

NEVER HIT TRUE FORM

Two Penalties Helped Leeds

LEEDS UNITED 4
LUTON TOWN 0

Here was a badly-out-of-gear Town team who failed to master the lively conditions and did not adapt themselves anything like as well as their opponents to the handicap of a light ball and a hard ground.

Where Leeds were coming in to meet the ball all the time, the Town were too often standing waiting for it and they made the mistake, too, of keeping it too close, whereas Leeds gave it plenty of boot and followed up hard.

It was by no means pretty football to watch, and the match was not worthy of two teams so closely concerned in the promotion battle, but it was successful from the Leeds point of view.

Seldom did the Town settle down to the progressive football that has brought them results in the past and the through pass which had been so dangerous to opposing defences was rarely in evidence.

Instead, there was much square passing, too much doubling back with the ball, and the net result was that the forwards had a thin time against a defence that did not spare itself in the tackle.

That great player, Charles, simply buttoned up the middle of the field and hard though Groves tried he could make little impression on this bulwark and there was never any sign of a gap down the middle.

Both Turner and Cummins are in a far from happy patch with Cummins often caught in possession and the former seemingly out of touch for quite long periods.

The service the wingers received was far from adequate and Davies often went inside looking for the ball.

I doubt whether Shanks will be asked to fill in at outside-left again, for, even allowing for the lack of service, he did not look happy and, in any case, on this evidence, the Town cannot afford to have him absent from the middle line.

OWEN A STRONG DEFENDER

There was not the grip at wing-half that there was in previous matches, with the result that Leeds' forwards received more room in which to operate than those of the Town.

One of the few to come through and add to his reputation was Owen, a strong, assertive defender, but Dunne and Aherne coped adequately, too, and that a defence that had gone through the two previous matches with a clean sheet should concede four goals was rather an unlucky circumstance.

The first, after 10 minutes, was completely unexpected, for BROOK stuck out a leg to have a poke at a pass by Nightingale, and saw the ball go just inside the post.

When, after 30 minutes, CHARLES scored from the penalty-spot after protests by the Town about the legitimacy of the decision, there was not a great deal of hope, judging from the way things were going.

The penalty was awarded when Nightingale went sprawling when tackled by Dunne, and, in addition to the room for doubt about whether an offence had been committed, I thought the incident happened outside the penalty area and that Nightingale made sure of falling into it.

At half-time there was still some optimism among Town officials, based largely on the fact that their team would have a strong breeze behind them, for that had been making things difficult by causing clearances to hang deceptively.

However, the second half gave little grounds for encouragement and, in any case, the wind died down. Even though Turner and Groves switched, there was no sign of additional thrust and not much of a difficult nature came the way of Wood from start to finish.

Baynham, who did not have too happy a time, should have prevented the third goal secured by a most innocent shot from HENDERSON which the goal-keeper had completely covered and he was out of his goal when Pemberton threw himself full-length to fist out a shot by Brook and again, CHARLES blasted the ball through from the spot. These two goals came in the 75th and 80th minutes.

The best thing the Town can do is to forget all about this performance which was really too bad to be true.

Leeds' bustling tactics upset them but, in view of the fact that they must expect this at this vital stage and must also expect to have to put up with a lively ball, they must show themselves to be more adaptable.

LEEDS UNITED. — Wood; Dunn, Hair; Gibson, Charles, Kerfoot; Williams, Nightingale, Brook, Henderson, Meek.

LUTON TOWN. — Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Pemberton, Owen, Watkins; Davies, Turner, Groves, Cummins, Shanks.

Referee. — J. G. Williams, Nottingham.

Attendance.—29,500.