

BACK'S MISFORTUNE GIVES POINTS TO TOWN

Wrong Methods On Sticky Pitch

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	1
Marshall (own goal)	
BURNLEY	0

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

BURNLEY. — Adams; Robinson, Marshall; Gardner, Woodruff, Bray; Taylor, Morris, Billingham, Brocklebank, Hornby.

Referee: E. V. Gough, Stoke-on-Trent.

Why should so many of the spectators get the idea that Luton Town were lucky to win?

Merely on the matter of the goal scoring there was reason to take that view, perhaps, but surely on the run of the game generally they were the better team. They had much more of the play, for in spite of the inability of the forwards to score, or even to shoot well, Adams, the Burnley goalkeeper, had far, far more work than Coen.

Isolated events such as the save by Coen in the last few seconds, or even the fact that the one goal was scored by the most unwilling player on the field, hardly justifies the contention that luck decided the match.

SUPERIOR SIDE

Luton were certainly superior in their play all-round, but the failure to take cognisance of the conditions baulked them of the wider margin that would have made all the difference to the view of the onlooker.

Not that I am under-rating Burnley. They played good football, very clean football, too, and made many splendid moves, but were not on the aggressive so often, and their defence had a much more gruelling experience than fell to the Town rearguard.

I fancy it was just as well, because while I have nothing but praise for the courage and resolution shown by every individual entrusted with the care of the goal, it appeared to me that it was this determination to "stick-it" rather than cool and steady opposition that for the sixth time this season prevented any addition to the "goals against" column.

POLISH PREFERRED

With all possible admiration for this spirit, stamina and determination, I prefer to see a little more polish in the work. Lest anyone should imagine I have no good word for the defensive combination I would say at once that we are now seeing more unity of effort, better understanding in the rear than we did in the early part of the season.

Reason for that is that Roberts and Finlayson are helping their backs much more; and that both Redfern and Connelly, and in some degree Stephenson, are giving a good deal of assistance to the middle line.

There is more all-round team-work, and that has meant a great deal during the last two months. I hope it will continue, for there is always hope when there is understanding in any phase of the game.

BURNLEY'S POLICY

Why I preferred the Burnley defensive work was because of the quick decisions they made. I do not think they could have escaped so lightly if the going had been really firm, and judging on their recent displays I think we can write down the Town team as best on firm going.

We had hoped that the ground would be firm on Saturday, but it was soon clear that the use of the roller had given only a temporary effect. Whether the Town players were deceived by the appearance of the ground I do not know, but they were soon in trouble, and their attempts to keep the ball close failed repeatedly.

Burnley's rear men lifted the ball out

of the mud. What they would have done in other circumstances I cannot guess, but while they were sending the ball long distances by lifting it, the Town defenders were trying to play their normal game.

The kicking of the Town players, notably Dunsmore, was of fine precision and length. King has improved immensely in this respect, too, and they sent the ball skimming just the right height in ordinary conditions. Where they lacked by comparison with the opposition was that they were disposed to try and place the ball always, with the result that it dragged in the mud, and often stopped dead.

GOOD TACKLING

Little fault could be found with the tackling. They were on the ball quickly, and I thought the covering of each other was as good as anything I have seen this season. Dreyer was always ready to pop out and cover either King or Dunsmore if the back was beaten, and invariably we found either Roberts or Finlayson slipping into the vacancy created in the middle, and then Connelly or Redfern taking up the half-back gap.

That was what I liked most about the Town's play. It was really fine teamwork, however much we may quibble and cackle, as I often did, about the hesitation in kicking clear.

Dreyer has a mission on the field, and the Burnley inside forwards could pay tribute to the manner in which he enters into his job, while behind that line of defence Coen was safe. That Coen saved a point by his courage in the very last minute was obvious to everyone, and he is keeping goal better to-day than at any time of his career.

KEEPING THE BALL CLOSE

Apart from the disposition to keep the ball too close, both Roberts and Finlayson accomplished splendid work in support of the forwards, and in the van chief honours went to Billington and Stephenson. The former was not receiving as much support from his inside colleagues as usual, but was always a trier, and had a lot of misfortune with his shots.

Stephenson worked very hard again, and might have had a couple of goals had he steadied himself on the run in when he received good passes, but he was working hard all the time, and some of his footwork and centres won ready applause.

Carroll is the best right winger we have had since the days of Sid Hoar. I say that deliberately.

In this game he did not get nearly as many good passes as he should have had, and while his finishing could have been better, he showed the touch of class that in the long run pays best.

THE OLD HABIT

Redfern and Connelly did not have such a good game. Both fell into the old habit of holding on too much in view of the sticky going. They did many clever things, but again and again their work was of no avail because they persisted in going a yard too far. Redfern was also out of luck with good chances, but Connelly made the goal that did come—never mind how it was scored—by a wonderful bit of work.

STOUT DEFENCE

Burnley were stout in defence. Their backs never yielded an inch of ground, and they marked the wingers very effectively. I also liked their quick kicking. Woodruff was a grand pivot, and Adams kept goal splendidly. Between the flank halves there was little to choose. They were worriers and warriors; did numerous clever things; had ideas both in defence and attack.

The young right wing pair, Taylor and Morris, should develop into a really fine wing, but I thought Hornby was the most successful. He never wasted a ball. Brocklebank did not have a very good game, and Billingham was so closely shadowed by Dreyer that he had no chance of an easy shot.

POSSIBLE PENALTIES

There was much talk about the Town being lucky to escape a penalty kick. Well, I thought the referee was very sluggish. I could not understand why he gave only a free kick against Dreyer just inside the penalty area, because it seemed to me that the infringement came within the scope of the law for which a penalty kick is provided, and was not at all dangerous play.

However, I was equally at a loss to know why a penalty was not given against Burnley when Redfern was brought down by a positively deliberate trip after he had beaten the opposition and had a clear run in to goal. Possibly the referee made more considerable allowances for the state of the going than the spectators would make.

Burnley got off the mark quickly, but

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about the best chance of the match fell to the Town almost immediately, when Redfern went right through and at three or four yards' range had only to tap the ball past Adams; instead, he shot against the goalkeeper's legs and the ball rebounded.

At the other end Coen just managed to dive and hold the ball as it was creeping over the mud towards goal. Burnley had not nearly so much of the ball in this half, but there was menace in their moves. The Town had chances, but failed to take them, and Adams brought off several fine saves.

CONNELLY MAKES IT

A minute after the interval Billington broke through and shot grandly for the net, but Adams managed to turn the ball aside by a brilliant effort, and only a fruitless corner resulted.

However, the Town persevered, and six minutes after change of ends Connelly took possession. Most cleverly he went through on his own while opponents were expecting a pass into the middle; then he drove the ball to the front of goal very hard; with Billington and Redfern boring in, MARSHALL hastily rushed across and got just in front of them, but the ball struck his shins and rebounded into the net.

COEN'S SAVE

This was the deciding goal, but in the last few seconds when Burnley staged a grand rally, Hornby outwitted King and then lifted the ball squarely in front of goal. Both Billingham and Brocklebank were there to take it, with only Coen in front of them. Momentarily they appeared to leave the ball to each other, and in that instant Coen plunged. How it came about I could not tell, but the ball was deflected; twice it was sent in, and each time defenders got in the way, and then there was a terrific tussle and friends and foes were mixed up in a heap with Coen beneath. The Town goalkeeper came out with the ball safely in his arms, and booted it up the field, and the whistle came to herald the fact that the points remained at Luton.

Attendance: 13,547; receipts: £739 7s.