

PROMOTION HOPES BRIGHTER STILL

TOWN DRAW NEARER TO THEIR TARGET

Successful Moves Have Relieved Much Anxiety

By Chiltern

Although there is no disposition to "count their chickens," one can detect a "what can stop us now?" sort of attitude at Kenilworth-road and it is certainly justified by the strong position which the Town have built up for themselves in the promotion struggle.

Certainly there is a long way to go yet and some stern away tests await them, but the acquisition of 15 points from the remaining 11 matches, to bring them a final total of 56 points, a target which was set some weeks ago, should not be an impossible task.

TO reach the same target, Blackburn require 15 from only nine matches, Leeds 17 from nine, Rotherham 19 from 11, Stoke 20 from 12, West Ham 20 from 11, and Birmingham 22 from 14.

The Town's remaining programme consists of five home games and six away. Assuming that they take full points at Kenilworth-road, they will then need five points from their visits to Swansea, Liverpool, Leeds, Blackburn, Birmingham and Doncaster to put themselves in what would obviously be an unassailable position.

As things are at the moment, with Blackburn suffering two consecutive defeats, Notts County fading out of the picture and Stoke having a home reverse, a lower total than 56 might ensure promotion this season.

Gamble That Paid Off Handsomely

SO, what the Town have to do is to go plodding through what is admittedly a difficult programme and hope that a run of injuries does not upset their chances.

On this score, the happenings against Fulham on Saturday brought a good deal of relief, for they showed that the club's decision to rely on their younger reserve players when vacancies in the first team arise, is the correct one.

It was a gamble to put the responsibility of leading the attack on Groves, but it paid off handsomely, for he showed what football ability he has and scored a striking success even against such a widely experienced centre-half as Greenwood.

Morton Eased Worry About Owen

WHILE his success removed anxiety about the centre-forward position, the fact that Morton showed again what we all knew—that he can bear comparison with most centre-halfs in the Second Division—solved the problem that Owen's absence through lumbago had left.

Duration of Owen's absence is still open to doubt for no one can attempt to make a firm forecast, but, obviously, Manager Dally Duncan must be feeling happier about the prospect of having to be without him a little while longer after the way in which his experiment on Saturday turned out.

In one way, it could be an embarrassment, raising the query of what to do when Owen is fit again, but that can be dealt with when it arises and it is better to be in that position than to have to cast about for a possible solution.

Mystery Of The Decline Of Fulham

THE decline of Fulham since the start of the season is one of football's mysteries.

Obviously, they have the players, but they seem to have lost all the blend they showed earlier on, and it was really no more than a token resistance that they put up at Kenilworth-road. Never did they threaten to

FOR THE RECORDS

LUTON TOWN 3
Turner (2), Groves.
FULHAM 0
LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Pemberton, Morton, Shanks; Davies, Turner, Groves, Cummins, Cullen.
FULHAM: Black; Chenhall, Fisher; Lowe (E), Greenwood, Lawlor; Barton, Robson, Jezzard, Hill, Mitten.
Referee: E. Crawford Doncaster. Attendance: 17,966.

defender to deal with it, and it finally went into the net off Chenhall.

At the time there was some doubt about whether Turner should be credited with the goal, but there was general agreement afterwards that this should be the case, and it was the one that enabled him to set up a new scoring record since the Club gained promotion to the Second Division.

A lead of a single goal at half-time did not really represent the measure of the Town's superiority, for they had always looked the more dangerous side.

Spectacular Goal By John Groves

FEATURE of the second half was the cool way in which Groves scored his first goal from the centre-forward position.

It began when he secured the ball from Greenwood in a tussle out near the wing and then made a bee-line for goal before cracking the ball into the far corner of the net from a surprisingly narrow angle.

This spectacular effort put me in mind of a similar one by Pye against Derby County, I believe it was, at Kenilworth-road last

season, and it earned him much applause and the delighted congratulations of his team-mates.

A few minutes later he had the ball in the net again, but this was disallowed, presumably on the grounds of offside, though many people disagreed with the decision, and it seemed that the ball came back to Groves a second time off a Fulham defender.

Turner Gave Score A Healthy Look

NOT that it mattered a great deal for, 13 minutes from the end, Turner gave the score a good, healthy look by finishing off with a firm drive a clever movement in which Davies and Groves took part.

