

Hopes Of Morton's Return

NO OTHER TOWN ALTERATION IS CONTEMPLATED

For football clubs, Christmas is not so much a time of year for exchanging presents and good wishes, but one at which results of matches can make or mar the hopes of promotion seekers and can decrease or increase substantially the hopes of those engaged in the unenviable struggle against relegation. Fortunately, it is in the former category that the Town come, and a "double" over their holiday opponents, West Ham, would not only wipe out the effect of the setback at Everton, but put them in a position to make a most formidable challenge to the leaders in the New Year.

So, the Town's target this week-end will be four points, but, doubtless, they will be well satisfied if they can come back with a point from the Boleyn Ground on Christmas morning and win the return the following day.

The Hammers started the season at such a pace that they lost only one of their first 10 matches and looked such an effective combination that their fans must have seen visions of First Division football back on their ground again.

Their run that brought them 15 points out of the first 20 did not last, however, and something went so badly wrong with the works that there followed four consecutive defeats.

Have Had A Poor Spell Recently

SINCE then, apart from one riotous afternoon when they routed Bury by 5-0, the Hammers have been struggling for points—so much so that their last 13 matches have yielded them only seven points.

Main reason seems to be that their young forward line that relied so much on speed and directness has lost the knack of scoring at all fluently as seven goals in their last six matches would suggest and, possibly, they are feeling the lack of experience and a steady influence.

Whatever the cause may be, their recent performances must give the Town real ground for hope that they will have a successful Christmas.

Town Have A Good Record At West Ham

IN addition, they have the knowledge that they hold a good record on this ground and they can count three 1-0 victories in the Second Division there and, curiously enough, three goalless draws.

Through the years the meetings of the teams at West Ham have been curiously unproductive so far as goals are concerned, and the most decisive victory was scored by the Hammers on Christmas Day, 1951, when they won by 3-0 and the Town were handicapped by an injury to Billy Cooke.

This was only the third home win West Ham had gained over the Town, the others being by 2-1.

Meetings Are Usually Closely Fought

WITH one exception, the pattern of the encounters between these old rivals at Kenilworth-road has been similar. Five have ended in draws, the Town have won twice, and the Hammers have returned with the spoils twice.

The exception was also two years ago when, thanks in the main to a brilliant outside-right display by George Stobart, the Town were runaway winners by 6-1.

That apart, past history suggests two hard-fought matches, but the Town, on form and providing that their defeat at Everton does not upset their rhythm, can be fancied for three points.

Bumper Gate May Be In Prospect

CHANCES are that there will be a bumper Boxing Day gate at Kenilworth-road, for the arrangement of the fixtures means that the only serious counter-attraction is that between Chelsea and Cardiff City.

All the other First and Second Division London clubs are either away or not playing, and both Northampton and Watford have away matches.

Definite selection of the Town team cannot be made yet and will probably be delayed until tomorrow, when a final assessment of Bob Morton's fitness will be made.

FIRST WIN FOR BOYS' BRIGADE

Boys Brigade Juniors recorded their first win of the season in the 14/16 section of Luton and District Youth League when they beat Biscot Mill, but it was not a good game.

Luton Town Y.C. 3 (Oglestrey, Jenkins, Southern), LANGLEY RANGERS 1 (Allen).

SKEFFO ATH. 9 (Halliwell 2, Tomlin 2, Smith, Collins, Ashley, Cook, opponent), BISCOT MILL B.C. 3 (Trotter 2, Harvey).

OLD BEDFORD-R.D. 3, VAUXHALL MINORS 2 (Williamson 2, Gorch).

BOYS' BRIGADE JUNIORS 2 (Filton, Winc), BISCOT MILL B.C. 1 (Randall).

LUTON HOTSPUR 1 (Graydon), FLITWICK BROTHERHOOD 0.

Luton Greyhounds

No. 3 TRAP HAD THREE WINNERS ON MONDAY

Trap 3 was the lucky one at Luton Stadium on Monday evening when it started three winners. Honours were fairly evenly distributed among the remaining traps, but number 1 failed to gain a success.

In the early races, short-priced winners were the rule, but, in the last four, there were two successes at 5-1 and one at 6-1.

I. (410yds). — 1. OLD JOE (2); 2. Dainty Piece (4); 3. Chevalier (6); 4. Star Signal (5); 5. Admiral's Pup (11); 6. Ashwood (3). 1, 2, 4, 6, 25.33.

II. (470yds). — 1. PRINCESS (4); 2. Small Bass (1); 3. Bally Low (4); 4. Lili (5); 5. White Diamond (5); 6. Walcott (6). 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 28.78. OR 7.59.

