

Luton fault: Holding ball too long

By ERIC THOMPSON

Burnley3 Luton Town1..

MEET Peter McKay, ex-reserve centre forward of Burnley—with the emphasis on the “ex.” After last night’s hat-trick against Luton McKay is surely a first-team player for keeps — unless Bill Holden performs wonders in the reserves.

Retain McKay in the middle, I say, for this former Dundee United player stands only 5ft. 6in., and that must mean the gradual abolition of the high centre from Burnley’s calculations—the high centre which has almost become a waste of time in these days of towering centre halves.

Sapling among the oaks

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McKay tried to prove me wrong when he scored Burnley’s second goal after 57 minutes. This sapling among the oak-trunk legs of Luton’s defenders rose higher than Dunne to head Gray’s centre over the goalkeeper’s hands.

But that goal was the exception. The other two the rule which Burnley can profitably follow.

The first could not have come at a more heartening time—just on the interval, to equalise the score.

Winton pushed a long ball to the halfway line, where little McKay’s speed on the turn left tall Owen chasing.

McKay kept control, and released his shot just as Baynham came out to narrow the angle. It was a perfectly taken goal.

Size doesn’t matter

McKay’s third, after 85 minutes, came from a short, fast ground pass turned back from near a post by McIlroy. More like the scheming Irish star we know, this.

Cheekily McKay whipped the ball with his right foot round the back of his left. You knew,

in that moment, that size does not matter, after all, in this game.

McKay hooked a shot over the bar early in the second half, and later put the ball between the goalkeeper’s legs — Owen clearing off the line. That’s how near Burnley’s deserving reserve came to five goals.

Luton were the bigger side, looked wonderfully fit, and shaped in the first half with immense promise. You could almost see the side thinking. Each man seemed to have a job to do, whatever the circumstances. All they needed was a quicker release of the ball, especially by right-winger Cullen.

Their shots by Shanks, Turner, Groves, and Morton made too dainty Burnley’s finishing efforts look puny in comparison.

Turner scores

Turner’s goal, after half an hour, followed an ideal example of taking position and correct passing by Groves, MacEwan, and then the marksman.

But, inspired after 44 minutes by the first home goal of the season, Burnley threw those good Luton half-backs Morton and Shanks on defence by their improved speed to the ball.

Luton’s passing began to go astray. They were rarely in range for power shots, thanks in particular to the busy work of schemer McIlroy, McKay, and Pilkington, and to the drive behind from Shannon and Winton.

Cummings sometimes looked wobbly, and Adamson tended to loft the ball, but this win should boost Burnley’s confidence.

Burnley: McDonald; Rudman, Winton; Adamson, Cummings, Shannon; Gray, McIlroy, McKay, Cheesbrough, Pilkington.
Luton T.: Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Cullen, Turner, MacEwan, Cummins, Groves.