

HAD CHANCE TO GAIN A DECISIVE LEAD

Last-Minute Goal Dashed Town's Hopes At Bury

[By Chiltern]

BURY 2 LUTON TOWN 1

Rueful reflections on this match at Gigg-lane on Tuesday night must be based largely on the disaster that can be brought about by the failure to accept gilt-edged chances a few yards from goal just at a time when consolidation of a slender lead is a dire necessity.

Also, there will probably be some thought on the question of thinking along the lines of "safety first" in the last minute of an away match when a valuable point is apparently well within the bag.

Both these factors contributed quite substantially to a Town defeat that should never have happened, for they held the lead until 12 minutes from the end and were never in arrears until the 89th minute.

By midway through the second half, the Town could have been going smoothly along with a three goals lead, for brilliant football carved out for them in quick succession about that time, two opportunities about which no mistake would have been made 99 times out of 100.

First of all, Cummins began a movement and was there to accept a return pass from Adam, but, from close in, he tried to place the ball well wide of Goram and missed the post by inches.

That was not in the same sensational category as a miss as that managed by Davies shortly afterwards.

The left wing pair worked out the perfect opening and, after Groves's final pass, Davies, in the middle of the goal, the net yawning in front of him and from inside the goal area, somehow contrived to lift the ball over the bar.

No wonder he held his head in despair and it seemed that from that point, Bury gained confidence, urged on by a crowd whose enthusiasm was matched by the fight and fire which Bury put into their play.

DID WELL TO WEATHER THE STORM

Previously, they had had some sustained spells of pressure during which the Town defence had done well to weather the storm, but it was hotted up after that.

Yet, the Town were distinctly unlucky when Groves drove the ball into the net after Goram had partly saved from Turner, but the referee disallowed the goal on the grounds of offside against Adam, who had been caught unawares by the quick development, but he did not appear to be interfering with the play.

Bury had had their chances, too, and missed them—none more glaring than one by Clarke, who slashed wildly at the ball some few yards from goal and failed to make contact at all.

However, with time going fast, the Town clung on to the lead that TURNER had given them in the 41st minute with a fine rising shot made with his left foot from the edge of the penalty area after Daniel had made a bad mistake in attempting a short pass so close to goal and the inside-right had intercepted.

Quickly, he turned in for goal and left Goram hopelessly beaten with his drive into the far corner of the net.

Strangely enough, DANIEL was able to redeem this error 12 minutes from the end when he gained the equaliser.

What led up to the success was Turner being dispossessed in midfield and the ball swept out to the speedy Law.

He hit in a cracking drive to which Streten, at full length, did extremely well to get one hand. It was impossible to hold the ball which ran loose and but for slipping at the critical moment, Morton would have cleared.

Instead the ball went to Daniel, who running on to it, drove it with terrific power into the top corner of the net.

The Town must have known they were in for a hot time after that and there was an exciting moment as Bury turned on the heat when a bouncing shot by Clarke struck the far post and bounced to safety.

At this stage, the Town were not aided by the fact that both Turner and Cummins were limping from knocks and, in fact, the latter spent a spell at outside-right with Davies in the middle.

Then, just when we thought the worst was over and there was a bare minute to go, the final disaster occurred. A minute before Davies, attempting a short pass in midfield, saw it intercepted and a dangerous raid develop.

Cummins, left in a similar situation, did not benefit from that experience, for, instead of making a long pass down the wing, he also tried a short pass, and this led directly to the winning goal.

Redman collected the ball set the attack going and CLARKE, racing through, retrieved previous errors by beating Streten, who touched the ball as he came out, but could not deflect it sufficiently.

It seemed as if Shanks might have got a foot to it before the inside-right made his final shot, had he not been under the impression that Streten would make ground in time.

So, there it was. A match snatched from the burning if ever one was and one that provided some of the fastest, hardest football we are likely to see this season.

Did Bury deserve to win? Strictly on the run of the play, perhaps they did, but on sheer football ability, they were not in the running.

All the artistry in this rumbustious encounter came from the Town, who gained a renewal of the admiration they have had in the north in previous seasons by the quality of their football.

Never did they deviate from

the course they had set themselves and, for much of the time, the ball was moved about in delightful fashion.

Perhaps there was a little too much football at times and a bit more shooting would have been welcome, but the fact remains that brilliant, easy openings were worked out by these methods to have assured victory had the most use been made of them.

Had the Town won, as they should have done, they would probably have been hailed as something very much out of the ordinary, judged on football ability alone.

Perhaps, had Pye been there, the punch would have been increased, but Cummins played the role allotted to him, that of a roving centre-forward lying deep, extremely well and his use of the ball was most accurate.

It could be that the biggest criticism to be offered of the present set-up is that rather too much reliance is being placed on Turner's powers as a goal-getter.

He is responding well and was unlucky on two or three occasions in this match but he found that he could not completely forsake the normal role of inside-forward.

There were times when the middle near goal seemed empty of Town players, but the Town are convinced that they are on the right track and they were unlucky in this match not to gain a result that would have added further proof to it.

I should like to see Adam having a crack at goal when he cuts in on the inside, but this is largely a matter of lack of experience, which will come, and he should develop into a real match-winner.

Groves worked tremendously hard and should improve with every match in which he appears, but, already, he is using the ball like an old hand.

From Davies and Turner there were again signs of developing understanding, particularly in their inter-changing of positions, and the work of the line as a whole was most satisfactory except in the vital aspect of obtaining goals, which, I repeat, were there for the asking on at least two occasions.

As for the defence, they had a real hammering at times against this fast, robust Bury side which had little or no pretension to class, but made every use of the hard-hit, quickly-made pass either through the middle or down the wings.

Star of the rearguard was undoubtedly Streten, who looked unbeatable until the closing minutes and who brought down the house several times with saves that seemed in the near-impossible category.

Group with him Owen, for his grip on the bustling Kelly, a much-improved player from last season, Morton for the way in which he kept Pearson subdued, and Aherne for his close watch on the nippy McIlvenny.

Shanks pulled his weight thoroughly, too, and the only radical fault one could find with Dunne was that he was sometimes too far away from Law, something that was accentuated by the fact that the winger was inclined to lie deep.

BURY: Goram; Wilson, Redman; May, Neilson, Daniel; McIlvenny, Clarke, Kelly, Pearson, Law.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Turner, Cummins, Groves, Adam.

Referee: W. Clements, West Brom.

Attendance: 15,535.