III. (410yds). — 1. GOOD HEALTH (3); 2. Max Future (6); 3. Keep Single (5); 4. Johnny Boy (2); 5. City Light (3); 6. Half-Pint (10). 1, 6, 3, 2, 25.46. OR 8.18.

IV. (470yds). — 1. BLOSSOM TIME, All White, Black Dot; 4-1 Nigger Minstrel, Biddy; 6-1 Runners.

V. (410yds). — 1. SAMMY (6); 2. Whippoorwill (2); 3. Miss Carol (1); 4. Pet Lili (5); 5. Tin Ram (6); 6. King-pot (3). 1, 1, 4, 2, 24.64. OR 8.53.

VI. (470yds). — 1. BENTLEY (3); 2. Some Hopes (4); 3. Southall (3); 4. Taffy (1); 5. King Charles (2); 6. Peter Lawer (3). 1, 4, 5, 1, 3, 27.73. OR 9.11.

VII. (470yds). — 1. PHILLIP'S PET (3); 2. Short Head (2); 3. Rubber Neck (6); 4. Egg Cup (4); 5. WIM HONEY (1); 6. Knapton (2). 2, head, 6, 8, 28.39. OR 9.29.

VIII. (470yds). — 1. Short Head; 2-4

Weakened Vauxhall On "Boggy" Ground

INJURIES and holidays cause Vauxhall Motors to make three forward changes for their visit to Hertford in the Spartan League on Saturday.

Those not available are F. Minn, Lawrence and James and Owens, Todd and Anderson will be the deputies.

Only defensive change is at centre-half where Humphrey returns. In the past, the Hertford ground has not been a particularly lucky one for Vauxhall, but they are hoping to continue their unbeaten sequence in the League.

Team: D. Johnstone; J. Burgess, K. Starin; J. O'Neill, J. Humphrey, F. Bunning; K. Owens, A. Morgan, G. Todd, R. Brandham, N. Anderson.

Old Boys In A Local "Derby"

WITH Fensome and Thorpe, captain and vice-captain respectively, not playing, Old Lutonians R.F.C. will be led by Heanue in their home Boxing Day fixture with their keen rivals in every sphere, Old Dunstablians.

Smith, Yorkie and Knapp are also not available, 'ut among the substitutes are Wood (Oxford University), and Cam:ron (Leicestershire), so Old Lutonians should not suffer unduly.

Team: Witney; Potter, Cameron, A. F. W. Pakes, Thurlow; Edmonds, Robinson; Shepherd, Vaughan, Adkins, Young, Heanue, Cato, Wood, Kelly.

Old Lutonians Extra "A" are also meeting Old Dunstablians "A".

County Choose Their Netball Teams

TO give players and clubs plenty of time in which to make their arrangements, Bedfordshire Netball Association have chosen their teams for forthcoming matches well in advance and they are as follows: 1st team—J. Brown (Davis), J. Thorne (Electrolux), P. Valentine (Davis), B. Clark (Biggleswade Schools staff), B. Edlin (Arlesey), B. Harmer (Luton), B. Handscombe (Luton Schools Staff).

Second team: B. Anslow, G. Anslow (Skeffo), J. Ansell (Davis), J. Grigg, J. Sent (Barclays Bank, Luton), M. Walters (Skeffo), P. Smith (Davis). Reserves: J. Rickert (Kent's), K. Coleman (Skeffo), J. Crobie (Davis), P. Daniels (Harington).

Junior team: D. Houghton (Vauxhall), H. Deamer (Bedford Ladies A.C.), J. Hall (High Town Y.C.), M. Hetherington (St. Thomas Y.C.), M. Fensome (Electrolux), Young (Skeffo), M. Ib-bett (Davis).

Steady Demand For Cup-Tie Tickets

SO far, there has been quite a steady demand for tickets for the Cup-tie at Blackpool though, season ticket-holders, with nearly a week to apply, have not been rushing to do so yet.

Rugby

OLD BOYS WON EASILY

Old Lutonians 20, Slough 3. Victory came to Old Lutonians at Stockwood Park more easily than the score of a goal, two tries and three penalty goals to a try would suggest.

That the score was not higher was the result of a period of uninspired play in the second half when the Old Boys coasted along content, or so it seemed, to hold the Slough team at bay within feet of the home line.

Amidst from this quite lengthy period the Old Lutonians were on top throughout the game and won nearly all the set pieces.

The first score came from a penalty awarded between the posts which Adkins converted. Thorpe followed shortly afterwards with a well-controlled dribble along the touch line. The try, far out, was not converted. Continuous pressure was applied by the Old Boys and after another penalty had been converted by Adkins, Thurlow, playing in the centre three-quarter position, ran strongly, following an orthodox movement, to score. Adkins was again successful.

