

NOW, FOR BIRMINGHAM TEST

NO NEW INJURIES TO TOWN PLAYERS

Trevor Smith May Not Be Available For The City

[By Chiltern]

With the results of Saturday's matches doing little to clarify the situation at the top of the Second Division, we reach the next-to-last week of the season with all sorts of possibilities presenting themselves.

From the Town point of view, the hard-won point at Blackburn keeps them firmly in the forefront of the struggle and they are preparing quietly for another tremendous struggle with Birmingham at St. Andrew's to-morrow night.

On the return trip from Blackburn, manager Daly Duncan told players he did not want to go until Tuesday.

But about the tension of the week-end and relax, he said except those who were injured.

Finally, those collected in a minor character and first team players will be what is always a stern test.

Owen who took a terrific beating against the Rovers through without feeling from his back and to will be an important day in capturing the team from his former club.

Point Would Ease The Strain

Will it be for Birmingham-born, Ron Baynham, never played on the St. Andrew's ground and for Jim Brown, from nearby Stour-

town. Town can win a point, which will help ease the strain on the players during the next matches and, judging by the manner in which they tackled their task at St. Andrew's, this is something that is within their compass.

What is needed, though, is support from the forwards. If they would not be altogether satisfied if a change were made in the forward line, manager is not to blame for his team until later to-

Astall May Be Able To Return

Nowing at Port Vale on Saturday, Birmingham disappointed their fans and to some extent a chance of promotion, they must win to-morrow.

As for the defeat, their manager, Arthur Turner, told them "It was one of those days. Port Vale were better. It was not one of our best days and the Vale did win."

wonderfully consistent run which has brought them from a place midway in the table to be real live challengers for a return to the First Division.

Over Easter they gained the maximum quota of points by beating Middlesbrough twice and Plymouth, and their previous setback was on March 26, when West Ham beat them 2-1 at St. Andrew's.

Before that happened they had taken 14 points out of 16 and, even taking into account their setback of last Saturday, they have still gained 23 points out of the last 30.

Not A Lucky Ground For The Town

OF their 19 home matches, Birmingham have won 13, drawn three and lost three. Apart from West Ham, Nottingham Forest and Bury won there, and the points were shared by Hull, Derby and Lincoln.

St. Andrew's has never been a particularly lucky ground for the Town, who are still seeking their first victory there, and of the six meetings between the teams, Birmingham have won five, by 1-0, 2-1, 3-0, 3-1 and 5-1. The Town gained a point in the 1952-53 meeting in a 2-2 draw.

Birmingham's goals have been fairly equally distributed among all the forwards of the forward-line, with Peter Murphy, former Coventry City and Tottenham inside-forward leading the way, and Lane also prominent in the list of marksmen.

A big crowd is expected for this "needle" match, and there will be considerable support for the Town.

Progress of the game will be given to the crowd at the Town "A's" match with Tonbridge at Kenilworth-road to-morrow.

Gallant Defence Was A Point Earner

A GALLANT defence in which Baynham and Owen were outstanding enabled the Town to hang on to that precious point at Ewood Park on Saturday and they withstood a tremendous amount of pressure in the second half when the Rovers piled on everything they knew in order to secure the first goal that always looked as if it would decide the destination of the points.

They had their chances, including a penalty kick from which that experienced and deadly marksman, Langton, shot wide, a happening that brought a wail of near despair from the excited home fans.

Time and time again during the most severe pressure the Town have experienced this season, Owen threw back the Rovers forwards by sheer grit and determination.

Could Not Expect A Classic

THIS was no classic. How could it be in view of all that was hanging on the result? The excitement of the occasion, combined with a fast, lively ground and a light ball made good football a matter of real difficulty.

Rovers' idea of tackling the situation was to bang the ball high and hard down the middle and hope for mistakes to be made by the Town defenders.

These tactics and the support given to Langton posed the main threat to the Town and the battering ram dashes of Briggs down the middle took some stopping.

All members of the Blackburn forward line missed fairly easy chances, but with the ball kicking up on the bumpy surface it was not altogether surprising that the shooting was lacking in accuracy.

Baynham Was In Inspired Form

WHEN the Rovers did get on to the target, there was always Baynham in inspired form, playing pretty nearly the game of his life and making a series of brilliant saves.

Time and time again, he risked injury by throwing himself at the feet of on-rushing forwards and it was a perfect piece of goal-keeping that drew him well-earned applause from the crowd.

In particular, the way in which he pulled down high crosses stamped him as being in the top class.

There was firm backing for these two from the remainder of the defence with Aherne tackling so hard and effectively that he just about put Mooney out of the game and there was little threat from this wing.

