

WILL HOME FAILURE LEAD TO CHANGES?

Leadership Is Still The Most Troublesome Spot

By Chiltern

There is no smooth path for the Town to tread these days, faced as they are with the difficulties of finding their most effective combination from the material at hand. Away defeats when the result could have been the other way provide their own legitimate excuse, but failure before the home supporters is another story altogether.

Yesterday, Manager Dally Duncan, who, for the second week in succession, did not see his team play, was busily sifting reports of the setback and what he has to face up to now is whether to write this off as a bad day, as it undeniably was, or to make more changes than has been the general rule this season.

PANIC is always a bad thing in football and I do not think the Town will be driven to such measures after this first home defeat.

However, the shadow of disappointment lies heavily over the scene and it seems clear that alterations can be made so as to give grounds for reasonable hope of improvement.

Chief difficulty the Town have found this season has been an attack which can really hammer home the goals.

There have been times when it has seemed that success was within their grasp but, somehow, it has never been lasting, and no one but a super-optimist would suggest that the formation is anything near right yet.

Defence's Bad Day Complicates Issue

HOWEVER, to cloud and complicate the issue, was the fact

on Saturday that the defence was unreliable and faltered more often than in any previous game this season.

Not that this is likely to cause any undue worry at Kenilworth-road, unless the return of Owen is further delayed.

There are sound hopes that he will be back for the match at Nottingham on Saturday, though a good deal turns on whether there are any after-effects from the full-scale test which he is having this morning.

Willing trier though Hall is, he is not an Owen, and not only is the International missed from the centre-half position, but just how great is his influence on the rest of the defence is clearly seen when he is out of the team.

Swansea Wingers A Worry To Full-Backs

A VERY square-looking Town defence failed to cope with

the young Swansea forwards once they had gained the confidence of a goal, and when the pressure was on, Hall looked very uncertain and ill at ease.

He was not helped by the fact that the young Swansea wingers caused a great deal of trouble and established an ascendancy over Dunne and Aberne, both of whom had an uncomfortable time against the speed and directness of Len Allchurch and Jones. The former has come on a lot since he last played against the Town and may soon be rivaling brother Ivor as a star in the Welsh firmament.

One piece of brilliant football from him in the second half brought spontaneous and thoroughly deserved applause from the crowd, dejected as they were by the fact that the Town were trailing two goals down.

Poor Clearances Began The Goals

BOTH these goals, as they so often do, began from poor clearances.

First came after 26 minutes, when Morton attempted to head away when Dunne, standing behind him, could have made a kicked clearance.

Burgess secured the ball, made what was an obvious effort at a shot at goal, but sliced the ball into a delightful pass for the well-positioned Griffiths, who accepted a snap chance with alacrity.

Burgess had been concerned in a dangerous raid earlier when he got himself into an open space for a throw-in and lobbed the ball over Streten's head on to the bar.

It was after that that Swansea gave full rein to their attacking powers, and when a second goal arrived seven minutes later, things began to look really grim for the Town.

Breathing Space Of Short Duration

THIS time, Streten, after taking time to see where everybody was before making his clearance kick, sent the ball straight to Ivor Allchurch, who immediately switched it to his brother. Inside cut the winger and Griffiths's shot would have been a goal but for the fact that Hall got a foot to it and deflected it over the bar.

Breathing space did not last long, for as the corner came over, Griffiths raced out of the crowd of players to meet the ball squarely with his head and turn it into the far corner of the net.

An opportunist effort by a player who was always lurking dangerously in the penalty area, and who used the element of surprise to good effect in this instance.

Had Chance To Take Grip Early On

THE Luton tragedy in this match was not that they treated the opposition too lightly, as some people were inclined to think afterwards, but that they did not take advantage of the superiority they gained in the early stages, when, once they settled down, they had more of the play.

Swansea, mindful of their own shortcomings away from home, were somewhat tentative in their early efforts and rather lacking in confidence. Had the Town obtained an early goal this confidence would have been further sapped and might well have paved the way to a convincing victory, which, of course, was what most people were expecting.

Unfortunately, from the Luton point of view, it did not arrive.

FOR THE RECORDS

LUTON TOWN 1
Turner
SWANSEA TOWN 2
Griffiths (2)
LUTON TOWN: Streten; Dunne, Aberne; Morton; Hall, Shanks; Davies; Turner, Kelly, Groves, Adams.
SWANSEA TOWN: King; Willis, Thomas; Charles, Kelly, Burgess; Allchurch (L.), Griffiths, Medwin, Allchurch (R.), Jones (C.).
Referee: H. Vickers (Crewe).
Attendance: 15,555.

though there were chances of securing it, and really the defeat could be traced back to the early stages, for the longer Swansea went without conceding a goal, the better they played.

