

Team Selection Delayed

MINOR INJURIES AFTER THE HOLIDAY MATCHES

With several players nursing slight knocks and strains, received in the Christmas matches with West Ham, Daily Duncan, manager of Luton Town F.C., said yesterday that he was delaying selection of the team to play Plymouth Argyle on Saturday.

None of the injuries is serious but the manager feels that he will have a clearer picture of the situation later to-day.

SEAMUS DUNNE, Bob Morton and Joe Scott received knocks in the game at West Ham on Christmas Day, while Bernard Stretton complained of a pain in his shoulder after the return match at Kenilworth-road.

Leslie Jones, Wally Shanks and Bernard Moore all played well on Saturday, so the manager faces another problem here, for they must all be considered for a place in the team.

McJarrow Almost Certain To Play

WHEN I contacted Plymouth Argyle yesterday I was told that their team would not be settled until later to-day, but one player certain of his position is Hugh McJarrow, who left Luton to join the Devon club a couple of weeks ago.

Hugh made his first appearance for Plymouth against Nottingham Forest on December 19 and he played in both their Christmas matches with Fulham.

An official of the Plymouth club said yesterday: "McJarrow has settled down quickly and is playing well. You can take it for certain that he will be playing against his old club on Saturday."

Shortt Is On The Injured List

PLYMOUTH were fortunate in that they came through two tough holiday games with no injuries, but they have had two players on the injured list recently, Shortt and Dougal.

The latter, a wing-half, was injured in the match with Bury on December 12, but he is training again now and there is a possibility that he will be included in the team to meet Luton.

If he is it will mean a reshuffled half-back line, for it is thought likely that Chisholm would lose his place at centre-half and Robertson would be switched from right-half to the all-important pivotal position.

They Collected One Holiday Point

WELSH International goalkeeper, Shortt, has been unlucky with a hand injury this season and Les Major, a former Leicester player, has been keeping goal in the last three matches.

Plymouth collected only one point from their two holiday games with Fulham, but before that they had collected seven points out of a possible ten.

This run started on November 21, when they beat Derby 1-2. This they followed up with a victory at Blackburn and the following week they did well to hold the powerful Doncaster Rovers to a goalless draw. They felt heavily when they met Bury, but recovered from the next week to spring a surprise by beating Nottingham Forest.

Beat Plymouth With 10 Men Last Season

SO, it is obvious that they will put up a hard fight and the result will probably be close. There may well be a close finish after the Town's return to the winning path on Boxing Day. What is more, the fact that McJarrow will be playing will be quite an attraction.

It was about this time last year that Plymouth were the visitors to Kenilworth-road. On that occasion, Luton won 1-0 although Wally Shanks injured an ankle in the 65th minute and was able to take no further part in the game.

Probable Plymouth team: Major; Ratcliffe, Jones; Robertson (or Dougal), Chisholm (or Robertson), Porteous; Tadmam, McCrory, McJarrow, Dews, Thomas.

Reserves Are Due At Leicester

NATURALLY, with the Reserves' line-up dependent on who plays in the first team, selection of the second team has been deferred, too.

For the Reserves there is a journey to Leicester, where they are sure of a hard game.

Matches between Luton and Leicester are always attractive, hard-fought affairs, and Leicester will be all out to avenge that 1-2 defeat suffered at Kenilworth-road a couple of weeks ago.

Still A Few "Cup" Tickets Left

EVERYONE who applied for a ticket for the Blackpool versus Luton Town Cup-tie on January 9 has received one and here are still a few 3s. 6d. tickets left.

The only snag which arose when they were issued was that there were not enough seat tickets to meet all requirements and in some cases applicants will have received a ticket which entitles them to stand only.

Meanwhile, those fans who will not be making the long journey north are hoping that the Town will cause a Cup sensation by beating the holders or—failing

in the League match at Hertford last Saturday. Team:

D. Johnstone; J. Burgess, K. Sturtin; J. O'Neill, J. Humphreys, F. Dunlop; C. Firmin, A. Morgan, W. Lawrence, R. Brandham, E. James.

