

TOWN'S UPWARD DRIVE CONTINUES

SIMILAR POSITION TO LAST SEASON NOW

Visit To Doncaster Is Of Vital Importance

By Chiltern

Those who are now beginning to wonder whether the Town can get into the promotion race this season will be interested in a comparison between their position to-day and the one they were in exactly 12 months ago.

Strangely enough, the two are almost identical, for last year, at this stage, the Town were seventh with 21 points from 18 matches. Now they stand eighth with 21 points from 19 games. The teams who went up eventually, Sheffield United and Huddersfield, then had 27 and 25 points respectively.

At the moment the Town are five points behind the team in second place, Doncaster Rovers, which only goes to stress the vital importance of their visit to the Riverside ground next Saturday. Fortunately, they will face them with their full-strength resources available, for, apart from the slight concussion that Mitchell received in scoring the winning goal, the players came through a tough match without injury.

Mitchell's spectacular effort certainly provided a dramatic finish, for there were only two minutes left when he headed the goal.

Ball Did Not Run Kindly For Them

AGAIN, he had shown intelligent positioning by drifting into the middle, and he was on the spot to head through Cummins' cleverly-placed free kick, as the inside-left had been brought down.

That the Town should not have been in the position of having to rely on such a belated decider is another story, but it is fair to say that they scarcely had the time of the ball in this match.

For the first half an hour they played some of their most impressive football of the season, and there was a time when the Blackburn defence looked likely to be overrun.

Rovers' Defence Made A Shaky Start

THERE was distinct shakiness from them for a long time, Elvy must have been a bit disconcerted at the suddenness with which the ball frequently came back to him from his own wingers on occasions.

When Watkins opened the scor-

ing with a beautiful shot 10 minutes after the start, the prospect seemed that the Town would at last get the crop of goals they have been threatening, but somehow not achieving, in recent weeks.

Could they have scored again quickly, it is reasonable to assume that the Rovers' defence would have been blasted wide open.

Elvy Saved Them Several Times

BUT they hung on doggedly, improving and gaining in confidence as the Town's heavy pressure failed to bring results.

For this they owed quite a lot to Elvy for some very good saves, notably one from Turner, who had broken through brilliantly and placed his shot well and another from Pye when he sought to find the unmarked Mitchell from the right wing.

Two or three chances slipped by, too, and in view of the Town's persistent pressure, it was strange that their half-time lead was limited to a single goal.

Turner Thought He Had Scored

AFTERWARDS, Turner told me that he thought he had scored in the first half when Elvy half saved a shot from him and the ball bounced behind the goalkeeper.

The inside right claimed that it fell over the line by a matter of a foot or so and then spun out again.

That more goals did not come is causing concern among some of the fans, but I think that the Town can fairly claim that luck was not with them in this match.

There was that great shot by Turner that struck the foot of the



SEAMUS DUNNE the Town's right-back, who gave a polished display against Blackburn.

post early in the second half and one from Pye that missed the far post by inches.

Briggs's Goal Came As A Real Shock

DESPITE the famous names in their forward line, Blackburn seldom produced any football that even approached that shown by the Town in the first half.

Here was the quick movement we have been crying out for and so intricate was some of it that the Rovers defenders sometimes wore quite a bewildered look.

Nevertheless, it came as a distinct shock and a nasty jolt when the Rovers broke away and scored after 55 minutes.

A quick pass down the middle by McLean found Briggs, who brushed past Owen and placed the ball wide of Streten.

Game Swung Other Way For A Time

PROBABLY the bounce of the ball beat the centre-half, and Streten, who was almost certainly expecting it to be pushed back to him, could not make the ground necessary to smother the shot.

For some minutes after this, the game, which had always been going in the Town's favour previously, suddenly swung the other way, and there was an uncomfortable feeling that another home point was going to be lost.

Almost immediately afterwards Briggs twice forced his way through a now unsettled defence and went close to putting the Rovers into the lead.

Unlucky To Have A Goal Disallowed

GRADUALLY, the Town reasserted themselves, though without moving with their first-half smoothness, mostly due to the fact that they were holding the ball a trifle too long.

Yet they seemed distinctly unfortunate when a goal was disallowed after Cummins had swept into the net a cross by Mitchell, against whom the offside decision was made.

Then came the fighting finish, with Mitchell taken off the field with the cheers ringing in his ears.

Despite the fact that the forwards did not score as many goals as most people thought they should, they moved with a good deal more thrust than has been the case in several home games this season.

Turner's Luck With His Shooting Was Out

NINE times out of ten, Turner would have finished with a couple of goals to his credit for his efforts in this match, and not only has he brought more punch to the front line, but his general play is showing a marked improvement, too.

With Davies, now playing better and more consistently than at any time during his stay with the Town, he is forming a dangerous wing, and Davies did not allow the reputation of Eckersley to worry him. Result was that he had another successful game, and quite a lot of centres came from him.

Mitchell was a little more spasmodic, but he is the man who is getting the goals, and his value to the line is inestimable.

Pye Was A Worry To Blackburn

OBVIOUSLY, Blackburn approached this match with the danger from Pye in the forefront of their minds, and the most panic was produced when he had possession of the ball.

He did much that was clever and constructive, but there were times after the interval when he held the ball and tried to beat an opponent or two when a quick pass would have saved him all the trouble.

The same applied to Cummins,

often trying to do that fraction too much with the ball, but he was a terrific worker, who took quite a number of knocks in the robust Blackburn tackling.

However, both began a number of dangerous attacks.

Not Much Need For Anxiety

THE first half success pointed the way to the value of a quickly-made pass, and it was then that the Town front line as a whole really clicked in streamlined fashion.

