

TOOK A HAMMERING AND THE POINTS

Resolute Defence Kept A Blank Sheet Again

By Chiltern

BRENTFORD 0 LUTON TOWN 1

If Brentford suffer relegation—and this is a fate that may well be in store for them—they will look back on this match at Griffin Park as the crisis of their struggle, for they had ample opportunity to alleviate their serious position.

Yet their setback was very much on the lines of some that have come the way of the Town this season when they have had by far the greater share of the play, but have simply failed to obtain the vital goals.

That is what happened to desperate, over-anxious Brentford, who were hammering away for quite 75 per cent of the time without ever seeming within even striking distance of opening their account.

The plain fact was that in the second half, they attacked too much, too many players, even half-backs and full-backs had a hand in the pressure, and the Town defence was seldom drawn out of position.

What finally beat them was the dogged, resolute way in which a Town defence, often stretched to the utmost, threw back raid after raid, and deservedly kept a blank sheet for the second consecutive week...

Never could the Brentford forwards, relying almost entirely on dash and speed, open up gaps and honours went all round to a defence that fought a tremendous battle throughout.

Particularly did honours go to two members of it — Owen, watched by an England selector and Streten, and it was on the latter that the Brentford fans placed most of the blame for the defeat of their team.

STRETEN WORKED OVERTIME

"It was nearly Brentford versus Streten," said a Brentford official afterwards. An exaggeration, maybe, but the goalkeeper certainly worked overtime in earning winning bonus for the Town in this match.

Never was his positional play or anticipation at fault and the ovation he received from the crowd at the end was a well-earned tribute to his skill.

As for Owen, after an unsteady sort of start against the hard-fighting bustling Dare, reached peak form in taking a complete stranglehold on the middle of the field and the cool way in which he broke up attacks must have been a source of great discouragement to the home forwards.

This was a display that must put him even more firmly in line for that coveted England cap next month.

If these two players stood out, there was all-round support for them from the remainder of the defence, with Morton and Shanks working like Trojans, tackling hard and covering up intelligently.

The positional sense of the defence as a whole and the way in which they covered was something that Brentford could never circumvent, and the wingers, despite the fact that they switched—and so did the inside men for that matter — seldom worried Jones or Aherne, who took all the hammering in the coolest possible way.

A DIFFERENT TALE IN ATTACK

Forward, the tale was vastly different and, for much of the time, the line was ineffective. Just how little they were in the first-half picture can be realised from the fact that they had not a single shot at goal in the opening 25 minutes and that their goal came from one of the mere handful of movements that could be called cohesive.

The goal began with a pass by Cummins to Mitchell, who beat Bragg and crossed a low centre to which Downie got a foot and the ball went to an unmarked TURNER off the foot of a defender.

Turner hit in a terrific rising drive from close range that gave Newton no chance at all and Brentford looked vainly for an offside decision.

Almost the only other occasion when a goal to the Town looked a possibility came soon after the interval when a mis-punch by Newton sent the ball to Turner, whose header was cleared off the goal-line by Bragg.

While the forwards were a little more active after the interval in

breakaway, they were too prone to be caught offside to be really dangerous.

Cummins was well below his best form and the Town were again lacking in drive and accuracy at inside forward, though Downie was the livelier and more constructive of the two.

There was little support for Turner who, as a result, was much overshadowed by Dargie, and Davies and Mitchell had long spells when the ball did not come to them.

Both did their share in going back to help the defence in emergencies, but had few chances to show their raiding abilities.

BRENTFORD: Newton; Bragg, Latimer; Bristow, Dargie, Coote; Robertson, Gazzard, Dare, Rainford, Dudley.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Jones, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Downie, Turner, Cummins, Mitchell.

Referee: W. Ling, Stapleford.

Attendance: 14,200.