

TOWN FOUND THAT ONLY GOALS COUNT

Brilliant Football Went Without Any Reward

By Chiltern

WEST HAM 2 LUTON TOWN 1

Not often does it happen that a team so vastly superior as the Town were in this match is denied the consolation of even a solitary point.

That they should have been beaten by a late goal after giving as brilliant a display of football as the Hammers' supporters have seen for some time was almost unbelievable but, there it was, and all the Town received for their work was an increase in their reputation as a footballing team and a lot of sympathy for their undeserved failure.

Failure it was so far as the bare result is concerned, but there was triumph, too, contained in the fact that the forward-line blend, for which the Town have searched so hard and with which they have experimented so much this season, was there for all to see.

If this form can be taken as a guide to the future, and there seems no reason why it should not, then there is trouble in store for opposing defences, especially if the front line can retain the fast, crisp movement that caused the Hammers' defence so much concern.

But this game, apart from the near-miraculous escapes which the home goal had at times, really turned on two fortunate, or unfortunate, goals, which ever way you care to look at it, one of which came before the game was properly into its stride and the other which arrived in the dying minutes.

One gave the Hammers a narrow advantage they never deserved to hold and the other netted for them two points that they could never have expected once they had experienced the quality of the Town's football.

OWN GOAL SHOCK

DUNNE was the central figure in both incidents. In the fourth minute he elected to pass back, caught Baynham on the way out, and the ball rolled ever so gently over the line with the goal-keeper making an unsuccessful scramble to try to retrieve the situation.

Once the Town were over the shock of this, they really began to give the Hammers a lesson, and the marvel is that they did not wipe out this reverse and take a substantial lead by the interval.

Brilliant movements brought shots at Taylor from all angles and Taylor was so much in action that there was an ovation for him at the interval.

All the Town forwards found employment for him and he always seemed to be on the verge of being forced to pick the ball out of the back of the net but, somehow, it never happened.

There were missed chances, too, such as when Cummins and Adam gave the impression of leaving the ball to each other when the defence had been pulled all over the place but, in the main, there was a lot of good shooting that just did not experience any luck at all.

The second half brought no change in the tempo, with the Town raiding incessantly and the home team having to be content with breakaway which seldom seemed dangerous.

When, after 50 minutes, MORTON stepped in to collect the ball after Taylor had fumbled a

pass by Malcolm, and dribbled it into an empty net, all then seemed set for the result which the trend of this match had indicated all along.

Again, the goal that would really have clinched this match was elusive. There were more saves by Taylor, deflections of drives that had the "goal" label all over them, a quota of missed chances—all of which added up to nothing tangible.

A POINT WOULD HAVE BEEN VALUABLE

There would not have been real disappointment had a point been retained, for that was what the Town were hoping for from this match, and there seemed nothing more certain than this would be the case until the second disaster happened.

This time, DICK swung round quickly on the ball for a shot that Baynham had covered, but the ball struck Dunne and was deflected to the other side of the goal.

Just before that happened, the Town had survived the shock of seeing the ball fly into their net from a header by Andrews, who was judged by the linesman to be offside.

So there it was a case of the righteous going unrewarded, but the work of the forwards was really heart-warming.

Most ably led by Morton, who has taken to his new position as a fish to water and with Turner and Cummins both using the ball accurately and continually getting on with the job without waste of time, this line was a constant danger.

A good response, too, came from Davies, who was a long way ahead of Adam in this match. The outside-left had a very quiet time and could not make a lot of Bond.

From both Pemberton and Shanks there was splendid support for the men in front and both were so strong in the tackle that many West Ham raids were broken up before they could develop.

In the middle, Owen effectively barred the way, with the result that Sexton had a very lean time against his former colleagues and that was the experience, too, of England prospect, Hooper, who was rarely in the picture.

His unfortunate part in the goals apart, Dunne was in top form, too, and wisely, he did not allow the early disaster to upset his confidence.

As for the much-discussed Baynham, I thought it possible to fault him to some extent on the first occasion, but cannot see what he could have done about the deflection that brought the second goal.

He did not have a lot to do in this match, but he shone by the way in which he dealt with high crosses.

WEST HAM: Taylor; Bond, Kinsell; Malcolm, Brown, O'Farrell; Hooper, Foan, Sexton, Dick, Andrews.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Pemberton, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Turner, Morton, Cummins, Adam.

Referee: L. Callaghan. Merthyr Tydfil. Attendance: 23,000.