

Praise, But No Points For Gallant Town

By Chiltern

PRESTON NORTH END 1 LUTON TOWN 0

If ever the Town needed a full-strength side and no accidents to happen, it was at Deepdale on Saturday when they faced up to a Preston team perched on top of the Second Division.

However, that imp of fate who, one way or another, has paid more than average attention to the Town this season, interfered again and they found themselves facing the second half a goal down and with virtually only 10 men.

A collision with Stretton when both were trying to make certain that the ball did not reach Finney caused Aherne to be a concussion victim and although his first-half absence amounted to only two minutes, he could not resume for the start of the second half.

For 17 minutes, the Town struggled on without him and even when he returned he went to the highly unfamiliar position for him of outside-right.

As so often happens, a misfortune of this kind inspired the others and they gave a highly courageous, non-stop fighting display against the goal-hungry Preston forwards who were unable to increase the single goal lead they gained after 20 minutes.

Their scorer was HORTON, who made ground quickly to hit into the net from close in, a cross pass from Wayman, who had veered out to the left.

In a way, Preston were fortunate that this goal was not merely an equaliser, for they were most fortunate to escape earlier when Stobbart broke clean through the defence, but placed the ball wide of the post as Gooch advanced.

DID NOT COUNT

Just previously, the inside-right had smacked the ball hard into the back of the net from near the 18-yards line only to be judged offside, a decision with which the Town were not in agreement.

Once North End obtained the lead they moved with assurance more befitting League leaders and there were one or two moments of anxiety in the Town goalmouth. but the interval arrived without further disasters.

With only 10 men, the Town buckled to the task and after driving off some early pressure by the home side, gave Preston's defence some uncomfortable minutes during which a shot from Davie going out of Gooch's reach, was diverted late by a defender's head.

In the main, though, it was Luton's defence holding out against the home forwards, and a strange-looking defence it was, with Morton at right-back and Taylor at right-half.

Both played their parts manfully, and although there were close calls when Finney twice hit the woodwork and then headed inches wide, and other chances were missed, the Town held out, and thoroughly deserved to do so.

Late in the game there was a spirited rally by them during which Owen, from inside the Preston penalty area, had a particularly good shot headed away.

WENT DOWN FIGHTING

True, the Town went down, but they did so with the flag flying high and their fighting spirit unimpaired. Never did they let up, and every man played his part.

Main honours in defence were shared by Owen for the way in which he kept Wayman in subjection, and Streten for his brilliant anticipation and consistently good judgment.

There were full marks for the others, though, with Aherne, until his injury, making quite a good job of holding Finney, and Cooke finding Finney a more dangerous opponent in the second half than Morrison had been.

However, Cooke was dogged and unyielding, and so was Morton in both the positions which he sampled. McAuley made a solid contribution, too, and Taylor's display at right-half was something of an eye-opener.

He was more successful there than he had been in the middle during the first half, for he did not keep the line on the move as he did on the previous Saturday.

Yet, as a line, the forwards surprised Preston by the quality of their football, which was always skilful and constructive. Had the finishing been as effective then goals would have come Luton's way.

Stobbart and Davie were much in the picture in the first half with clever footwork, and Glover and Havenga both responded well to some good prompting.

Even in the second half when the attack was mostly a four-man affair, they still served up the football, and although the team did not get any points from this match, there was plenty of honour in this defeat.

PRESTON , NORTH END:
Gooch; Cunningham, Scott;
Docherty, Marston, Forbes;
Finney, Horton, Wayman, Beattie,
Morrison.

LUTON TOWN: Streten;
Cooke, Aherne; Morton, Owen,
McAuley; Glover, Stobbart,
Taylor (J), Davie, Havenga.

Referee: G. Tedds, Nottingham.