

A BOLD MOVE PAID BIG DIVIDENDS

Groves Led The Forwards Like An Old Hand

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 3, FULHAM 0

Giving a display in keeping with their promotion ambitions, despite having to make changes in key positions, the Town gained an easy victory over Fulham, who proved to be a far less formidable proposition than they appeared on paper.

This was a case in which a bold move paid off handsomely, for it was certainly boldness to put John Groves in at centre-forward for the first time in his career as the solution to the problem left by the moving of Bob Morton to centre-half.

Groves, all of whose previous League team experience had been at inside-left, led the line like an old hand at the job. Continually picking up the loose ball in midfield, he kept the attack on the move with well-judged passes.

In the second half, he became quite a spearhead, too, and proved a lively handful for Greenwood and scored one of the best goals seen on the ground this season.

It came after 59 minutes and counted as the Town's second. There seemed no danger to Fulham when GROVES challenged Greenwood for the ball near the left wing.

The centre-forward won the tussle, turned inside for goal, leaving Greenwood floundering and surprised Black with a low shot from a most acute angle that sent the ball racing into the far corner of the net.

That really sealed the Town's victory, though there had been no particular danger since TURNER gave them the lead after 22 minutes.

AN IN-OFF GOAL

In a way, it was an odd goal, for Turner headed a corner by Davies against the bar and the ball after bouncing upwards, spun down again under the bar and finally went in off Chenhall, who was seeking to make a goal-line save.

Both before this happened and afterwards, the Town were the more polished, assured side on going that was anything but easy.

Most of the pitch was heavy after the thaw, but there was a snowy, well-sanded patch in front of the stand which was a tremendous hazard for those unfortunate enough to have to play on it.

To both sets of conditions, the Town adapted themselves the better and they owed much of their supremacy to the grip which the half-back line took on the middle of the field.

Result was that Fulham's forwards had few opportunities to launch an effective attack, especially as Jezard was literally put out of the game by Morton, and we saw little of the dash that usually characterises this leader.

All the same, Fulham tried to play to him, but the Town covering was so effective that no gaps were left, and there never seemed much danger that there would be other than a clean sheet.

NON-STOP WING HALVES

Non-stop work by Pemberton and Shanks put the Fulham inside forwards out of the game and with Dunne winning his tussle with Mitten and Aherne completely holding Barton, the Fulham attack was largely an innocuous affair.

Behind them was Baynham, who although he did not have a great deal to do, showed that his confidence is unimpaired by the unfortunate happenings to him the week before.

Almost immediately after he scored, Groves had the ball in the net again, but, presumably

on the grounds of offside, the referee disallowed it.

Most people thought that the ball came back to Groves off a Fulham defender and there was some surprise at the decision.

However, with 13 minutes left, TURNER emphasised the Town's superiority by rounding off a clever movement by Davies and Groves.

There was much thrustful work by Turner and a return to his best by Cummins, who worked tremendously hard in midfield.

From the wingers, there was not quite sufficient finishing power, though Davies made a marked improvement in the second half. Cullen worried Chenhall, but his passing was not always accurate and there were times when he delayed his pass too long.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Pemberton, Morton, Shanks; Davies, Turner, Groves, Cummins, Cullen.

FULHAM: Black; Chenhall, Fisher; Lowe (E.), Greenwood, Lawlor; Barton, Robson, Jezard, Hill, Mitten.

Referee: E. Crawford, Doncaster. Attendance: 17,966.