

TEAM WORK AT ITS BEST

Billington's Best Bag Of Goals

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN 5
Billington (4), Stephenson

CHESTERFIELD 0

LUTON—Coen; King, Dunsmore; Finlayson, Nelson, Roberts; Clark, Redfern, Billington, Connelly, Stephenson.

CHESTERFIELD. — Middleton; Milburn, Kidd; McMillen, Booker, Weightman; Hughes, Lyon, Milligan, Mackie, Bonass

Referee: G. W. Jones, Nottingham.

First let me sympathise with Chesterfield. They were a far better side than the score suggests, and when the tide was flowing strongly against them they kept fighting courageously to minimise the severity of the defeat. That is always a commendation to sportsmen, and if there were a few occasions when some of the visitors trespassed on our patience by losing their own, they had ample excuse in the conditions, which were the worst yet this season.

One of the mysteries was the manner in which Town players would persist in moving into the morass in the middle of the pitch, but second thoughts showed that there were not many spots easily negotiable, and the pace of the game was so thrilling that there was little time to choose the route to goal.

There was not a dull moment until the game was wearing late and players were feeling the effects of toiling through the mire; even then there was entertainment in the manner in which the Town developed attacks by sheer artistry, and Chesterfield by unflinching determination.

NEVER OUTPLAYED

Only those who saw the game will be able to recognise that Chesterfield were never outplayed, not even in the last hectic twenty minutes, for while they were never able to match the skill of the winners, they had the saving quality of grit and there was fire in their attacks as well as in their resistance.

Luton were value for their success, and even if one agrees that the margin flattered them somewhat, there was not a goal that was not fully earned, and had there been more it would not have surprised any but the people who had to remain in Chesterfield when their hearts were down south.

A SHOCK

So thoroughly had Chesterfield mastered Southampton at Saltergate that the very least the supporters of the Derbyshire club expected was a point, and they were prepared to think Luton would be lucky to get so much. Those who travelled with Chesterfield marvelled that the Town were not high and dry above every other team in the Division, and I am quite sure they would have been if the team work had always touched the heights reached in this struggle.

Chesterfield fought with tremendous zeal for upwards of an hour, and I do not think they thought of defeat until the third goal was scored fifteen minutes from the end, though at that time they were feeling the pinch very keenly, and to some degree were showing it in the numerous infringements committed by their defenders.

Indiscretions were not too seriously noticed by the official, although he maintained a firm hand, and controlled the game very well, for it was clear that if there had been any laxity there might well have been a "rough house," so determined were the visitors.

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

Naturally the big topic this week will be the four goals scored by Billington. I was not surprised, for I have been saying all along that he would get a bag of goals if he received the right support. He did, and I think he would pay tribute to the splendid work of his colleagues. Billington had a great day,

and of his four goals the second and third were thrilling efforts.

Whether first impressions are good or ill we are slow to revise, and this is as much a weakness with me as with any individual, but when a player does earn remission none is more eager to admit it. That is how I feel about Connelly. His skill has never been in question, but he has never been such a splendid team man as on Saturday. On this display none could wish for a more brilliant player; there was no gallery play, but the most delightful scheming allied to perfect ball control, and all for the benefit of his team. That is what we want, and Connelly has only to continue in that vein to be one of the most prized players Luton have ever had.

GREAT HEIGHTS

And Redfern was close up with him, both for control and for developing attack. I will not have it that it was merely that the conditions suited them better. It was no joke to dribble through the mud, for there is a difference between a ground that is yielding and takes the resilience out of the ball and a ground as stodgy as this. The two inside forwards touched great heights, and we have not seen better inside formation in any game or from any team this decade.

So we saw a much better Stephenson, something of the speedy fellow who came from Aston Villa four years ago, and a very promising player in Clark on the other extreme. If not so prominent as Stephenson, Clark certainly made a fine show and with experience will make good.

