

# Luton Are Not Worried By Injuries

## CAME THROUGH HOLIDAY WITH ONLY MINOR KNOCKS

### Jim Adam May Be Fit, But Will Change Be Made?

Happy is the team that can come through the Christmas programme with points and no serious injuries. That is what the Town manager, Dally Duncan, can look back upon and, yesterday morning, he received the report that only minor knocks, which are all clearing up, were collected.

Injuries, or the lack of them, can be a decisive factor when a team is so deeply involved in the promotion race as the Town are at the moment, and that so few changes have been necessary recently is a matter that is giving considerable satisfaction.

Since the home game with Liverpool on November 13, an alteration in only one position has been necessary.

That was occasioned, of course, by the injury to Jim Adam and, in fact, the same team has played in the last four matches, from which seven points have been collected.

Adam is near to complete fitness again, and will probably be ready to make a return on Saturday.

Problem that must be facing the manager is whether to displace the forward line that played so brilliantly at Hull on Monday to find a place for Adam.

In this match, George Cummins and Michael Cullen teamed up splendidly on the left wing, and it may be that as the duration of Adam's absence will be a month by Saturday, that it will be deemed wiser to give him a try-out in the Reserves.

### Shock When Owen Fell Heavily

THAT would give him the opportunity to regain his confidence fully before being called upon for the more arduous football of the Second Division, and would also enable Cullen to have the further opportunity that he well earned as the result of his showing at Hull.

Those who collected knocks on Monday were Sid Owen, Gordon Turner and Bob Morton.

There was something of a shock in the opening minutes of the second half when Owen fell heavily on his back in clearing a dangerous situation.

At that stage, the game was a long way from being buttoned up, and it was a great relief to Town officials to see him up on his feet again after attention.

### Turner And Morton Also Had Knocks

THE fall caused quite severe jarring, from which he has fully recovered.

Turner aggravated a previous injury to the shin-bone in a tackle, and Morton went down heavily in a race for the ball with the home goalkeeper.

Result of this, too, caused some temporary concern, for Morton limped heavily to the touchline, and actually was off the field of play for a few minutes.

However, this turned out to be no more than a knock on the side of the knee which probably affected a nerve for a short time, and he was able to finish the

Rees, Parker; Reed, Grant, Garneys, Brown, McLuckie.

Of these, all but Fletcher and Grant won championship medals last season, but Fletcher was with the club and made seven appearances.

Other medal winners were Elsworth, Myles and Crowe, all of whom played against the Town when they were beaten 3-1 at Portman-road on August 28.

The way in which they began encouraged Ipswich to hope that they would keep their place without difficulty, for after a narrow defeat at Rotherham they gained three consecutive victories.

### Away Record Gives Them Little Hope

THAT, however, produced only an illusion of safety, for there followed a depressing run of ten consecutive defeats, half of which were by the narrowest possible margin.

Ipswich's away record can give them little ground for hope of gaining any reward from their visit to Luton, but this is a case where desperation could lend strength and the Town will not be inclined to treat this match as being in the easy category.

They need the points as urgently as their opponents, though for a vastly different reason, for victory in this game could well put them at the top of the Second Division.

Man they will be keeping a weather eye on is Tom Garneys, that strong, bustling centre-forward, for he, at least, has not found the change of grade too much for him since he has scored 16 goals.

### Watkins Likely To Return For Reserves

FOLLOWING their blank Christmas, the Reserves will be keen to get back to winning form and they face their third consecutive away match in paying a visit to Brighton.

For this, they are likely to be reinforced by the return of Charlie Watkins, who has been out with a pulled calf muscle, but who is expected to be available for this week-end.

Probability is that the experiment with Leslie Jones at centre half will not have to be continued and that the defence will go back to its former pattern.

One experiment that has succeeded, though, is that of playing Derek Allen at outside-right and, in view of the shortage of wingers at Kenilworth-road, that is a matter of some satisfaction.

### No Great Demand For Cup-Tie Tickets

"NOT too well," was Secretary Phil Coley's reply when I asked him yesterday how the tickets for the Cup-tie with Worthington on Saturday week were going.

Yesterday was the last day for season ticket-holders to apply for their usual seats and by the morning about three-quarters of them had done so.

As for the seats in the wings of the stand, applications from the general public are trickling through steadily, but the demand is nothing like that which the Town have experienced before previous Cup-ties.

However, now that Christmas is over, there may well be a stepping-up in the interest for a

## Sports Chat By Chiltern

match which could easily turn out to be much better than a lot of people seem to think.