High-Powered Work By Swansea Forward

EVEN when due credit is given to a Swansea attack that gave as high-powered a display as we have seen from a visiting team this season and in which there is much future material for the Welsh selectors to think about, the Town defence cannot be absolved from blame.

Often they were beaten by sheer speed of movement and a lot of effort had to go into patching up the holes that appeared.

After beginning like a world-beater, Morton found Ivor Allchurch more elusive than ever before, but it was he who tried to rally the Town after the decisive blows.

When he came through with the ball, danger seemed likely, but his use of the ball was much less immaculate than usual and the same applied to Shanks who was rather caught up in the maelstrom, too.

Kelly Did Not Look The Answer At All

WHAT the defence lacked was its usual solid look, and Streten got them out of trouble several times with smart saves.

Yet, the most thought will not be directed to this department, but to the attack where the problem that has existed since the departure of Pye remains.

In this instance, Kelly could not be said to have held out any more promise of filling the centre-forward position than did MacEwan in the previous game.

Lacking the sharp burst of speed so necessary in a successful leader, he was in Kiley's grip to such an extent that he was switched to outside-right for the last 20 minutes.

Apart from one shot in the first-half and a couple of headers, he left little impression on this match and this problem position has now assumed mountainous proportions.

Will The Pack Be Reshuffled?

WHAT now? Will the pack be given another shuffle or will there be a new attempt to fill the vacancy from outside sources.

I do not think that anyone is inclined to under-estimate the difficulty of finding a ready-made centre-forward, but the need is there, and a remedy must be found before further leeway is lost.

As a line, the forwards had their moments, without suggesting that they carried a great deal of thrust and it was evident, when they began their second-half battle, that much reliance had to be placed on Turner as the means of saving the match.

He did his best, for he was

always the man most likely to score, and he was unlucky not to do so before the 78th minute, when he came along with a great goal from the edge of the penalty area.

Swansea Had Speed And Punch

WITH the crowd right behind them in their efforts, the Town gave promise for a time of an equaliser, but Swansea recovered, and with that old campaigner, Burgess, chasing his forwards out of the penalty area and telling them to act on with their own job, Swansea avoided the panic which the closing minutes might have induced.

Nobody could grudge Swansea the points on the day. They had the speed and punch that the Town lacked.

Groves flickered into the picture with some delicate, sometimes too deliberate footwork, and there were spasms of combination between him and Adams that never seemed to reach the desired end.

The robust tackling of Charles was a bit too much for Groves and Adams's sparkle was of the intermittent variety.

Nor did Davies hit it off, but the lack of a key-man in the middle is a big handicap for any forward line to carry.

Reserves Go From Strength To Strength

WHILE there is faltering by the first team, the Reserves seem to go on from strength to strength and they gained a fine 4-0 victory at Bournemouth to give them their fifth point from the three matches they have played in the Combination.

Good football in the opening stages brought them a goal by MacEwan and although Bournemouth fought hard, they could not break down a sound defence and in the last 12 minutes the Town scored three times through Cullen (2) and Cummins.

From the defence, in which there was not the slightest suggestion of a weak link, there was a grand display in which Pemberton had an outstanding role and the forwards combined well too with Cummins showing much of his old form in the second half when he distributed the ball most accurately.

Taking the game through, though, Cullen was the best of the forwards and he received plenty of support from Pemberton and Allen.

Chiltern's Forecasts

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

DIVISION II
Blackburn R. v. Middlesbrough
Bristol Rovers v. Lincoln C.
Derby Co. v. Ipswich T.
Doncaster R. v. Nottm. Forest
Fulham v. Stoke C.
Liverpool v. Hull C.
Notts County v. Luton T.
Plymouth A. v. Bury
Port Vale v. Leeds Utd.
Swansea T. v. Rotherham Utd.
West Ham v. Birmingham C.