Kent's Athletic Make Changes

KENT'S ATHLETIC, still at the bottom of the South Midlands League, Premier Division, but with games in hand over most of the other teams in the division, entertain Bedford Corinthians at Waller-avenue on Saturday and stand a good chance of collecting two much-needed points.

The Corinthians have played a game more than the Athletic and have four more points to their credit. Kent's make several changes.

Ron Peel is introduced at centre-forward where he will be making his first appearance of the season. Ken Peel moves from centre-half to outside-right and Bob Redding returns at inside-left. Team:

R. Tottenham; W. Day, R. Noble; W. Meyrick, H. Naylor, J. Hull; K. Peel, P. Berry, K. Peel, R. Redding, A. Dickens.

Big Match For Beds Schoolboys

NOON next Monday will see the departure of the Bedfordshire Schools' team to meet Northamptonshire at the British Timkin ground, Dunston, in the first round of the Midlands Counties Federation "Cobbin Cup" competition.

Two years ago Bedfordshire reached the final where they were beaten by Derbyshire, but last year they made their exit in the first round when they were beaten by Hertfordshire.

That team did not include any Luton boy. This season the team has a pronounced Luton flavour, though, as eight Luton players are included, and it is hoped that they will make amends for last year's early dismissal.

Eight Luton Boys Are Included

IN goal will be Kershaw, who is playing brilliantly for Luton Schoolboys in their successful run in the English Schools' Shield competition, and four of the five forwards are also Luton boys.

Northants, too, will be fielding a strong side who should bring out the best from the Bedfordshire team.

The Beds team will be: Kershaw (Luton); Rowe (Bedford), Dillon (Luton); Chambers (Bedford), Summers, Hetherington (Luton); Bridgman (Bedford), Chance, Hills, Whitley, Mardle (Luton).

Reserves: Baker (Bedford), Rowlands, Newberry (S.E. Beds).

Old Boys Entertain Oxford Exiles

OLD LUTONIANS R.F.C. entertain Oxford Exiles for the very first time in their history on Saturday at Stockwood. They have selected the following team:

Yorke; Smith, Thorpe (J.), Thorpe (A. W.), Thurford; Edmunds; Robinson; Adkins, Knapp, Shepherd, Young, Hamme, Cato, Fensome, Kelly. Luton have been showing improved form of late and on December 19 they completed a "double" over Northampton Men's Own, for their first and "A" fifteens won. On Saturday they send the following side to Towcester:

Cannon; Holloway, Jones (H. G.), Jones (J.), Cope; Temple, Newman; Hammond, Pelton, Powell, Skinner, Bowell, Oakley, Beechener, Swain.

Rugby O.L.s BEAT OLD RIVALS

Old Lutonians 24 Old Dunstablians 6

Despite the fact that six regular members of Old Lutonians' first XV were not available on Boxing Day, Witney, Rayner, Cameron, J. Thorpe, Ironmonger and T. Vaughan were able deputies.

The Old Lutonians won comfortably by three goals and three tries to one try and one penalty goal against their old rivals, Old Dunstablians. The score would have been greater but for poor scrummaging in the loose and slack passing.

Kelly, following a forward rush, opened the scoring with an unconverted try. The same player, backing up well, took a pass from Robinson to score the second try. After a scrum near the Old Dunstablians' line, Robinson ran strongly from the base of the scrum to score between the posts. Adkins converted.

For a period in the second half the Old Dunstablians confined play to their opponents' half, and scored when Seamark kicked a penalty, given for an infringement by an Old Lutonian forward.

Following this, the Old Lutonians scored again when J. Thorpe took an inside pass from Thurlow. Then Ironmonger touched down for a push-over try. This was converted. Soon afterwards, Ironmonger, after a break from the line-out and a diagonal kick by Heanue, was up to score midway out. The try was converted.