Changing round with a 14 points advantage, the Old Boys let their hold on the game slip, and were hard pressed by the Slough forwards who, at times, were unlucky not to slip through the loose maels and score, but the home team played just well enough to hold them.

Once on the attack again, however, the Old Lutonians stayed there and repeating the first half formula Adkins kicked a penalty goal and Thurlow ran through to score a try, this time unconverted.

Throughout the game many chances were wasted by the Old Boys, very often when the defence was wide open. In the last minute of the game Old Lutonians were guilty of a defensive lapse and Slough still eager and doing their utmost to score, succeeded in doing so in the corner. The kick failed just as whistle blew for no-side.

Runners And Selections For Saturday

11.0—410yds: 528 Biddy; 141 Brickhill Lad; 321 Old Lady; 124 Marver; 544 Old Rodco; 425 Runners; reserve, 255 Echo.

12.0—470yds: 651 Mary's Son; 222 Mick's Son; 64 Miss Take; 41 Ruby; 412 Skimpot; 441 Too-the-line; reserve, 222 Short Head.

14.0—410yds: 122 Fozzler; 421 Hill Crest; 1 Pan-Yan; 46 Rod Scarf; 516 Tracer; 4 Vanguard; reserve, 455 Three Cheers.

12.0—675yds: 414 Blackbird; 341 Blossom Time; 244 Pet Lip; 352 Quack Answer; 643 Spider; 341 The Coo; reserve, 611 Lipwick.

12.20—675yds: 221 Cynic; 4 Gay Monarch; 136 Kit-Kat; 142 Lotie's Pet; 513 Sabote; 4 Tom Boy.

12.40—410yds: 441 Buntley; 11 Camper; 321 Nut Brown; 2 Rupert (Dec 12, to 1, 23.75); 122 Some Hopes; 1 Tit-Nit.

1.0—470yds: 31 Bessing Low; 613 Dark Flybird; 311 Knocker; 412 Just Janet; 422 MacNab; 351 Summer; reserve, 611 Lipwick.

1.20—410yds: 54 Black Dot; 131 Crooner; 251 Jade; No Dice (Nov 18, to 2, 24.74; Dec 19, to 4, 24.78); Vern's Pet (Dec 17, to 6, 24.75; Dec 19, to 3, 24.55); 515 Viola; reserve, Lucky Dome (Aug 29, to 1, 24.36; Dec 28, to 1, 24.46; Dec 19, to 4, 24.63).

SELECTIONS

11.0: Brickhill Lad (Oglestrey, Derek's Pet); 11.30: Mick's Son (Skimpot, Biddy); 12.0: Q. C. (Arlesey, The Coo); 12.10: Q. C. (Arlesey, The Coo); 12.20: 675yds: 221 Cynic; 4 Gay Monarch; 136 Kit-Kat; 142 Lotie's Pet; 513 Sabote; 4 Tom Boy.

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DAVID SEXTON may be fit enough to play against Luton on Christmas Day.

ATTACKS ON THE MARK

Reserves Had A Good Day

Luton Town Reserves 5, Leicester City Reserve 3.

Whenever a team from Luton meets a Leicester team—whether in the Football League, the Combination or even a schoolboys' competition—it always results in a hard-fought, exciting match.

The Combination game at Kenilworth-road on Saturday was no exception and the spectators certainly had their money's worth. Both forward lines played neat football which produced seven goals, while both goalkeepers made several thrilling saves.

In the Luton goal Baynham was in brilliant form. In fact, it is fair to say that but for his brilliance Luton would not have won so comfortably.

The first goal came after seven minutes when Adam sent in a rasping shot which WEBB turned into his own net to give Luton the lead, and afterwards goals came regularly.

LITTLE equalised for Leicester after Crawford had hit the woodwork, but ten minutes later Jones worked an opening from which BENNETT restored Luton's lead.

JONES, playing at centre-forward for the first time since his amateur days, gave a very promising display, leading the line intelligently, and he increased Luton's lead when he coolly banged the ball into an empty net during a raid in which Moore and Downie were prominent.

Leicester reduced their arrears through CRAWFORD, but second-half goals from ADAM and BENNETT sealed Leicester's fate.

It was good to see the home forwards shooting for goal so regularly and their efforts were well rewarded.

The fact that they saw so much of the ball can be traced back to their half-backs, McGuffie and Smith, both of whom worked hard and sent pass after pass through to their waiting forwards.

Hall played his usual steady game and did not give Little a lot of scope, but the full-backs were not always completely at ease.

