

ALL THREE TOWN TEAMS BEATEN

HOPE OF PROMOTION TOOK A BAD KNOCK

Reserves Unlucky To Go Down For The First Time

By Chiltern

December 13, 1952, is a date that will bring back no happy memories to the Town or their supporters, for it will go down in the records as one of those black days when nothing went right.

Defeat of the seniors by Doncaster Rovers at Kenilworth-road was a nasty jolt to the Town's promotion aspirations, especially in view of the successes of Huddersfield Town and Sheffield United in vital matches, and the failure of the Reserves at Crystal Palace brought to an end their magnificent unbeaten run. Just to cap it all, the "A" team also suffered an odd-goal defeat at Headington.

BEFORE - THE - MATCH talk. really shaken, and for a few minutes there was a sort of unearthly silence on the ground. Both Doncaster goals were credited to Herbert, and both were preventable. Failure to clear a high cross led to the damage in each case, and Stretton is not cutting out this type of centre as he used. A point-blank save by him from Lawlor in a scramble nearly got the Town out of trouble on the first occasion, but Stretton could not hold the ball and Herbert rushed it through.

Flying Start—Then Into Arrears

FROM the way play began, the Town seemed to be laying the foundations of another big home win, for they had the Rovers' defence fighting desperately from the first minute, and that the Rovers scored with only six minutes gone caused no more than a mild fluttering among the fans. Reason was that the Town had looked so masterful in the early minutes and so full of goals that an odd one against them, scrappy affair that it was, seemed merely incidental.

However, everybody sat up abruptly and took due notice when Doncaster scored again after 15 minutes.

Both Goals Should Have Been Prevented

THOSE who had turned up in the hope of seeing the Town attack on the rampage again were

All Never Seemed Lost, Even Then

FROM the second corner, Stretton came out, missed the ball completely, and Herbert was there again to collect another simple goal.

Even with such arrears facing them so early in the game, all never seemed lost from the Town point of view, despite the fact that the Rovers' breakaway were revealing gaps in the Town defence and there might conceivably have been two more goals.

However, the Town's optimism was based on their free-scoring forward line, and the feeling one gained from watching developments was that if the Town scored once Doncaster might well be overrun.

Mitchell Raised The Town's Hopes

WELL, the Town did score, and a very good goal it was, obtained by Mitchell, who

cracked the ball past the advancing Hardwick after Pye had found him in an open space with a well-made pass.

For a few minutes the pressure was on at full force and the Rovers' defenders were reduced to lick-anywhere tactics that bespoke near-panic.

However, beleaguered though they were, they held out gallantly and still had their heads in front at half-time, when the conversation hopefully ran along the lines of "If we can get level we can win this match."

Scoring Shots Hit Defenders' Feet

CHANCES had been missed in the first half, notably when Pye steered the ball wide from a position bang in front of goal when the ball came over from the right, admittedly at a terrific pace.

The finishing, as a whole, had not been of the same deadly species as we have seen in previous home matches, and the close packing of the Rovers defence and their quickness in the tackle had something to do with this.

In the second half this was even more marked, for time and time again a shot that might have had Hardwick in trouble was intercepted by a foot or by the body of some desperate defender.

Rovers' Goalmouth Constantly Packed

OBVIOUSLY, the Town set themselves out for a quick goal at the start of the second half and, had it come, it is most likely that Doncaster's defence would have been reeling against the pressure afterwards.

Trouble was that the success just did not arrive and, as time went on, the Rovers' defenders became more and more confident and the Town looked less and less like saving the game.

Yet they had nearly all the play which was perhaps something to do with their lack of success in front of goal, for the Doncaster goalmouth was constantly packed and it was most difficult to find a way through.

Nothing Went The Way Of The Town

OPPORTUNITIES cropped up, though, and were missed, and some went astray through hesitation in making a shot.

At least twice Moore had a chance to have a crack at the ball from reasonably close range, but his effort to make certain by getting the ball under control gave the defenders just that split second that they required and the gap was closed with amazing speed.

That slight hesitation in front of goal cost the Town dear but, at the same time, it must be said in their favour that nothing went their way or came off for them during the desperate assaults they launched on the Rovers' goal.

