

CITY'S BRILLIANT ATTACK IMPOTENT

Connelly's Great Part

HOME DEFENCE IN RESOLUTE MOOD

By CRUSADER

LUTON TOWN 3
Billington, Connelly (2)

MANCHESTER CITY 0

LUTON.—Coen; King, Dunsmore; Finlayson, Dreyer, Roberts; Carroll, Redfern, Billington, Connelly, Stephenson.

MANCHESTER CITY.—Swift; Clark, Westwood; Percival, Cardwell, McDowall; Toseland, Herd, Milsom, Doherty, Brook.

Referee: I. H. W. Wright, Derby.

Clouds are proverbial at Manchester, but I should imagine that on Saturday the supporters of Manchester City would feel that darkness covered the face of the earth.

End of the game found me wondering why the Town ever lose a match.

If they could make rings round such a grand side as Manchester City, I asked myself, why should they fall to teams with far less skill? The answer, of course, is that no team ever yet could maintain its highest standard over a long period.

Individuals may do so, but not whole teams, hence we have the record of Luton Town losing at Norwich, Manchester City winning there in a cake-walk, and Luton Town trouncing Manchester City comfortably.

That last description must not be regarded as a synonym for the word easily.

This was a hard game, at times brilliant, with the City producing occasional spells that stamped them as worthy of their highest reputation. Had there been the slightest faltering in the Town defence, Manchester City could have won the match.

A NECESSARY COMPLIMENT

That brings me to a very necessary compliment. The defence on Saturday showed such a stern and unyielding front to the skilful threats of the visiting attack that it was obvious before the end that some of the City players had almost given up hope of ever being able to get through.

I doubt if we have ever seen a team at Luton with such a standard of marksmanship rendered so impotent.

How few really good chances the City had. Coen had by no means the task written down for him, and his best save, if a bit lucky, was that made from Dreyer just before the end when the centre-half could only shoot out a leg at the ball in the hope of preventing Milsom reaping a chance. The ball flew towards the net, but Coen went down like a flash and retrieved the ball, although the City claimed a goal, and spectators very near the spot have told me that the ball was over the line.

COEN AND COADJUTORS

Coen did his part very well; but he himself must often have felt like shaking hands with King, Dunsmore and Dreyer for the unflinching and courageous manner in which they tackled. The kicking has been better, but then the ground was treacherous, and those errors could be excused, but there could be nothing but praise for the manner in which the rearguard resisted the opposition, and showed such fine powers of recovery.

Finlayson came out best in many duels with that fine-craftsman, Doherty, and had a great day. He disappointed me when he cheekily dribbled right through the opposing lines, and then failed to have a smash at the goal. I believe if he had then shot at all well instead of passing he would have scored.

ROBERTS A REAL CAPTAIN

What shall we say of Roberts—so often dubbed a "favourite" of mine? Well, Roberts was just grand, both as captain, an inspiration to his colleagues, and for the immense amount of skilful work he did both in attack and defence. The Town half-backs were as dominating a force as could be expected against such a forward line, and very handsome bouquets should be handed to them.

Because of the assistance received from the middle men, the forwards were able to grind down the City defenders.

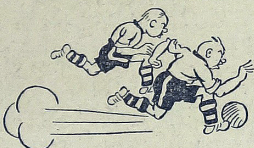
The latter played magnificently, I thought, and only succumbed to superlative manoeuvring and good shooting.

That there could have been better shooting I am aware, but several times Billington could not stand up on the slippery turf, while no player could have had worse luck with grand shots than did Redfern.

THE WINGERS

The Town attack played so well that it is hard to differentiate at all, and I would not say that one was better than another.

The crowd did not appreciate some of Carroll's moves in the first half, but later they saw what could be done between him and Redfern, and I think the partnership is going to be fine.



Stephenson played splendidly, working harder than usual, and once in the second half he tore back and helped the defence to get out of a sorry mess. But it was his pace and his centres that caused most trouble, and here again there was an understanding between him and Connelly better than usual.

INSIDE MEN

Billington led the line with great dash, and although the goal was almost presented to him, he deserved it, for he had been shadowed very closely, and sometimes treated anything but gently. Connelly and Redfern played football of a class superior to that of the City inside wingers. Now and then each would hang on just too long, but on the whole they did such great work that they confounded utterly the opposition. Redfern was right out of luck with splendid shooting, and Connelly's first goal was a glorious effort—the sort that makes one wonder why he does not get more.

Further, these inside forwards did much useful work in midfield, and a feature of the Town's play was the co-operation and help-one-another spirit.

It was match-winning football at the best, and I would repeat what I said about the match with West Bromwich Albion: if the team would play like this every week they would never be beaten; if they would respect the worst teams as they do the best they would step into the First Division at the end of this term.

And we still have much ground for hope.

CITY'S BEST

Swift was a grand goalkeeper. Two or three of his saves were really thrilling efforts, and there was one wonder effort in the second half from Redfern that stifled the cries of "Goal!"

Clark and Westwood were strong backs, too, built on the right lines. They tackled strongly and kicked well, as also did Cardwell, but were simply beaten in the second half by speedy combination and the clever footwork.

McDowall and Percival played well, but, like one or two more, lost their tempers. Toseland and Brook were the most dangerous of the attack. Now and then the combination was near perfection, and the ball was kept on the ground, delightful passes to the man in best position.

Although the Town won, there was much they could learn from some of the moves of the City halves and forwards.

Milsom did not have a very happy time against Dreyer, who stuck to him like a leech. Doherty showed captivating footwork at times, but the promptness with which he was tackled disturbed him not a little, and before the end he had become commonplace. Herd

had only one chance to make one of his famous drives, and that was off the mark.

THE PLAY

The City came near scoring in the first minute. A swift centre from Toseland skidded quickly, and Coen did well to snatch the ball at the second attempt. Then it looked as though Stephenson would score, and so the game went on at a rattling pace, with the Town improving rapidly and striking back hard every time the City attack had been negatived.

Several free kicks were given against the City, and the Town had a few corner kicks, but it looked as though the best chance was made for himself by Finlayson, and when everybody expected a direct drive he passed to a colleague and the chance was lost.

More and more pressure was exerted by the Town as the interval drew near, but the teams crossed over without score.

FIRST GOAL

Defending the Kenilworth-road end in the second half the Town opened very confidently, but so well did the visitors cover up that there was no opportunity for a deliberate shot.

Eleven minutes after the resumption Connelly danced a way through on the left wing, came dribbling past opponents on the goal line, and then tapped the ball to BILLINGTON, who stabbed it first time; Swift shot out his hand and managed to hit the ball, but it passed over the line and the referee promptly signalled a goal amidst a terrific burst of applause.

CONNELLY'S BRACE

The City played hard, but the Town were doing better, and there would have been more goals but for Swift's skill. Once he leaped across and deflected a powerful cross shot from Redfern and the ball flew into the stand. This was a magnificent save.

However, the Town continued to menace the City goal, and Carroll and Redfern outwitted the opposition, and the latter lifted the ball across; CONNELLY, standing about fifteen yards out, quickly controlled the ball, and then shot beautifully into the lower corner of the net, Swift being helpless to save.

The City raided on their wings now and then, but Coen had a very easy time, thanks to the energies of the men in front of him. Then came the goal that clinched the issue. Carroll worked his way into position and then passed into the middle, and Billington gave CONNELLY the ball; the latter dodged every arresting effort, and wound up with a shot just inside the upright, Swift diving in vain.

The City made valiant efforts right to the last, but could not beat through the stout defence, and the end came with the Town meritorious winners.

Attendance, 15,997; receipts, £916 8s.