

TEN MINUTES SPELL CHANGED THE GAME

Wednesday Were Flattered By Three Goals Margin

(By CHILTERN)

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY ... 4

Hunt (pen.), Fallon,
Robinson, Toseland

LUTON TOWN 1

Finlayson

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY.—Smith; Ashley, Catlin; Russell, Hanford, Burrows; Toseland, Robinson, Hunt, Napier, Fallon.

LUTON TOWN.—Coen; King, Dunsmore; Finlayson, Dreyer, Roberts; Stevens, Redfern, Vinall, Connelly, Stephenson.

Referee.—W. P. Harper, Stourbridge.

The bare result of this match gives an entirely false impression of what actually occurred, but Luton's bad luck in their encounters with the Wednesday continued, and they lost two valuable points.

This success may well mean the return of the Wednesday to the First Division, but they had any amount of shocks before they finally took the upper hand.

On the run of the play Luton should have had a point, and I fancy that if the number of attacks made by each side could be counted up, it would be found that the Town had slightly more of the play.

WEDNESDAY TOOK THEIR CHANCES

Why then this heavy defeat, readers will ask? Well, in the first place, the Wednesday were the more adept at taking their chances, and it was in this phase that the main difference between the teams lay.

Luton did very well up to the penalty area, and, in fact, their attack was far more methodical, and played the better football. However, as has been the case in previous matches, the region of the penalty area spelt Luton's downfall.

They simply could not finish off their good midfield work, and the fact that their only goal was scored by a wing-half is a true enough reflection of what took place.

Apart from one brilliant hook by Redfern which would have scored nine times out of ten, the best shooting was done by Roberts and Finlayson, and these two made almost as many shots as the whole forward line put together.

BALL DID NOT RUN KINDLY

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the ball did not run so kindly for them in front of goal as it did for the Wednesday.

The home team took their chances, but they were far simpler than any that fell to the Town, and really no one forward could be pinned down as guilty of a bad miss.

However, the finishing was never impressive, and there was a number of occasions when passes were made when the obvious thing to do was to shoot.

WEDNESDAY'S INSPIRED SPELL

Whatever their failings in this direction, the Town certainly did not deserve to be beaten by three goals, and had it not been for a positively inspired spell of about ten minutes immediately after the interval, the Wednesday might have had to be content with a draw.

It was during this period that the game was won and lost. Up to then the Wednesday were fortunate to be in the lead, and there was no possible doubt that Luton were by far the more workmanlike side in the first half.

Their forwards were always the more potentially dangerous, while the whole team was faster on the ball, and showed more constructive ideas than the Wednesday's team of all-stars.

LUTON WORKED OFFSIDE TRAP

The Sheffield forwards simply could not make ground at all. Luton worked the offside trap brainily, and it was only rarely that the Wednesday got anywhere near the Town's penalty area.

Time after time the whistle went for offside, and Robinson and Co. must have become really tired of being pulled up. All praise is due to Luton for their display in the first half, for they got away to the worst start imaginable.

The game was only three minutes old when they had a penalty given against them, and I have seldom seen an offence

that less warranted such a severe punishment.

PENALTY WAS HARSH AWARD

Dreyer was the unfortunate player and he went to gather a loose ball with no Wednesday player within ten or 15 yards. There was no danger of any kind, and Coen was on the spot ready to come out if necessary.

As Dreyer went to control the ball, it bounced sharply off the hardish turf, and struck one of his outstretched arms. It was obvious that the ball had "played him," and that he had not played the ball.

There was a half-hearted appeal by the Wednesday players, and Referee Harper, who was well up with the play, pointed to the penalty spot.

THERE WAS NO DANGER

The Town players were dumbfounded, and I feel that the referee erred on the side of harshness. If the offence had occurred during a hot attack, the decision would have been understandable, but there was no danger of any sort, and the offence was obviously unintentional.

HUNT was entrusted with the kick, and he gave Coen no chance. Many teams would have wilted under such a blow, but not Luton, and in two minutes they were on terms.

An attack engineered by Stephenson brought a scramble just inside the penalty area, and the ball came out to FINLAYSON. He saw an avenue through a crowd of players and hit the ball hard and low for the far corner of the net.

Russell made an attempt to stop it, but the pace beat him, and the unlucky start had been washed out.

UNEXPECTED SECOND GOAL

After that Luton got a grip on the game and should have taken the lead, but although Smith had far more work than Coen, there was nothing of a very difficult nature.

The ball was kept in the home half, and the Wednesday's attacks were confined to breakaway. It was from one of these that they regained the lead after 33 minutes—a success for which we were totally unprepared.

Luton had been forcing the pace, when all of a sudden a big clearance sent Fallon away. King gave chase, but could not get in his tackle, and the outside-left took the ball almost level with the goalpost.

It looked an impossibility to score from that angle, but as Coen came out FALLON hit the ball hard, and somehow or another it went under the bar.

WAS SOMETHING OF A FLUKE

My opinion is that Fallon's intention was to cross the ball, and that the goal was something of a fluke. Nevertheless, it looked good enough, and if it was intended as a shot, was a wonderful effort.

After a few minutes of Wednesday superiority, Luton returned to the attack, but seldom gave me the impression that they would score again.

Came the second half, and something went wrong with Luton's "works." The man who did the damage was Robinson, the England inside-right, who suddenly appeared to have a brainwave.

ROBINSON TURNED THE SCALES

In the first half, ROBINSON had been caught as often as anyone in the offside trap, but now he began to be canny, and realised that these tactics could be beaten if he took the ball through himself.

