

# BILLINGTON GETS GRAND WINNER

## Fulham Made A Gallant Resistance At Luton

### TOWN ATTACK AGAIN IN BRILLIANT MOOD

(By CRUSADER)

|                      |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| LUTON TOWN           | ..... 2 |
| Connelly, Billington |         |
| FULHAM               | ..... 1 |
| Worsley              |         |

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

FULHAM: Turner; Bacuzzi, Keeping; Evans, Hiles, Tompkins; Higgins, Worsley, Dennison, Woodward, Miller. Referee: S. Hadley, Leicester.

Friday we had plenty of goals for our delectation: Saturday goals were hard to achieve, but there was no lack of excitement, and the end of the second day of the holiday programme found the Town with the full complement of points.

Who could say they were not merited? Friday's heavy defeat of Southampton was followed by a grim and relentless defence that threatened to prevent the better side from reaping the full reward of their very fine labours. Everyone present at either game must have been pleased with the quality of the Town's performance, but on the whole I think we should be agreed that there was more satisfaction to be gained from the victory over Fulham.

#### A GALLANT FIGHT

Whereas the issue was safe after just over half an hour against Southampton, it was not until the final whistle that the points were safely garnered from Fulham. The London side, evidently keen to show that their defeat at home the previous day was a pure misfortune—and their officials claimed very emphatically that it was—put up a gallant fight, and although generally they were fighting to save rather than to glean, magnums of praise were due to their stalwart and unyielding defence.

Firm ground had a deteriorative effect on the scientific game, and the visitors must have felt that they had something of an ally in this respect, and when they scored their goal shortly after the interval there was every incentive to them to fight to hold that lead, believing that it would be easier to keep that than to increase it.

#### BILLINGTON'S PLUCK

Alas, their hopes were diminished by the persistent pressure of the Town forwards, which could have only one result in the long run, and Connelly's goal brought the scores level. Then it was a repetition of the struggle to share the spoils, but Billington's magnificent pertinacity gained the day with a goal which might wrongly be described as brilliant, and yet deserved a high-sounding adjective because of the pluck and perseverance through which it accrued.

Much of the first half was spent in long kicking and aimless chasing of the ball by both teams, but after about half an hour the Town had the measure of the opposition, and only the brilliant goalkeeping of Turner prevented them taking a strong lead before the change of ends.

Quite half a score of corner kicks must have fallen to the Town in the first half, and yet there seemed to be so much difficulty in getting the ball under control that the Town forwards had few really good shots until that severe bombardment through which Turner came with flying colours, and a blank sheet at the retirement.

#### FULHAM'S LEAD

Second half seemed likely to be similar, but when Fulham's right wing

raced clear and WORSLEY converted the centre with a timely contact, it was obvious that the Town would have to pull out something more strenuous if they were to save the game.

They responded gamely, and it was no more than their just deserts when Connelly scored. There were quite a lot of people who disagreed that CONNELLY had scored. It was thought that Redfern's header had done the trick, but what happened was that Redfern headed the ball goalwards, and Connelly leaped up and diverted it unexpectedly.

#### A COURAGEOUS GOAL

It was amazing how the Town were foiled repeatedly after this, and we were thinking that the game would be drawn when BILLINGTON took possession among a number of players; he was tackled promptly, but retained possession, and managed to get in a scoring shot before he was brought to earth rather violently.

I had an idea there would have been a penalty kick if the shot had not got there, but perhaps I was wrong about that, for the referee did not seem to be of the type that would take drastic action of that kind without everybody else had previously agreed to it.

Even then the game was not over, for Fulham came with a rattle to try and save a point, and Evans headed just over the bar as the whistle went for the final.

It was a game which became more exciting the farther it went, and the wind-up was exciting enough to keep all the crowd there to hear the last tootle.

#### THE DEFENCE

Coen had not a great deal to do, but such work as he had was of a more testing nature than on the previous day. I thought there were times when there was a lack of understanding among the Town defenders. Some of them never seemed quite sure of either themselves or their colleagues.

The kicking was sound, and I preferred King to Dunsmore, for grand back though the latter undoubtedly is, there is a tendency to hold the ball unnecessarily, and this invariably leads to challenges, and more than once it led to fouls which could have been avoided.

Roberts and Finlayson were grand both in attack and defence, and unquestionably Roberts has the right spirit for the captaincy not less than he has the right ideas for half-back play. It would have been a good thing for the club if he had been placed there before.

Finlayson was again the artist, though now and then he was not accurate in his passing, but neither were others. Dreyer worked hard as ever, and that he has improved wonderfully in his use of the ball after beating opponents is clear.

#### BRILLIANT FORWARDS

The forwards often reached heights of brilliance that left the visitors astounded, and the reason they failed to get more goals could be attributed chiefly to the fact that Fulham brought all their main resources into the defence, and their penalty area was often overcrowded, too much so to allow of the finer points being exploited.

Carroll had a rather better day than against Southampton, but Billington was very well watched, and it was to his credit that he managed to score the winning goal. But the best entertainment was provided by Connelly and Redfern, whose skilful footwork again and again elicited spontaneous applause. Stephenson maintained his splendid form, too, and while I am writing these last words I am hoping what every supporter is eagerly anticipating—a victory at Southampton, though it will have been a tough task despite the disparity between the teams on Friday.

#### FULHAM'S DEFENCE

Fulham had a magnificent defence. Turner kept goal splendidly, but Bacuzzi was a great back, and Keeping has proved that he has retained all his skill, though he is now in his twelfth season of League football.

Hiles was a reliable pivot of the stopper type, but it was difficult after the first half to distinguish between inside-forwards and half-backs, for the visitors drew back their forwards to help in the defence, and at times had nine defenders and two forwards only.

Higgins was always a potential danger, but I fancy that now he has filled out a bit he is inclined to try and use his weight more and test defenders, and therefore he cannot quibble if they accept the gauntlet, as was the case with Dunsmore.

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