Just before full-time Seamark cut through, and the Old Dunstablians three-quarters combined cleverly to enable Hamilton to score. The try was not converted.



HUGH MCJARROW who is almost certain to play against Luton—his old club—on Saturday.

RESERVES OUT OF LUCK Were Beaten At Plymouth

Plymouth Argyle Reserves 3 Luton Town Reserves 0

The Town Reserves had to travel a long way for one Combination match during the holiday—to Plymouth for a match with the Argyle Reserves on Christmas Day.

It was a journey that brought them no tangible reward, either, for they were beaten by three goals in a match which was spoilt by too many petty infringements.

Luton played neat, attractive football, but their forwards had no punch, and they never recovered from the shock of being a goal down in the first few minutes. Baynam made one or two great saves afterwards, and Luton reached the interval only one goal down and with a good chance of forcing a draw at least.

Leslie Jones, who started off at centre-forward, was switched to his favourite position at full-back. Hawkes was moved to the wing and Bennett to centre-forward.

Mid-way through the second half Plymouth scored again, following a defensive mistake, and their third goal came in the closing stages.

Nearest Luton came to scoring was when a shot from Moore hit the woodwork, but the ball was scrambled away by a defender. Indeed, Moore looked the most likely Luton forward to score, for the others, although they played clever football, appeared reluctant to shoot for goal.

Baynam came in for a lot of rough treatment and took several nasty knocks. After one goal-mouth incident in which he was involved with the home inside-left both players had their names taken by the referee.

LUTON TOWN RESERVES: Baynam; Hawkes, Pemberton; Kelly, Dallas, Smith; Bennett, Moore, Jones, Downie, Adam.

S. Midlands League LEADERS CANNOT RELAX

Keen Tussles In All Divisions

There were only a few matches played in the South Midlands League during the Christmas holiday, and the position at the end of 1953 is that Baldock lead the way in the Premier Division, Langford in Division I and Davis Athletic in Division II.

None of these teams can feel sure of success, though, for in each case they are being hotly challenged.

In the Premier Division, Baldock are only two points ahead of Sheffield, who have three games in hand, while in Division I Langford have one more point than Electrolux but have played a game more, while Vauxhall in third position are only three points behind with three games in hand.

A mere point separates Rother Sports and Davis Athletic in Division II, but less than Rother's two games.

Four Premier Division matches were played on Boxing Day and AC-Delco caused a surprise by holding Arlesey, the champions, to a draw.

RESULTS CHRISTMAS DAY DIVISION II Cranfield Utd. 1, Wootton B.C. 0

PREMIER DIVISION AC-Delco 2, Arlesey 2; Binglewade 3, Amptill 2; Potton Utd. 9, Leitchworth 3; Wootton B.C. 0, Cranfield Utd. 0

DIVISION I Eaton Bray Utd. 3, Leighton Utd. 0; Tickford Sports 3, Marston Shelton 2

THIS GROUND STILL UNLUCKY

But Vauxhall Got A Point From Hertford

Hertford 1, Vauxhall Motors 1

The Hertford ground lived up to its reputation of being unlucky for Vauxhall, for on Saturday Hertford nearly became the first Spartan League team to lower the Motors' colours for more than three months.

In Vauxhall's favour it must be said that they were fielding a weakened team as Firmin, Todd and James were not available, but they did not settle down on a heavy pitch.

The home side opened the scoring and TODD equalised. Late in the game Hertford pressed heavily and in this period they missed two open goals,

THE HOLIDAY GAMES BROUGHT 2 POINTS

Consolation For The Town On Boxing Day

By Chiltern

WEST HAM 1 LUTON TOWN 0

While the Town were hoping for at least one more point from their two holiday games with West Ham, they at least won their home encounter convincingly enough in the end, and perhaps considered themselves slightly unlucky to admit defeat by the only goal at the Boleyn Ground on Christmas Day.