Forward Story Was Not So Happy

NOT always altogether happy against the clever Langton, Dunne yet put up a hard-battling display and, if he were beaten, he was always quick in recovery, and his speed stood him in good stead.

Both Pemberton, who finished the match with a black eye, and Shanks, were great-hearted battlers and triers in midfield, and their work completed a de-

FOR THE RECORDS

BLACKBURN ROVERS . . .
LUTON TOWN

BLACKBURN ROVERS:
Elvy; Smith, Eckersley;
Clayton (R.), Smart, Bell;
Mooney, Croxall, Briggs,
Quigley, Langton.

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

Referee: L. Richardson,
Doncaster.
Attendance: 35,800.

fence that has never more richly deserved to save a point.

Forward, the story was not such a happy one, especially in the second half, and yet, the Town might very well have snatched the other point.

Most of what shooting there was came from Turner, who was desperately unlucky after the interval when he finished a long, solo run with a shot that beat Elvy and struck the inside of the post.

Two Narrow Escapes For Blackburn

THE rebound sent the ball to Adam, awkwardly it must be said, and he tried to turn it into the net by diving full length to head, but the ball went wide.

Then, with almost the last kick of the game, Turner went weaving through again and when he shot from his favourite angle, I thought we were going to see the decider.

The ball crossed Elvy, but just missed the far post and, at the same time, eluded the oncoming Adam, who looked to hold a reasonable chance of turning it in.

From the forwards, the best work came before half-time, particularly in the earlier stages when they moved the ball about in a style that was reminiscent of their best days.

But, as the Rovers secured more and more of a grip, opportunities for the forwards became few and far between.

Ball Came Back To Defence Continually

THERE were few cohesive movements after the interval, and the defence had the unfortunate experience of seeing the ball come back to them immediately time and time again.

Not yet back to his best is Adam, who, even allowing for the lack of support, and Cummins did not feed him as he

should, did not make much impression after looking, early on, as if he had gained the mastery over Smith.

Cummins has not yet adapted himself to these lively conditions, and is not scheming as well as he was when the going was giving and the left wing was rather a disappointment.

Morton struggled on gamely without a great deal of help against the vigorous, close-marking Stuart, and far too many times, the ball went to the centre-forward in the air where he was at a height disadvantage.

Turner's Thrusts The Main Danger

QUICK thrusts of Turner always represented the chief threat to Blackburn, and he made one grand drive before the interval which Elvy did well to reach at full length.

Davies was the more lively and direct winger, though he, too, did not get the service he should reasonably expect, but, of course, during the second half it was much of a last-ditch battle that the Town defence were fighting, and a destructive, rather than a constructive, role was forced upon them.

Sheer fighting spirit gained this point, and if there is the same spirit to-morrow night, and if the forwards can find a little more thrust, then Birmingham will find that they have something with which to cope.

Amateurs Did Well For Reserves

THE Town Reserves gave a much-improved display on Saturday, when they held the Combination (Division I) leaders, Chelsea, to a draw.

They were full value for their point, and would not have been flattered had they won.

In the first half they had more of the play, and although Chelsea scored first through Lewis—from what looked suspiciously like an offside position—Taylor converted a penalty a couple of minutes later after MacEwan had been fouled by Robertson.

Norman Arnison, who had a good first half, gave Luton the lead with a neat header 10 minutes before the interval, and Chelsea did not equalise until eight minutes from the end, when Johnson scored after a goalmouth scramble.

The three amateurs in the Luton side, Collier, Norman and Arnison, all did well, and Kelly had a very good game at right-half. Dallas shone, too, and once Hawkes saved his side when he cleared off the goal-line with Collier beaten.

WINNING PRICES LOW AT LUTON ON SATURDAY

FAVOURITES won five of the races at Luton Stadium on Saturday when winning prices were not high.

I. (410yds).—1, BRICKHILL LAD (5); 2, Lizette (1); 3, Dale (6); 4, Kelling (3); 5, Rumous (2); 6, Halfway (4). 5, 3, 4, 2, 1. 24.35. Off 6.45.

Betting: 5-4 BRICKHILL LAD, 5-2 Lizette, 8 Others.
Forecast 9s. 3d.

II. (470yds).—1, CRIMSON (1); 2, Red Head (4); 3, Mary's Son (6); 4, New Way (3); 5, Charmaine (2); 6, Queen (5). 5, 5, 3, 1, 8. 27.82. Off 7.05.

Betting: 6-4 CRIMSON, 3 Charmaine, 5 Red Head, 6 Mary's Son, New Way, 8 Queen.
Forecast £1 5s. 3d.

III. (410yds).—1, HAT CATCHER (5); 2, Madam (1); 3, Whipped Cream (6); 4, Charitreuse (2); 5, Kath (4); 6, River Trout (3). 6, 6, 3, 6, 4. 24.43. Off 7.25.

