace, and the trickiness of the Wednesday right winger was something he had not bargained for.

Smith, too, should have made a better show against Fallon, and it was in the quick turn and chase that he was left by his opponent. Neither full back was able to take position aright, and with Nelson also much below his average standard, the plight of Coen was as hard as it was undeserved. Coen could not be blamed in the slightest degree, and I thought he did extraordinarily well to remain on the field after he had been hurt early on.

Coen could be singled out for great praise in defence, and Connelly and Billington in attack, but I would not lavish praise elsewhere. The team had a bad day. Nothing went right for them, and they deteriorated as the minutes went by.

ADOPTED RIGHT TACTICS

The Wednesday must have sized up the position at half-time. They had been little more than second rate in the first half, but adopted the right tactics after changing ends. Rarely did they have more than three forwards in the attack, but the inside forwards and the flank halves kept well in the rear and when the Luton defenders were drawn out of position the accurate passes to the wings meant trouble for the home defence.

Robinson and Napier knew their book, and the former was the best forward on view, though much of his work was of an unostentatious character. On this showing, Massarella and Fallon are the best wingers we have seen at Luton, but they were made to look so because of the weakness of the opposition.

So it was with Hunt. He was always in position, and too often without opposition, hence his three goals.

SOUND DEFENCE

The Wednesday flank halves were just moderate, but Hanford played a strong game at centre-half, though he should have been penalised when he brought down Billington in the first half. I liked both Ashley and Lester for the manner in which they were right on top of the Town wingers, and when they were drawn out of position the flank halves became full backs. That was the secret of the Wednesday's successful defence.

Goodfellow played a great game in goal, but he had a good deal of luck, and he was always better protected than was Coen.

THE PLAY

Luton had much the better of the exchanges, and more frequently made contact with Goodfellow, but there was menace always in the raids of the Wednesday wingers.

It was a well earned goal when the Town took the lead after nineteen minutes. Clark had forced a corner, and placed it well, but the ball was beaten out. Again it was returned, and this time was headed to the left, where Stephenson returned it sharply, and BILLINGTON just jabbed it with his foot as it came across, and Goodfellow was beaten completely.

LEAD LOST

The Town were soon at it again, but a clearance found the Town defenders all well up field; HUNT managed to get on the right side of Nelson and, keeping the ball well under control, steered it out of the reach of Coen.

More Town pressure failed, Billington having very hard luck with one grand effort, and then there was a clearance to the left and Fallon raced away. He centred squarely, and MASSARELLA headed the ball into the net past a whole lot of defenders, some of whom should have been marking the scorer.

The Wednesday goal had many escapes before the interval, and Clark missed badly on two occasions when he should have scored. Hanford once cleared when Goodfellow was beaten, and the goalkeeper brought off a lot of fine saves, and so the interval came with the score:

Wednesday 2
Town 1

The Town attacked hotly on the re-start, but the Wednesday conserved their efforts, and with their first advance nearly got through again, Coen saving magnificently. However, the tactics were repeated, and HUNT took a pass from the right and banged the ball past Coen.

WORSE TO COME

More pressure by the Town and then another rush by the Wednesday. FALLON this time cut on the inside of Smith, and went right through to wind

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up with a fast shot which struck the farther upright and entered the net.

It was nearly all Town pressure for a long period, but every time the Wednesday got going they were dangerous, for the Town defenders could do nothing to stop them, but there should have been goals at the other end, and Clark again was badly at fault in finishing.

Came another raid on the Wednesday right wing, where Robinson made a wonderful run from near his own penalty area, going right through and when foiled of a shot he passed for HUNT to ram the ball home again.

The Town forwards made strenuous efforts to get another goal, but they had no luck at all, and the game ended with the Wednesday supreme.

Attendance: 15,759; receipts: £891 13s. 6d.