First of all, in the opening minutes, he should have scored when he walked through with the defence appealing for offside. The inside-right turned round to make sure that play was still on, and seemed a certain scorer.

However, he was not quite quick enough, for Coen came out to make a despairing save. The next time he got the ball, he made no mistake, for he beat Roberts and swerved past Dreyer to make a great chance for himself.

This time he made no mistake with a low shot that left Coen helpless. After that the Town defence had a worrying time, and the offside tactics were continually beaten by forwards taking the ball through.

WAS FALLON OFFSIDE?

Hunt was the next to try it, but Coen again saved, and Napier spoilt the chance by punching the ball into the net when Coen and Hunt were lying on the ground.

The pressure was so great that more goals were always likely, and the fourth came after 55 minutes when Fallon

HIGH TOWN (NO. 39) BILLIARD HALL
10 TABLES



SCISSORS

Resharpener like new, 3d. pair

GEORGE RIPPER

The Gentlemen's Hairdresser

63, STUART STREET

crossed the ball for TOSELAND to run in and score with complete ease from close range.

There were confident Luton appeals on the grounds that Fallon was offside, and two or three defenders told me after the match that the winger had infringed by at least two yards.

They were unavailing, however, and the referee had no hesitation in awarding a goal.

Offside tactics have their good points, and they can be most effective, but they have their weaknesses, too. Throughout the first half I was expecting Robinson to break through in the same way as he did at the beginning of the second.

An inside-forward who is quick on the uptake can defeat these tactics, and if there is a man in the game to-day who is equipped to do so, he is Robinson.

For ten minutes he played like a £10,000 player, and that was sufficient. For the rest of the match he was commonplace.

Another weakness of the offside tactics is that too much reliance has to be placed on the accuracy of judgment of the referee and linesmen. They are always liable to err, and a team that is continually laying such a trap has to take this chance.

NOTHING WRONG WITH LUTON'S SPIRIT

After that spell, the Wednesday faded out again, and for the rest of the half the Town were every bit as good as their opponents. I could not help admiring the way Luton fought back. There was nothing wrong with their spirit, and if their shooting had been made of the same stuff they might have reduced the lead more than once.

Some good efforts were made, notably by Roberts, Finlayson and Connelly, but although they were unlucky once or twice, the Wednesday always looked safe enough for the points.

HAVE PLAYED WORSE AND WON

And that is the story of a game that might have had a far different result. I have seen Luton play much worse, and yet come away with a couple of points.

They had none of the "breaks," and it is perfectly true that any team to win away must have a bit of luck some time. Luton had the bad luck. There was the penalty, that "should have scored" shot of Redfern's, Fallon's goal, and finally the last goal.

That was enough to break the heart of any team, but Luton fought on, and made many friends by reason of their pluck.

Most supporters will be interested to know how Stevens, the latest outside-right, came through. I should like to be able to say that he was an unqualified success, but he did no better in this position than his predecessors.

STEVENS WAS WELL MARKED

It was a big thing to ask him to play in what was really an unaccustomed position in such an important game. Added to that was the fact that he was opposed to one of the best backs in the game in Catlin.

Stevens has always been a trier, and he put all he knew into his play, but he was closely marked by Catlin, and could rarely get away. He did not have the best of support, and it was mainly in experience that he was beaten.

Stephenson, on the other wing, was far from happy, and there was not the necessary pace and incisiveness on the wings. Not half so many centres came across as were needed, and Stephenson could rarely make much of the burly Ashley.

INSIDE MEN DID TOO MUCH

The inside-forwards were again prone to do too much, and Redfern was perhaps the biggest offender. A lot of good work was spoilt by taking the ball that extra yard, and although he played some clever football, it was not so effective as it might have been.

Vinall was a hundred per cent. trier as usual, but was well held by Hanford and was not allowed to get in many shots. However, Vinall got very few passes that were of any use to him, and most of them were head high, and here the tall centre-half held the advantage.

No one could say that Vinall let the side down, and I doubt whether Billington would have done any better with the rather poor material provided.

CONNELLY THE BEST FORWARD

Best of the forwards was Connelly who showed what a genius he can be. Some of his work was masterly, and although he sometimes carried cleverness to extremes, he did much that was useful.

As I have mentioned previously Finlayson and Roberts were the best marksmen, and each did wonderful work in attack. At times, Finlayson ventured too far, and did not get back quickly enough, but he played glorious football and might have scored more than one goal.

Roberts made some wonderful drives that deserved a better fate, and he was once again a tireless worker, and on the whole came through well against Robinson.

DREYER MASTERED HUNT

It was not Dreyer's fault that the Town were beaten. He held Hunt in a vice-like grip, and the bustling centre-forward had no opportunities of adding to his goals tally apart from the penalty. As usual, Dreyer refused to be drawn out of the centre, and he was sound enough throughout.

Dunsmore had another good match.

(Continued in next column)

(Continued from preceding column)

and Toseland, the flier, was not much in the picture. The left-back tackled very hard, and his kicking was always of good length.

Fallon, too, was not given much rope by King, who played pluckily and sturdily, while Coen could not be faulted. He might have done better to stay in goal when Fallon scored, but the angle seemed too acute for a scoring shot to be delivered.

Although conceding four goals, the defence, as a whole, by no means had a bad day, and few teams could have lived with the Wednesday during their second half spell.

More goals might have followed but for Coen's daring saves.