

Six Second Division Points Collected



HUGH BILLINGTON

Right In The Promotion Struggle

Luton Town have advanced their prospects of promotion in a manner that has evoked the admiration of their supporters. To-day it is patent that if they can manage to sustain the brilliant standard of the holiday games they may well depose one of the more fancied candidates, and at least take the second place in the table at the final count.

This is not a moment to exaggerate their opportunities or to belittle their chances, but I am led to the belief that the great improvement in the weather, and the consequent firmness of the grounds has been to their advantage, and if we have a continuance of this weather the prospects of achieving an ambition that has been consistently denied by supporters for months past will be enhanced.

There can be no question whatever that in the three games this Easter the Town have displayed a quality that is good enough for the First Division. The football has been extremely clever; the team work has been grand; determination has been allied to skill in the scientific phases, and that is why they have now attained a position that is a direct challenge to the leading clubs of the Division.

The great question is whether they can maintain that standard, and time alone can prove that, but if they can win, or even avoid defeat at Chesterfield on Saturday, then they will have further stabilised their position, so that the last three games will find the team fighting for the highest honour in League football.

On Friday and Saturday they showed magnificent combination, and although there were a few flutters before Fulham were overcome, the difference between the teams on the run of play was just as strikingly marked in the second as in the first game.

At Southampton on Monday, despite the effects of the two previous games, the team rose to great heights again, and it was really this third consecutive success that hall-marked their prospects.

In Sports Chat is given the various games that have to be played by the leading clubs, and there is no reason why the Town should not continue their sequence, although as previously pointed out there is not the slightest advantage in minimising the difficulties or in exalting the possibilities.

CRUSADER

Southampton Swamped

(By CRUSADER)
AT LUTON ON FRIDAY
LUTON TOWN 6
Billington (3), Redfern (2), Connelly
SOUTHAMPTON 2
Tomlinson, Bevis
LUTON TOWN.—Coen; King, Dunsmore; Finlayson, Dreyer, Roberts; Carroll, Redfern, Billington, Connelly, Stephenson.
SOUTHAMPTON.—Warhurst; Perfect, Emmanuel, Parkin, Chalk, Brophy; Bevis, Bates, Tomlinson, Holt, Briggs.
Referee.—L. Brown, Barnes.

Friday's game was something of a contrast in styles. The Town found plenty of trouble before they settled down, as Southampton showed up as they usually do, in the hard, fast and open style. They had few players who attempted clever work, though their leader, Tomlinson, could use his feet as well as his shoulders, and his "bull-rushes" in the early stages often threatened to upset the equilibrium of the Town defence.

However, once the Town forwards had settled down and mastered the defensive methods of the visitors, they gave the defence a gruelling time, and in the quarter of an hour before the change of ends, they scored four goals as the result of fast and stylish combination. In addition, Warhurst saved numerous shots that were right on the mark, and he averted a much heavier defeat.

CONNELLY had given the Town the lead with a prettily-worked goal after six minutes, but the crowd went wild with joy in the stretch just before half-time, when BILLINGTON, REDFERN (penalty), BILLINGTON and REDFERN scored in that order, and there were three or four other shots that were saved in splendid style by Warhurst.

CONSOLATION FOR "SAINTS"

BILLINGTON added to his tally two minutes after the resumption, after Connelly had chased a ball to the right wing and then put across a perfect centre, but that was the end of the Town's scoring, and one could almost say the end of the efforts to score, for the forwards dropped their keenness and we had a lot of close play that would not bring goals.

Moreover, the defence became less alert, and as a result, TOMLINSON beat Coen because the goalkeeper was not prepared for a sudden shot from near the touch-line, though the ball swerved a good deal, and later, the same player made an opening for BEVIS to score. Southampton never ceased trying, and they very nearly scored again twice before the end, and some of the gloss was taken off the Town's victory by these lapses.

Fulham's Fall

(By CRUSADER)
AT LUTON ON SATURDAY
LUTON TOWN 2
Connelly, Billington
FULHAM 1
Worsley
LUTON TOWN team unchanged.
FULHAM.—Turner; Bacuzzi, Keeping; Evans, Hiles, Tompkins; Higgins, Worsley; Dennison, Woodward, Miller.
Referee.—S. Hadley, Leicester.