### Replay Would Bring A Travel Problem

NATURALLY enough, some thought has had to be given to the possibility of a replay, which the Town are hopeful will not be necessary.

If it does become so, then Worthington have named the following Thursday as the day for it and that would produce travel complications, for the Town are due at Birmingham on the Saturday.

"I have turned the problem over in my mind and I hope that that is as far as I shall have to go with it," the Secretary told me.

His solution is to break the journey the day before, perhaps at Blackpool, return there after the match and then make the trip to Birmingham from the north-west.

That is not a prospect that anyone at Kenilworth-road wants to contemplate and he can only hope that there will be no mistake at the first attempt.

### Mannion Put Some Thousands On Gate

THE size of the crowd at Hull on Monday must have made Town officials envious and their 20 per cent of the takings which were over £4,000 would bring them nearly as good a financial reward as they receive from their net proceeds of a home game as they are averaging at the moment.

Various estimates were being made of just how much difference the debut of Wilf Mannion made to the gate, but this was a figure difficult to arrive at. Probably it was as high as 10,000, for the City's last three home attendances averaged only about 18,000.

In view of the lack of transport facilities, the Town's Christmas Day gate of just under 16,000 can probably be regarded as reasonably satisfactory, but, at the same time, it has not escaped notice that there was only one lower in the Second Division.

### Manager Heard News On The Radio

ALTHOUGH he took part in some of the preliminary negotiations, Hull City's manager, Bob Jackson, did not know that Mannion had been signed until he heard the news

on the radio in a Luton hotel on Christmas Eve.

Reason was, of course, that he had left Hull by road early in the day with his team and, while the news did not come as a surprise to him, it was certainly informative.

Original intention had been to make room for Mannion by switching the utility player, Vign Jensen, to full-back, but this fell through, on Monday morning when Jensen was found not to be 100 per cent fit.

A somewhat strange fact emerged during the week-end, and that was that Neil Franklin had never before played on the Luton ground.

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### Four Town Players In Bedfordshire's Team

FOUR players who have been appearing regularly in the Town's "A" team are required for duty for Bedfordshire in the Southern Counties Amateur Championship match with Hertfordshire at Biggleswade on Saturday.

They are goalkeeper A. Collier, full-back V. Moody, and wingers R. Mead and A. Flint, all of whom have been playing well since the semi-finals disappeared, but this game will give them a useful pointer to their chances next season.

The Town will now have two players in the England Youth trial at Leicester on Saturday week.

Collier was chosen originally, and now Michael Collins, a wing-half, has been invited to take part. Although he played for the Town in the Youth Cup, Collins is Northants in the County Youth Shield, and he comes from Wellingborough.

Both goals were scored in the first half but after the interval it was all Luton, who did everything but score.

Allen was easily the best forward, and he was always dangerous. Taylor, who replaced Petersen in this game, linked up quite well with Groves, but the inside man was inclined to hang on to the ball too long—a failure shared by Pearce in this match.

Jones appeared at centre-half again, with Dallas at right-back, but again Jones was disoriented to head the ball, with the result that he was often beaten when it was in the air.

In goal, Stretton did not have a particularly busy afternoon. LUTON TOWN RESERVES: Stretton; Dallas, Thompson; Kelly, Jones, Smith; Allen, Pearce, MacEwan, Groves, Taylor.

### FIGHT BACK WAS IN VAIN

Norwich City Reserves... 3 Luton Town Reserves... 2

With an experimental team Luton Reserves took longer to settle down than is usually the case when they met Norwich Reserves on Christmas Day and the result was that they were found in arrears before they found their feet.

Norwich opened brightly and took the lead in the third minute when WOAN beat Stretton, and five minutes later COLLINS converted a penalty for hands. With two goals behind them, Norwich continued to attack and HANSELL scored a third goal after only 12 minutes.

For a few minutes it looked as if Norwich would run riot but Luton gradually improved and just before the interval MacEwan reduced their arrears.

Luton faced an uphill battle in the second half but they set about their task in determined fashion and ALLEN put them back in the game with a chance when he converted a penalty after MacEwan had been "sandwiched" in the penalty area.

Seeing the chance of a point, Luton attacked and made ground continually only for the final pass

## CLEAR LEAD FOR BARTON

### Shefford Are Sitting Pretty

By beating Bedford North End on Boxing Day, Barton Rovers have established a clear lead in Division II of the South Midlands League.

Both Shillington and Barton have now played 12 League games. These have brought Barton 21 points and Shillington 19.