A continuance of this sort of approach work must bring goals, and there should not be a lot to worry about on this account.

Nor does there seem much need for anxiety about the defence, brought back to full strength by the return of Owen.

Apart from the ten minutes after Briggs had scored, when he looked distinctly uneasy, Owen had a comfortable sort of match on his return to the team, and was rarely in any sort of trouble.

FOR THE RECORDS

LUTON TOWN 2
Watkins, Mitchell

BLACKBURN ROVERS . 1
Briggs

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Watkins; Davies, Turner, Pye, Cummins, Mitchell.

BLACKBURN ROVERS: Elvy; Stuart, Eckersley; Smith, Kelly, Bell; McLean, Croxall, Briggs, Quigley, Langton.

Referee: G. Pankhurst, Warwick.

Attendance: 16,269.

Strong Foundation In The Middle Line

FROM the wing halves, there was strength in the tackle and resource, and the forwards will profit from the return of Morton to right-half.

Watkins has never played better since he joined the club than he is doing now, and the team has a strong foundation in the middle line.

Behind them, Dunne's fine form makes one wonder why he has been passed over by the Eire selectors, for he had a grip on the elusive Langton throughout.

For the winger, it should be said that he had a painful ankle injury early on which probably cut down his effectiveness.

Aherne Re-established Himself

AHERNE, who had been in some danger of losing his place earlier in the week, re-established himself with a solid display and Streten, far less fully employed than was Elvy, yet gave a further indication that he is in tip-top form at the moment.

Altogether, it was a display to encourage the hopeful people who are beginning to talk about a promotion bid, with just that slight query about the finishing power remaining.

Now for Doncaster and the



RON BAYNHAM who played a big part in the Reserves' fine victory over Arsenal Reserves at Highbury on Saturday.

hope that the Town can peg back the Rovers, beaten only once in their last six matches

Great Win By The Town Reserves

A BRILLIANT first half-hour at Highbury where the Town Reserves pierced the strong Arsenal defence three times through Taylor, Moore and McJarrow, enabled them to pull off a great 3-2 win.

True to the Arsenal tradition there was a determined fight back by them and they got to within one goal of the Town by half-time through Walsh and Goring.

So, the stage was set for a terrific second half battle in which Arsenal threw in everything in their attempt to save the game.

Terrific pressure was exerted on the Town's defence and they did extremely well to prevent further goals.

Hall And Baynham Were The Heroes

THEIR heroes were Hall, who broke up attack after attack, and Baynham, constantly in action during the second half, and who made a number of brilliant saves.

From the remainder of the defence there was sound backing for this pair, and the second half was mostly a case of the Town hanging on to their narrow lead.

The forwards, ably led by Scott, were at their best earlier, and Scott was desperately unlucky not to have made it 4-0 with a shot that beat Swindin and then missed the post by inches.

"A" Team Back On Top Of The League

IN a match at Dartford in which defences were predominant from start to finish, the Town "A" snatched the winning goal through Allen five minutes from the end.

This success puts them back at the top of the Metropolitan League, level on points with Headington and Guildford over whom they have matches in hand.

An unfortunate incident led to the sending off of Bennett and a Dartford player, German.

Nearly all the football came from the Town, whose forwards, however, did not really settle down against the hard, quick tackling of the home defence.

Chiltern's Forecasts

DIVISION I

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

DIVISION II

Blackburn R. v. Plymouth A.
Brentford v. Rotherham Utd.
Bristol R. v. Leicester C.
Bury v. Nottm. Forest
Derby Co. v. Swansea T.
Doncaster R. v. Luton T.
Everton v. Leeds Utd.
Hull C. v. West Ham
Lincoln C. v. Stoke C.
Notts Co. v. Fulham
Oldham Ath. v. Birmingham C.

DIVISION III (SOUTH)

Bournemouth v. Newport Co.
Brighton v. Bristol C.
Coventry C. v. Exeter C.
Gillingham v. Shrewsbury T.
Ipswich T. v. Norwich C.
Leyton O. v. Southampton
Millwall v. Q.P.R.
Northampton T. v. Walsall
Reading v. Colchester Utd.
Southend Utd. v. Crystal Palace
Torquay Utd. v. Swindon T.
Watford v. Aldershot

DIVISION III (NORTH)

Barnsley v. Mansfield T.
Bradford v. Wrexham

Chester v. Grimsby T.
Crewe Alex v. Stockport Co.
Darlington v. Barrow
Gateshead v. Chesterfield
Hartlepool Utd. v. Bradford C.
Port Vale v. Rochdale
Scunthorpe Utd. v. Halifax T.
Southport v. Accrington S.
Workington v. Tranmere R.
York C. v. Carlisle Utd.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE DIVISION "A"

Celtic v. Partick T.
Dundee v. Hibernian
East Fife v. Airdrieonians
Hamilton v. Raith R.
Hearts v. Aberdeen
Queen of South v. Falkirk
Rangers v. Clyde
Stirling A. v. St. Mirren

DIVISION "B"

Albion R. v. Dunfermline
Ayr Utd. v. Dundee Utd.
Cowdenbeath v. Motherwell
Forfar Ath. v. Queen's Park
Morton v. Alloa
St. Johnstone v. Kilmarnock
Stenhousemuir v. Dumbarton
Third Lanark v. Arbroath

SELECTIONS
TEN HOME.—Arsenal Blackpool, Wolves, Blackburn, Everton, Bournemouth, Northampton, Reading, Barnsley, Port Vale.

FOUR AWAY.—West Brom, Nottm. Forest, Birmingham, Tranmere.

THREE DRAWS.—Portsmouth, v. Manchester Utd.; Bristol R. v. Leicester C.; Crewe v. Stockport

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