Thus, after drawing blanks in three matches, Turner got back on to the goal standard and emphasised his great value to the side as an opportunist.

Though his general play and distribution were not quite so good as they can be, he was still the danger man.

Instructions to Groves were to keep moving and not allow Greenwood to take a grip on him and he followed them well. Throughout the match, his coolness in distribution was most marked.

After he had scored, he showed unbounded confidence and real dash and his was a highly satisfactory performance.

Cummins Gave Hard Fighting Display

IN some recent matches, Cummins has been affected by injuries, but he showed that he is over them by his hard-fighting display, in the course of which he took a deal of buffeting from Fulham defenders who did not hesitate to be robust on occasions.

Stronger finishing from the wingers would have been an asset and, although Cullen did the right thing in taking the ball

Same Team Was At Watford

Although his earlier intention had been to include two or three members of the Reserves, Manager Dally Duncan decided, after all, to field last Saturday's winning team in the Ribby Taylor Cup match at Watford last night.

Probably this was done as much to keep complete faith with Watford as to give the team in its entirety another chance to play together, with the difficult match that awaits them at Swansea on Saturday in view.

up to Chenhall, he did not always make the best use of it and there were times when he tended to hold it too long.

However, due regard has to be paid to the difficulties under which he played on the snow-bound part of the ground in the first half.

In the first half, Davies struggled to find his form, but he showed improvement afterwards when he used the ball to

damage the Town's fine home record, and the Town were always by far the better balanced, more cohesive side and the one that looked more consistently like obtaining goals.

On the other hand, Fulham, even with such stars of the calibre of Robson, Jezzard and Mitten, could raise few shots at goal, so complete was the grip which the Town defence took and maintained.

Illness Caused A Doubt About Shanks

OUTSTANDING department of the team was the middle line, from which much of the Town's strength sprang.

Well-kept secret was that it was touch and go whether Shanks would be able to play because of a slight attack of bronchitis, and he was scarcely able to breathe in the dressing-room after the match.

Certainly, he showed no sign that he was under any sort of a handicap, for he played a tear-away game for the whole 90 minutes, with the result that Robson had little opportunity to demonstrate his powers of opportunism.

No less successful was Pemberton, who must go down as the discovery of the season for the consistent way in which he has filled the right-half position since the opportunity arose to promote him.

Real Adaptability Of Bob Morton

THEN, there was Morton, thoroughly in command in the middle of the field and curbing his natural tendency to help drive on the attack.

Morton must be one of the most adaptable players in the game, judging by the displays he has given in three different positions, all of which call for a different approach and a different technique.

Against him, Jezzard seldom, if at all, looked anything like in the England class, and it is difficult to recall him having even one shot at goal, or at least one that was on the target.

So, with half-back line strength, the Town held command in the middle of the field, and the taming of the Fulham attack was completed by the complete competence of the full-back partnership of Dunne and Aherne.

Aherne Gave Young Opponent No Chance

YOUNG Barton never had much chance against the determined Aherne, whose tackling is so deadly these days, and Dunne battled successfully against the wiles of Mitten, which were seen most in the first half when he had reasonable going on which to operate.

Then, Dunne jockeyed him well, recovered quickly when beaten and generally cut down the danger from this source.

Obviously, Mitten did not relish the treacherous going on the stand side with which he had to contend after the interval, and Dunne's task was a good deal easier then.

Behind this safe rearguard, Baynham showed what a wise move it was to disregard completely his misfortunes of the previous week, with a confident if not very busy display, but what there was to do, he accomplished in crisp, easy style.

Little Danger After The First Goal

THERE was not much danger to the Town once they had taken the lead in the 22nd minute, when Turner got his head squarely behind a corner by Davies and sent the ball crashing against the bar.

The spin brought it down so that it was difficult for any

FOOTBALL

LUTON TOWN F.C.
Combination League—Div. 1

FLOODLIGHT MATCH
THURSDAY, 17th MARCH

LUTON TOWN RESERVES

versus

CARDIFF RESERVES

Kick-off 7 p.m.

Admission: Centre Stand (Season Tickets Only); Wing Stand and Enclosure 1/6, Boys 1/-; Bobbers' Stand 1/3, Boys 10d.; Terraces (not covered) 1/-, Boys 9d.