There were four Premier Division matches on Monday, but only one surprise. That was when Marston Shelton beat Cranfield United. Shefford, Town, the leaders, improved their comfortable position at the top when they took two points from Amphilhill Town.

Amphilhill's slump continues, and they have dropped to the middle of the table after their great start when they looked like a championship prospect.

PREMIER DIVISION: Marston Shelton 4, Cranfield Utd. 2, Shefford Tn. 3, Amphilhill Tn. 0, Stotfold 2, Potton Utd. 3, Wootton B.C. 1, Dunstable Tn. 1.

DIVISION I: Eickford Sports 5, Blechley LMS 1. DIVISION II: Barton Rovers 6, Bedford N.E. 1.

### LACKED AN "OLD HEAD"

Town "A" Beaten On Boxing Day

Luton Town "A" 1, Chelsea "A" 3

The Town third string have won only three of their 16 Metropolitan League matches, but they should never have lost this home game with Chelsea "A" on Boxing Day.

Although Chelsea are at the top of the table, they did not play like league leaders and Luton had more of the play.

It was a surprise when Chelsea took the lead through TINDALL 11 minutes before the interval, but NORMAN, Luton's best player, equalised when he beat Collins during a goalmouth scramble with the second half only a few minutes old.

Luton piled on the pressure after this but their finishing was too erratic to be dangerous.

Little was seen of the Chelsea attack until the last seven minutes. Then they came back into the picture with a vengeance and scored twice through SILLETT and TINDALL to take both points.

There were only two professionals in the Luton side, Neil Loasby. Had there been an older head in the side the result might have been vastly different. Les Hall, who stood down for the young amateur Underwood, was missed, although Underwood showed plenty of promise. Loasby was the best forward and was unlucky with one great effort that looked a certain goal but hit the corner of the cross-bar.

LUTON TOWN "A": A. Collier; Bell, V. Moody; M. Collins; K. Underwood; G. Norman; R. Mead, T. Wheelhouse, Loasby, A. Flint, P. Petersen.

CHELSEA "A": Collins; Heisterington, Whittaker; Gibbs, Berry, Ferry; Merrifield, Smith, Tindall, J. Sillett, R. Kitchener.

### TWO POINTS FOR WALDEN RANGERS

Whitbread (3), Hale and Priest scored for Walden Rangers when they beat Wilden Athletic 5-2 in Division IV of Luton and South Beds League on Boxing Day. Odell and Pinnock were the losers' scorers.

## POINTLESS CHRISTMAS FOR THE RESERVES

### Had Chances In Both Games, But Lacked Finishing Power

Although they were beaten in both holiday matches, Luton Town Reserves played well enough in both games to have earned the solace of at least one point.

At Norwich the home side scored three goals before Luton, with a re-shuffled side, settled down, and at Bristol, on Boxing Day, Luton literally ran rings round their opponents in the second half and did everything but score.

In both these matches Jones played at centre-half, but he did not look completely at home for he was beaten too often when the ball was in the air.

### JUST COULD NOT SCORE

Bristol City Reserves... 2 Luton Town Reserves... 0

Had Luton taken a point from their match on Boxing Day it would have been no more than they deserved for they played brilliant football at times but lacked that all-important punch in front of goal.

Despite their failure they impressed the City fans, who said afterwards that they considered they were lucky to against a team that always tried to play good football.

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## PROMOTION HOPES BETTER THAN EVER

### Fourth Consecutive Win At Hull For The Town

By Chiltern

In spite of an unpromising start in which they dropped a home point to Hull City after a disappointing display on Christmas Day, the Town fulfilled the hopes of their supporters by taking three points from their two holiday games as a result of a great win at Hull.

Now they have emerged as stronger promotion candidates than ever, holding second position, only a point behind Blackburn Rovers, who regained the leadership by completing a double over the moderate Doncaster team. Middlesbrough helped the Town considerably by taking three points from Leeds United, who began the holiday at the top of the Division.

By winning at Boothferry Park, the Town gained their fourth consecutive success on that ground and, for the second time in just over a week, they equalled their previous biggest winning margin in an away game.

## BACK TO TOP FORM

HULL CITY... 0 LUTON TOWN... 4

Showing all the forward thrust and dash that had humbled the Forest at Nottingham, the Town amazed a big crowd of 39,843 at Hull on Monday by the way in which they disposed of a City team reinforced by the inclusion of Wilf Mannion.