DIVISION III (SOUTH)
Aldershot v. Brentford
Bournemouth v. Shrewsbury T.
Colchester Utd. v. Millwall
Crystal Palace v. Torquay Utd.
Exeter C. v. Leyton Orient
Newport Co. v. Gillingham
Northampton T. v. Bristol C.
Norwich C. v. Southampton
Q.P.R. v. Reading
Southend Utd. v. Coventry C.
Swindon T. v. Brighton
Watford v. Walsall

DIVISION III (NORTH)
Bradford v. Workington
Carlisle Utd. v. York C.
Chester v. Southport
Chesterfield v. Oldham Ath.
Crewe Alex v. Halifax T.
Darlington v. Bradford C.
Gateshead v. Barnsley
Grimsby T. v. Barrow
Hartlepool U. v. Scunthorpe U.
Rochdale v. Mansfield T.
Stockport Co. v. Wrexham
Tranmere R. v. Accrington S.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE
DIVISION "A"
Aberdeen v. Queen of South
Clyde v. Raith Rovers
East Fife v. Dundee
Hearts v. Falkirk
Motherwell v. Partick T.
Rangers v. Kilmarnock
St. Mirren v. Celtic
Stirling A. v. Hibernian

DIVISION "B"
Airdrieonians v. Arbroath
Ayr Utd. v. Brechin C.
Cowdenbeath v. St. Johnstone
Dundee Utd. v. Albion Rovers
Forfar Ath. v. Dunfermline
Morton v. Hamilton
Queen's Park v. Alloa
Stenhousemuir v. Third Lanark



BLUE CROSS AND RED CROSS BOTH WINNERS AT LUTON

Blue Cross was a winner at Luton Stadium on Saturday and so was Red Cross, although the former was a 10-1 outsider while the latter was favourite at 7-4. Favourites won five of the races—the first three and the last two—and in between were sandwiched 6-1, 10-1 and 4-1 successes.

Traps 1 and 5 drew blanks.

I (410 yds)—1, RUMOUS (3); 2, Sporting Express (6) reserve; 3, Small Bass (1); 4, Halfway (2); 5, Piebald (4); 6, Vic (5); 7, 10, 4, 1, 24.98. Non-runner: Dinky-Do.

Betting: 6-4 RUMOUS; 3-1 Small Bass; 4-1 Sporting Express, Vic; 7-1 Halfway; 10-1 Piebald. Forecast 14s. 9d.

II (470 yds)—1, MacNAB (2); 2, Sammy (5); 3, Born Tired (1); 4, Nobbler (4); 5, Care Not (6); 6, Bantam (3); 3, 4, 6, 4, 3, 28.13. Off 7.0.

Betting: 2-1 MacNAB; 3-1 Sammy; 7-2 Nobbler; 6-1 Care Not, Born Tired, Bantam. Forecast 14s. 9d.

III (410 yds)—1, BUNTER (6); 2, Rodney (2), River Bank (3), dead heat; 4, Gay Linda (4); 5, Crooner (1); 6, Kath (5); 3, dead heat, 1, 3, 24.71. Off 7.40.

Betting: 5-2 BUNTER; 3-1 Gay Linda; 4-1 Rodney; 5-1 Crooner, River Bank; 8-1 Kath. Forecasts 14s. 3d., 11 6s. 9d.

IV (410 yds)—1, DIGGER MURPHY (4); 2, Poroljo (2); 3, Trial Spin (6); 4, Tracer (5); 5, West Mead (1); 6, Mae West (3); 3, head, 10, 12, dist. 24.46. Off 7.42.

Betting: 7-4 Trial Spin; 5-2 Mae West; 5-1 Poroljo; 6-1 DIGGER MURPHY, Tracer; 8-1 West Mead. Forecast 15s. 9d.

V (470 yds)—1, BLUE CROSS (2); 2, Signal Box (6); 3, Santa Maria (3); 4, Corn Silk (1); 5, Arm In Arm (5); 6, Jackdaw (4); 3, head, 14, 1, 1, 27.40. Off 8.03.

Betting: 6-4 Jackdaw; 3-1 Signal Box; 4-1 Corn Silk; 6-1 Santa Maria; 8-1 Arm In Arm; 10-1 BLUE CROSS. Forecast 18 3s. 6d.

VI (410 yds)—1, WIDMER (4); 2, Blanket (6); 3, Little Shrimp (5); 4, Susannah (3); 5, Legion (2); 6, Luton Pride (1). 2, head, 5, 1, dist. 24.49. Off 8.23.

SELECTIONS

TEN HOME. — Huddersfield, Portsmouth, Wolves, Blackburn, Bristol Rovers, Bournemouth, Norwich, Q.P.R., Darlington, Rochdale.
FOUR AWAY. — Manchester C., Leeds, Brentford, Scunthorpe.
THREE DRAWS. — Charlton v. West Brom; Plymouth v. Bury; Colchester v. Millwall.

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