ROBERTS BEST

Roberts was quite the best flank half on view. Again and again he came through a tackle with the ball at his feet, and plied his forwards to advantage. Finlayson also played much better, and did sound arresting work in holding up attacks ere they had developed seriously. Nelson was more himself, too, and the clever Milligan, upon whom Chesterfield are now staking their hopes, did not get three good shots at goal.

King reached the level that brought him to Luton, and on this form looks like being naturalised for Luton. Despite the temper of Bonass the Town full-back gave him a fair and square deal, and yet mastered him very well. Dunsmore also played finely, and with Coen at his best the defence was sounder than in any previous game this season.

Most of all we could appreciate the team work, and now that the players have captured that fine spirit let us hope they will maintain it. If so they will soon be right up with the leaders.

THE VISITORS

Chesterfield's defence was strong and sound until the last half hour, and although having a good deal of luck in each half, their pluck deserved it.

Middleton kept goal brilliantly—none better at Luton this season—and he had no chance whatever with the goals registered against him. His backs were hard working and sturdy, but were struggling unavailingly in the last twenty minutes. Kidd was probably the pick.

Booker, who was called in as deputy for Seagrave, the centre-half, did very well indeed in the first half; he was unable to hold Billington, but it was not a matter of holding one opponent; he had to meet three players at their best. McMillen and Weightman were also real triers, with the former the cleverest, but he was gradually worn down, and was a very tired fellow at the close.

Of the Chesterfield forwards I liked best the cleverness of Lyon, who almost came to Luton two seasons ago, and Bonass, the left winger. The latter may have spoiled his certificate to some extent by losing his temper, but eventually when he found he could not master King he had the wisdom to get rid of the ball quickly, and he led many enterprising raids that nearly brought success.

THE PLAY

Play was even in the early stages, for while Luton showed much cleverness, the raids of the visitors were very troublesome. Middleton made a great save from a wonderful first time drive by Billington, and Connelly initiated many attacks. A free kick for handling by Weightman was taken by King, who lifted the ball well across the Chesterfield penalty area. Connelly headed it over to Redfern, who dashed forward; Middleton rushed out of goal, but Redfern was there first and nodded the ball to BILLINGTON, who calmly tapped it into the vacant goal.

This was the only goal of the first

half, but Coen and Middleton each made many fine saves, and the pace was so hot that the teams looked tired when they left the field.

The resumption found the Town kicking their favourite way, and they at once took up the running. Redfern just missed with a fine cross shot, and Stephenson struck the foot of the post with a rasping shot. Redfern had another shot deflected by a defender, and then Connelly astounded the opposition by a splendid dribble, and Billington ran on with the ball and netted, but was offside.

A MAGNIFICENT GOAL

However, just afterwards Clark flicked the ball across to the inside-left position. Stephenson took it, and then pushed it through the middle for BILLINGTON, who swiftly swerved round Booker and then raced forward to deliver a magnificent cross shot that had Middleton beaten all the way. This was a great goal.

Chesterfield fought desperately, and Coen saved in marvellous fashion at full length, and for a few minutes the visitors hammered away, but the Town defence was more compact than it has ever been, and the retreat of Chesterfield began again.

STEPHENSON'S SHOT

During a rough and tumble in which half a dozen players were involved a few yards outside the Chesterfield penalty area, one of the defenders was penalised for a foul on Roberts. STEPHENSON took the free kick and his brilliant low drive flashed through a narrow passage between the defenders and entered the goal just inside the post. Middleton in vain flung himself at full length across goal.

Chesterfield were still fighting hard, but they had their backs to the wall, and the Town forwards and halves were controlling the ball splendidly, and now had command of the game. It came as no surprise when Redfern and Billington beat the defence, and the former slipped the ball forward for Billington to dash through again and shoot hard; Middleton saved grandly at full length, but the ball had returned to BILLINGTON, who placed it in the net.

A minute from the end Connelly was weaving a way through and was about to centre when the whistle sounded for a foul. Stephenson hit the ball very hard from the free kick, and it struck a defender who was in the goalmouth; as the ball stopped BILLINGTON was there and promptly banged it into the net.

It was a great win, and deserved a better attendance than 12,560, with receipts £688 17s.