Tactics Not Suited To The Conditions

IN the end, the combination of the thick, cloying mud and the Rovers' defence was too

FOR THE RECORDS

LUTON TOWN 1
Mitchell
DONCASTER ROVERS... 2
Herbert (2)
LUTON TOWN: Stretton; Dunne, Aberne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Moore, Pye, Watkins, Mitchell.
DONCASTER ROVERS: Hardwick; Makepeace, Graham; Brown, Paterson, Miller; Tindill, Lawlor, Harrison, Herbert, Walker.
Referee: J. R. Dunbar, Stapleford Attendance: 15,258

much for them. To some extent, they contributed to their own downfall by not putting their tactics to the conditions.

The state of the going was such that it was all against the short pass and it was noticeable that the Town made progress most dangerously when the ball was hit hard down the wings.

In the circumstances, it was scarcely wise to play so much to Pye who, for the first time since he began to lead the Town attack, found himself hemmed in.

Mud Clogged Town Scoring Machine

PATERSON, a strong, hard-tackling centre-half, never left Pye who found it impossible to shake off his attentions.

Pye did not improve matters by holding on to the ball and vainly trying to leave the centre-half beaten as he does most he meets.

Of course, the mud helped Paterson, just as it clogged the Town's attacking machine.

With Pye mostly held, Moore did not come into the game quite so much as usual, but, yet he had as many shots at goal as anyone.

On the other hand, Watkins showed a marked improvement on recent displays and, apart from a tendency to hold on to the ball too long, gained a high rating.

Wingers Were Very Dangerous

FROM the Town's point of view it was a pity that more use was not made of the wings, for both Davies and Mitchell were most dangerous when they were sent away and had the down-the-middle plan not been persisted in during the second half, they might have been the means of saving the game.

There will not be much anxiety at Kenilworth-road about the attack, but there may be some thought about the defence which was sorely troubled by the quick raiding Doncaster forwards.

Dunne was one who had a very worrying afternoon and apart from anything else, his kicking was poor and his clearances were often beaten down by opponents.

Morton Shone In The Defence

AHERNE had some trouble in getting the ball clear, too, but was more consistent than his

partner. Best of the defence was Morton, who turned in an immensely strong game and gave good service to his forwards.

For Owen, there was an anxious sort of opening because of the wandering propensities of Harrison, but, gradually he settled down to his normal, sound game and, apart from one badly-judged back-pass that could have cost a goal, was very safe.

Shanks was not at his best, as much due to the fact that his distribution was inaccurate as anything else.

Goalkeepers errors are usually more blatant and easily than those made by anybody else and Stretton must shoulder a fair share of responsibility for the shocking start from which the Town never fully recovered.

Reserves Wiped Out Two-Goals Arrears

ALL good things must come to an end, and the Reserves' defeat at Crystal Palace concluded their long unbeaten run of 21 games. Even so, they can consider themselves unlucky.

They did not hit top form in the first half and were two goals down at half-time, but after the interval they over-ran the Palace defence, equalised and looked certain winners.

Then, five minutes from the end, Palace broke away and Evans scored the winning goal. Immediately after this Luton set up a continual bombardment of the home goal and it was only ended by the final whistle.

Only One Team In It After Half-Time

LES HALL moved up into the forward line, but to no avail. Palace deserved their interval lead for they were always dangerous in front of goal and Baynham made one or two really good saves, but there was only one team in the game after the interval and Palace were run off their feet.

Gordon Turner scored Luton's second goal but he deserved at least two more for he got in three brilliant shots that brought out the best in Anderson, the home goalkeeper.

Luton's first goal was scored by Scott, who did not look too happy at centre-forward. One chance he missed was from three yards range, when he had only Anderson to beat.

McJarrow's Cleverness Was Missed

IN fact, the forwards missed the cleverness of Hugh McJarrow, who did not play because of a toe injury.

Turner was the best forward, but Sexton had an indifferent game and Cullen and Taylor, the wingers, were patchy.

Jones was outstanding at right-back, but Pemberton was not so confident as usual. Baynham made several outstanding saves and his long kicking was always useful.