Betting: 9-4 River Trout, 7-2 Madam, Kath, 4 HAT CATCHER, 7 Charitreuse, 10 Whipped Cream.
Forecast £3 9s. 6d.

IV. (410yds).—1, TINY'S TINY (6); 2, Ruffles (1); 3, Rodney (3); 4, Roving Tiro (5); 5, Sprite (4); 6, Bitter Sweet (2). 7, 1, 4, 1, 3. 23.71. Off 7.45.

Betting: 6-4 TINY'S TINY, 3 Sprite, 5 Rodney, 6 Bitter Sweet, 7 Ruffles, 8 Roving Tiro.
Forecast £1 7s. 6d.

V. (470 yds).—1, WALLFLOWER (2); 2, George (3); 3, Rastus (6); 4, Melody (4); 5, Red Cross (5). 4, 1, 8, 1. 27.56. non-runner Gone By (1). Off 8.05.

Betting: 11-10 Melody, 3 George, 5 Wallflower, 6 Rastus, 20 Red Cross.
Forecast £1 15s. 3d.

VI. (410yds).—1, LARRY LYNX (1); 2, Gold Leaf (3); 3, Nagrom (6); 4, Thistle (2); 5, Sea Captain (5); 6, Golden Dollar (4). 1, 1, 6, 1, 2. 23.64. Off 8.27.

Betting: 3 LARRY LYNX, Golden Dollar, 7-2 Gold Leaf, Sea Captain, 7 Nagrom, 10 Thistle.
Forecast £1 11s. 3d.

VII. (470yds).—1, BALLY'S SON (4); 2, Old Coat (5); 3, Printer (6); 4, Poroljo (1); 5, O.B.E. (2); 6, Silent Night (3). 1, 3, 1, 4, dist. 27.69. Off 8.47.

Betting: 7-4 BALLY'S SON, 9-4 Printer, 6 Old Coat, Poroljo, 8 Others.
Forecast £2 0s. 3d.

VIII. (410yds).—1, NIGGER (1); 2, Frances (4); 3, Sinbad (3); 4, Biddy (2); 5, Black and White (6); 6, Defender (5). 5, 2, 5, 10, 2. 24.25. Off 9.06.

Betting: 9-4 Biddy, 5-2 Defender, 4 NIGGER, Black and White, 9-2 Frances, 100-8 Sinbad.
Forecast £2 16s. 6d.

RUNNERS AND SELECTIONS FOR LUTON TO-NIGHT

7-10 (410 yards).—336 Harlequin, 401 Suppose (April 14, tp 3, 24.83), 332 Julie's Girl, 346 Kerry Dancer, 561 Sunlight, 146 Wee Wee Reserve £52 Chevalier.

7-50 (470 yards).—3 Greenlow Lass, 246 Julie's Boy, 446 Kye, 652 Lucky Jim, 425 Lullaby, 532 W.T.R. Reserve 233 Alltheway.

8-10 (410 yards).—Black Watch (Mar 31, tp 4, 24.75, April 5, tp 3, 24.82), 331 Blossom Time, 461 Boston Brownie, 131 Care Not, St. Patrick (Mar 17, tp 5, 24.70, April 5, tp 6, 24.72), The Barmad (Mar 31, tp 3, 24.78, April 5, tp 2, 24.78). Reserve 645 West Mead.

8-30 (470 yards).—632 Agalad, 423 Gaf, 631 Met Man, 412 My Gal, 41 Skittle, 333 The Porpoise.

8-50 (470 yards).—63 Green Irish, 335 Hypon, 132 Jackdaw, 112 Sepac, 131 Shady Lane, 211 Susannah.

9-10 (410 yards).—3 Arm In Arm, 155 Knockor, 525 Pan Yan, 514 River, 121 Poacher, 464 Parley-Vous.

9-30 (470 yards).—452 David's Choice, 534 Just Jake, 141 Kyme, 156 Midget, 545 Plasterer, 124 Shalwyn Reserve 645 West Mead.

9-50 (410 yards).—5 Dawn, 245 Just Janet, 112 Silver Dollar, 54 Skater, 2-5 Still Waiting, 3 Straight Deal Reserve 233 Alltheway.

SELECTIONS
7-10—Sunlight (Julie's Girl, Harlequin)
7-50—Greenlow Lass (W.T.R., Julie's Boy)

8-10—Boston Brownie (Blossom Time, Black Watch)
8-30—Met Man (Agalad, My Gal)
8-50—Susannah (nap) (Shady Lane, Hypon)
9-10—Poacher (Pan Yan, River)
9-30—Kyme (Midget, Plasterer)
9-50—Silver Dollar (Skater, Straight Deal)

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