Fulham made a stirring fight of it on Saturday, but they might well have been beaten as heavily as Southampton. Their defence, however, was of a different mettle and withstood almost incessant assaults by the Town just before the change of ends, and again almost throughout the second half.

Luton were far and away the better team, though for the first half-hour both teams could not control the ball well on the firm ground, and many passes went astray, while the finishing of the Town forwards was not so good.

Again, as on the previous day, the third quarter of an hour found the Town accelerating the pace, and they besieged the Fulham goal, Turner being constantly in action, and saving his side again and again by his long reach and agility.

After several skirmishes by the Town in the second half, Higgins got the better of Dunsmore and Dreyer in a struggle on the right wing, and centred finely for WORSLEY to rush in and score with a terrific shot.

Then came the pasting of the Fulham goal again. The visitors brought back their forwards and halves, and presented a massed defence in order to keep the Town at bay, and for a quarter of an hour they withstood the pressure. They gave away many corners, and it was from a well-placed flag kick by Stephenson that the equalising goal came. Redfern met the ball with his head, and it was travelling fast when CONNELLY leaped up and headed it even harder, and Turner had no chance.

More powder and shot at the Fulham end followed, and there were but rare excursions by the visitors from their territory. They still endeavoured to save a point, but they were frustrated by BILLINGTON, who captured a ball during a struggle just inside the penalty area, and despite the close attentions of three opponents, he managed to beat them and shoot right away from Turner for a winner.

Fulham made desperate efforts to rally, and forced a corner just before the whistle, but they were too late, and the end came with the Town good winners of a most interesting contest.

Southampton Feel The Lash Again

(By CHILTERN)
AT SOUTHAMPTON ON MONDAY
LUTON TOWN 4
Stephenson, Billington (3)
SOUTHAMPTON 0
LUTON TOWN team unchanged.
SOUTHAMPTON.—Warhurst; Perfect, Emmanuel; Cutting, Chalk, Brophy; Bevis, Bates, Tomlinson, Holt, Briggs.
Referee.—L. Brown, Barnes.

If ever a team had the promotion stamp on them, LUTON TOWN did at the Dell on Monday. So far did they outplay the SAINTS that the margin in their favour did not fully represent their superiority.

Apart from the settling down period at the start, Southampton never looked like saving a point, and, though they put up a plucky enough display in the first half, they were outclassed at every phase of the game in the second half.

Luton reached peak form, and the football played by the Town forwards was worth going a long way to see. They repeatedly caught the rather sluggish home defence in two minds, and, in the second half, it became, for Southampton, merely a matter of keeping the score down.

Whether the last half-hour would have been goalless, if goals had been urgently needed, is a moot point, but I think that, if Luton had concentrated on scoring in this period, they would have succeeded.

EVERY ONE AN ARTISTE

However, that is neither here nor there. The margin was good enough in any case and was thoroughly deserved. The Town attack was brilliant, with every member an artiste, and they found each other in a manner that was almost uncanny.

Redfern and Connelly did the scheming, Carroll and Stephenson kept plugging the ball into the middle, and Billington was on the job to the extent of yet another "bat-trick."

The wing halves, Finlayson and Roberts, gave every aid to the men in front of them, and both had plenty of time to spare to drive on the attack.

The Saints' forward line was never a menace, and the main method of making progress was to kick the ball hard and run. Once or twice, these tactics nearly succeeded, and the Town goal had one or two escapes, but there was nothing in the nature of sustained pressure, and the Luton defence had matters well in hand.

Dreyer was one of the heroes, for he received a nasty gash over the eye, but came back after ten minutes' absence to play in storming fashion.

BACKS WERE UNYIELDING

King and Dunsmore were a strong, unyielding pair, while Coen was more than capable of dealing with the little work that came his way.

The Town took the lead in 17 minutes through STEPHENSON, who dashed into the middle to head the ball well out of Warhurst's reach from Carroll's well-placed centre.

BILLINGTON added a second three minutes before the interval when he cleverly beat Chalk, and crashed the ball into the net.

Fifteen minutes of the second half were sufficient for the centre-forward to bring his total to three, and all his goals were glorious efforts.

For the last half-hour, the Town were content to weave pretty patterns which must have given the home defenders a headache. Only bad luck robbed them of more goals, and Redfern was particularly unlucky.