There is always something of a bitter taste about such a narrow defeat from the visiting team's point of view, especially when the only score comes in the near-freak category.

This match never looked like making a holiday occasion for 19,500 spectators who, of course, would have liked to see a spate of goals and, for a long time, it seemed that they would be disappointed completely.

Several times in the past, goalless draws have been played by these two old Second Division rivals and West Ham are one of the few teams the Town have met continuously since they were promoted.

They would have been well-satisfied with one on this occasion and it would have been a considerable filip to their promotion chances.

So much on the cards was such a result and so masterly was the display of Stretton, who brought off a series of fine saves and always showed brilliant anticipation that it came as a mild shock when West Ham did take the lead after 67 minutes.

By then, the crowd had almost resigned themselves to the fact that this was not going to be a forwards' day and then came the shock.

The ball was worked down the Hammers' right and a harmless-looking centre came across. Owen had time to clear but, unaccountably for him, missed his kick, and the ball rolled on to the left where either Dixon or Dick could have put it in without a great deal of difficulty.

COLLIDED—THEN SCORED

So eager were they that they collided but, with the Town defence not reacting quickly enough to the situation which might have been retrieved even at that late hour, DICK was able to recover and half-hit the ball past Stretton, who must have been completely foxed by the unorthodox things that were happening.

Although West Ham's forwards were the more thrusful and direct their finishing was not good, and it was left to the Town to provide most of the clever constructive work there was in midfield.

Unfortunately, this did not amount to much when close quarters were reached and much of that was due to the fact that both Davies and Mitchell found progress difficult to make against a couple of very useful full-backs and that Scott could rarely get out of the grip of Allison.

The centre-half made the most of his height advantage, with the result that Scott had not a hope when the ball was in the air and he did not receive the through passes along the ground that would have enabled him to be a real success.

Cummins tried hard to fill the scheming role, showed footwork ahead of anything else in the match and, although Turner was a worker, the forward line never really looked a smooth, cohesive unit.

HAD BAD LUCK NEAR THE END

Yet, with a bit of luck, they could have pulled the game out of the fire during the later stages, for there was one brilliant one-handed save by Gregory from Mitchell and it was lucky for West Ham that Bond was standing on the goal-line to kick away Cummins's return drive.

One or two other escapes came the Hammers' way during the second half when the Town were more effective in attack, but still lacking that extra bit of snap and drive that would have meant goals.

Stretton was the star in defence, and thoroughly earned the ovations he received at the interval and at the end. Yet I have seen him have busier matches on this ground.

Both Dunne and Aherne were kept pretty well at full stretch by a couple of speedy wingers, but they showed resource, as did Owen, who made only one serious mistake and, costly as it was, amply atoned for it by the nature of much of his other work.

Morton, with his knee bandaged and obviously not completely confident about it, was not quite so assertive as he can be, and Watkins, though doing valuable work in defence, was much out of touch in his use of the ball.

WEST HAM: Gregory; Wright, Bond; Malcolm, Allison, Bing; Southren, Sexton, Dixon, Dick, Andrews.

LUTON TOWN: Stretton; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Watkins; Davies, Turner, Scott, Cummins, Mitchell.

Referee: F. S. Fiander, Loudwater.

20,000 SAW LUTON WIN

LUTON TOWN 3 WEST HAM 1

The biggest attendance since the opening matches of the season, 20,135, saw the Town take adequate revenge for their previous day's defeat, but not before they had some very anxious moments.

In a game of varying phases, either side could have held a commanding lead and it was the Town who had the first chance of doing so.

For their task they could scarcely have had a more encouraging start than a goal from TURNER four minutes after the start with a shot from near the edge of the penalty area, the pace of which Gregory seemed to mis-judge.