EVERTON'S WIN CAME AT SIXTH ATTEMPT

Beat The Town For First Time In A League Match

By Chiltern

EVERTON 2 LUTON TOWN 1

For the first time in a League match and, at their sixth attempt, Everton beat the Town, from whose point of view, ironically enough, this was the vital meeting of the six and the one from which they most needed both points.

A check though this was to their promotion progress and the end of their long unbeaten run, the Town, lacking the services of two of their stalwarts, Pye and Morton, still managed to give their opponents a fright.

Right through the match it was very much on the cards that they would at least hold this strong opposition, and they could perhaps consider themselves a bit unfortunate that they did not do so in the circumstances, though there is no gainsaying that Everton deserved to win in view of the way they struck back in the second half.

Turning point of a hard, "no quarter" duel came in the opening minute of the second half, when Everton managed to rub out the arrears they had suffered 10 minutes before the interval when CUMMINS scored against his former colleagues.

The Town came out well aware of the danger that the opening spell would hold for them, and they had already had a sample of it early in the first half, but, even so, they could not prevent their lead being wiped out by a snap goal from PARKER.

A free kick just inside the Town half that led to the ball being worked out to Eglington, eventually, was the forerunner of the success, and when Eglington centred there did not appear to be, on the surface, any more danger than previous crosses from the winger had held.

STRETEN CLAIMED A FOUL. This time, Streten tried to make a catch and, because Hickson went up with him, could not get a hold of the ball, which fell to Parker, who drove it through despite Owen's attempt to get his body in the way.

There was an immediate appeal by Streten for a foul—ignored by the referee—and the Town defence had to face a very sticky 10 minutes or so after this.

At length, the Town forwards began to take a hand, produced some uneasy moments for the home defence, none more anxious than when Cummins crossed the ball in front of their goal, with Mitchell just short of being able to apply the finishing touch.

More of the play, however, was going the way of Everton. They missed two or three chances that had a gilt-edged look about them before they gained what proved to be the deciding goal 15 minutes from the end.

A quick clearance up the middle was seized on by Hickson, who begat Owen cleverly and made a reverse pass to EGLINGTON, who looked to be in an offside position.

At least he was so far as the players in the immediate vicinity were concerned, but Aherne, on the other side of the field, was

lying back, and the linesman judged Eglington to be onside as he swept the ball through.

It was a forlorn hope for the Town after that, though they put up a commendable fight, and both Turner and Scott went close in the last minutes.

Story of the first half had been different, with the Town more dangerous than they were later, with their attack better together and showing more zip in their finishing.

SCOTT MADE TOWN'S GOAL.

It was from a centre by Scott that struck Donovan en route that Cummins obtained this chance of putting the Town ahead, and there might have been other goals.

Yet, before they obtained anything like a grip, they had to survive a remarkable period during which Everton used the ball with such effect that pass after pass found its biller, with the Town powerless to do much about it.

Fortunately for them, this phase did not last long, and did not carry with it the finish that could have turned much immaculate work into goals.

Neither of the Town wingers was in anything like his best form which was a pity, for more harassing work from them might have upset the equanimity of an Everton defence that belied its somewhat doubtful reputation.

Cummins toiled and toiled, with a fair amount of success, despite a tendency to hold the ball too long, at times, and could certainly be put down as one of the Town's successes.

From Scott there was quite an encouraging show in not particularly easy circumstances, for he was whole-hearted in everything he did and, with not the best of support in the shape of through passes, still managed to worry the opposition.

Without being quite so impressive in midfield as he has been, Turner was still the man who looked the part of the opportunist and he tried to open things out in the second half with cross-field passes.

While Shanks and Watkins were more or less in control of the middle of the field, as they were for the greater part of the first half, the Town always had a real chance, but, gradually, they were worn down, and Everton got a hold of the situation.

Even so, the pluckiness of the defence nearly retained a vital point which was not surrendered without a tremendous battle.

Watkins was the more successful wing-half and Owen was out standing in the middle where Hickson found little scope.

Both Dunne and Aherne did well against elusive wingers, but the biggest cheer of all was reserved for Streten, who made several dramatic saves and things might have gone even worse for the Town had he not been in top-flight form.

Even so, things might have gone better for them, which only goes to show just what a toss-up this game can be.

EVERTON: O'Neill; Moore, Lindsay; Farrell, Donovan, Lello, Wainwright, Fielding, Hickson, Parker, Eglington.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Dunne, Aherne; Shanks, Owen, Watkins; Davies, Turner, Scott, Cummins, Mitchell.

Referee: A. W. Luty, Leeds. Attendance: 33,