What was hoped to be a master stroke by persuading the former in England player to come out of his self-imposed retirement, proved to be a damp squib, and apart from some preliminary sparkle it was the Town's inside forwards who did all the shining.

Approaching this match as if they were nettled at their partial failure two days earlier, the Town settled down from the start and gave a thoroughly workmanlike

There was Baynham rising to the occasion with brilliant saves before the position had been consolidated to complete a triumph for good football allied with team-spirit and determination.

HULL CITY: Teece; Whitnall, Neal; Horton, Franklin, Durham; Atkinson, Downie, Crosbie, Munne, Ackerman, Baynham; Dunne, Ahern; Pemberton, Owen, Shanks; Davies, Turner, Morten, Cummins, Cullen.

## WERE OFF THE MARK

LUTON TOWN... 1 HULL CITY... 1

The Christmas Day meeting between these teams at Kenilworth-road produced a different story altogether, with the Town a lot below their best and the Hull side, who were accurate in their approach and remis in their finishing.

Even so, despite their obvious shortcomings, which was due in the main to mistaken tactics which led to them keeping the ball too close consistently, they had sufficient scoring chances to have made sure of two points.

On the run of the play, victory for the Town should have been certain, for the Hull attack had not a lot to commend it, and made little impression on the Town defence.

The goal they obtained was of the type that should never have happened, and it produced a shock in the 26th minute, when DOWDIE, hopefully tried a shot from what could not be regarded as other than slightly optimistic range.

Baynham, who seemed to have it covered, went down too soon, and the ball rolled under his arm as he was full-length near the post and went on into the net—an unfortunate mistake.

### CHANCES WERE MISSED

Before that happened the Town had had chances of making a flying start, particularly when Turner swung at the ball and missed completely, and Cullen delayed his shot too long when he went through with Hull asking for an offside decision.

Morton, too, was remis on one occasion, but the most singular feature was the way in which passes went astray and the fact that the Town were making too many passes in order to make ground, and had little to show for it in the end.

When the second half began the Town were still that goal in arrears, and in an endeavour to bring about an improvement they switched Davies and Cullen.

This did not have the desired effect, for Cullen could not pass Neal, and Davies had a completely off-day. Result was that with danger not coming from the extreme wings, there was persistence in trying to force a way down the middle, where Franklin was the master.

Morton, in fact, had an unproductive time, especially when he tried to beat Franklin, and that left Turner and Cummins as the chief hopes of a revival.

Soon after the interval, TURNER raised these with a tremendous shot, but brought a dazzling save from Teece, and he it was who headed the equaliser after 67 minutes from a long centre by Cullen.

After that there was a lot of pressure by the Town, in which Turner twice went near to giving them the lead, and Davies had a great shot finely saved by Teece.

### HAD MUCH MORE OF THE PLAY

So, from a game in which they had by far the greater share of the play and infinitely the more chances the Town had to be content with a point—an acute disappointment for the 15,853 spectators.

Turner was the best of the forwards, and certainly had a more accurate idea of where the goal lay than his colleagues, but there was a deal of good work by Cummins, who, however, sometimes attempted a little too much.

All in all, this game, that was often dull, was typical of what often occurs on Christmas Day, when there is usually an unnatural kick-off time. The atmosphere is never quite the same, and the football suffers as a result.

But that could not excuse the spate of inaccuracies, particularly in the one of the ball, and there was a deal of aimless running of the streamlined work that we had seen in the second half at Nottingham the previous week.

Really there was not a great deal for the defence to worry about, for little of a constructive nature came from Hull, and Baynham had little to do, though he made one splendid save when Hull were still leading and Owen nearly headed into his own net in an attempt to clear.

Owen held Crosbie without difficulty, and Shanks had the better of the tussle with Downie. Dunne and Ahern were consistent and confident, but Pemberton fell away a great deal after a good first half, and his distribution of the ball went all awry.

## FOOTBALL

LUTON TOWN F.C. SATURDAY, 1ST JANUARY League—Division II

versus LUTON TOWN

Kick-off 2.15 p.m.

Admission: Centre Stand (Season Tickets only); Wing Stands (Unreserved) 5/-; Enclosure 3/6, Boys 1/3; Terraces (not covered) 1/9, Boys 1/3.

Referee for both matches: F. L. Overton, Derby.



Bob Morton, Luton's centre-forward, leaps high in a vain attempt to connect with a centre from Cullen when Neil Franklin, the Hull centre-half, watches anxiously. A "shot" from the Town's Christmas Day match with Hull City.



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