Member of the Luton party was Broughton, the young Palace winger, who broke a leg at Luton earlier in the season. He returned to Luton and Dunstable Hospital after the match and is expected to be discharged at the end of the week.

No Points, But "A" Team Earned Credit

DEFEAT came the way of the "A" team, too, but they put up a good display against a strong Headington side, which included Arthur Turner, former Charlton Athletic player, and Toulouse, another player of considerable experience.

Not many teams come away from Headington with any material gain, but Luton were beaten by only one goal and in the opinion of the spectators, were one of the best sides to play there this season.

In fact, many supporters said afterwards that the standard of play was more than equal to a good many Southern League games seen on the same ground.

Failed To Score For The First Time

THIS was the first time this season that the Town forwards have failed to score, but they came very close to doing so. Had they had just a little more goalmouth punch they might have equalised at least.

Prattley scored Headington's goal soon after the interval and although Luton made many dangerous raids they were unable to beat Woodward, Headington goalkeeper. In the closing stages Bennett was moved to centre-forward and the home defence had a gruelling time.

Cooke was the best defender of the field, Dallas blocked the middle effectively, and Allen was the pick of the forward line.

Chiltern's Forecasts

DIVISION I
Arsenal v. Aston Villa
Blackpool v. Portsmouth
Cardiff C. v. Wolves
Charlton Ath. v. Sunderland
Chelsea v. Manchester Utd.
Derby C. v. Bolton W.
Liverpool v. Preston N.E.
Manchester C. v. Stoke C.
Middlesbrough v. Burnley
Newcastle Utd. v. Sheffield Wed.
West Brom v. Tottenham H.

DIVISION II
Barnsley v. Doncaster R.
Birmingham C. v. Rotherham Utd.
Blackburn R. v. Nottm. Forest
Bury v. Fulham
Hull C. v. Everton
Leeds Utd. v. Huddersfield T.
Lincoln C. v. Brentford
Luton T. v. Plymouth A.
Notts C. v. Leicester C.
Sheffield Utd. v. Swansea T.
Southampton v. West Ham

DIVISION III (SOUTH)
Aldershot v. Norwich C.
Bristol C. v. Watford
Crystal Palace v. Brighton
Gillingham v. Newport C.
Ipswich T. v. Colchester Utd.
Oxford Utd. v. Reading
Northampton T. v. Bournemouth
Q.P.R. v. Exeter C.
Shrewsbury T. v. Bristol R.
Swindon T. v. Coventry C.
Torquay Utd. v. Southend Utd.
Walsall v. Millwall

DIVISION III (NORTH)
Accrington S. v. Hartlepool S.
Bradford v. York C.
Carlisle Utd. v. Gateshead
Chester v. Stockport C.

Crewe Alex. v. Rochdale
Halifax T. v. Workington
Mansfield T. v. Chesterfield
Oldham Ath. v. Tranmere R.
Port Vale v. Bradford C.
Scunthorpe Utd. v. Barrow
Southport v. Darlington
Wrexham v. Grimsby T.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE
DIVISION "A"
Aberdeen v. Partick T.
Clyde v. East Fife
Falkirk v. Celtic
Hearts v. Third Lanark
Motherwell v. Dundee
Queen of South v. Hibernian
Raith Rovers v. Airdrieonians
Rangers v. St. Mirren

DIVISION "B"
Albion R. v. Dumbarton
Aston v. Kilmarnock
Ayr Utd. v. Stirling A.
Dundee Utd. v. Arbroath
Dunfermline v. Stenhousemuir
Forfar Ath. v. Hamilton
Morton v. Cowdenbeath
Queen's Park v. St. Johnstone

SELECTIONS
TEN HOME.—Arsenal, Newcastle, West Brom, Birmingham, Sheffield Utd., Ipswich, Northampton, Crewe, Oldham, Scunthorpe.

FOUR AWAY.—Manchester Utd., Fulham, Norwich, Stockport.

THREE DRAWS.—Middlesbrough v. Burnley; Leeds v. Huddersfield; Wrexham v. Grimsby.



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