Two or three times after this, had the ball really run kindly for

the Town in front of goal, they would have put themselves in an impregnable position, for there were distinct signs of panic among the Hammers' defenders and even the usually safe Gregory seemed ill at ease.

However, despite some close calls, the goals did not come and West Ham, no doubt encouraged by this fact, suddenly got into the game with a vengeance and, for quite a spell, they were on top and were unlucky several times not to go ahead.

Although the Town were still ahead at half-time, they must have felt that they were slightly fortunate to be in such a position, remembering the quality of the



JESSE PYE is on the injured list at the moment, but that did not stop him watching the Town beat West Ham at Kenilworth-road on Boxing Day.

saves Stretton had made, the goal-line clearances of Jones, and Owen and the shot from Hooper that smacked against the inside of the post and sent the ball obligingly rebounding into the arms of Stretton.

HAMMERS' PERIOD OF SUPREMACY

There was, too, a penalty claim that the referee held to be no more than an indirect free kick for obstruction and there were very faces among the West Ham officials at half-time about the way fortune was treating them.

Period of supremacy for the Hammers' dated from the time the Town lost their grip in midfield, but the second half brought an all-round improvement from the Town with consequently fewer chances for the Hammers' forwards.

A spectacular goal following a solo run by Mitchell after 61 minutes put the Town within sight of both points, but the Hammers hit back quickly four minutes later through DIXON, left with a comparatively easy task after Stretton had gone down full length to a shot by Foan.

In view of their first-half form, many expected a big rally from the Hammers after this, but they seemed to have put all they knew into that first-half bid and although there were one or two sticky moments for the Town, their defence was never in the same trouble as had been the case during that earlier spell.

What anxiety about the position remained and there did not seem to be a lot at that stage, was removed 12 minutes from the end when TURNER made no mistake about sweeping through a low centre by Cummins.

So, the Town were worthwhile and convincing winners in the end, mainly because the forwards showed more punch at close quarters.

Arguments about the respective merits as leader of Scott and Moore are bound to arise now and the latter certainly kept Allison more on the move than the previous occupant of the position.

In this he was helped by his speed and the way in which he got out of the middle and was often a real source of danger.

Turner lived up to his reputation as an opportunist, played some good football apart from that and there was a deal of work, too, from Cummins. Davies did not have a completely happy day and Mitchell was a bit spasmodic, but there was a lot more life and fire about the line as a whole than had been the case the previous day.

The wing halves were more on top of things after the interval than they had been earlier, but Shanks a hard worker, but Watkins again none too accurate in his distribution.

Without being so commanding as he can be, Owen came through well enough and there was a most convincing display from Jones, making a return to the team after quite a lengthy spell of reserve service.

Again, he impressed with his coolness, his fine positional sense and his use of the ball.

Although sometimes troubled by the speed of Hooper, Aherne played hard and quite effectively, but the Town's hero was really Stretton for his great part during the time that the tide was running against them.

LUTON TOWN. — Stretton; Jones, Aherne; Shanks, Owen, Watkins; Davies, Turner, Moore, Cummins, Mitchell.

WEST HAM. — Gregory; Wright, Bond; Malcolm, Allison, Bing; Hooper, Foan, Dixon, Dick, Andrews.

Referee.—F. S. Fiander, Loudwater.



Gordon Turner was among the goals again when the Town entertained West Ham. This picture shows him in full cry for goal, but he was foiled on this occasion by Gregory and Malcolm.

FOOTBALL
LUTON TOWN F.C.
The League : Division II
SATURDAY, 2nd JANUARY
LUTON TOWN
versus
PLYMOUTH
ARGYLE
Kick-off 2.15 p.m.
ADMISSION: Centre Stand
1/6; Wing Stands 5/-; Enclosure
standing only 3/6; Boys 2/-;
Robbery Stand (covered) 2/-; Boys
1/3 (separate entrance); Terraces
(not covered) 1/3, Boys 1/-.