

United dazzle Luton and then give 'em the ball!

JOHNNY BERRY returned to the Manchester United attack today after injury, but Dennis Viollet, who sustained another knock on his instep in the match at Burnley last week, had not fully recovered.

Colin Webster moved from outside right, with the return of Berry, to take over from Viollet, and a third team change was that of Geoff Bent, at left back in place of Roger Byrne, who is in the England team against Denmark in Copenhagen tomorrow.

Luton Town last appeared at Old Trafford in January, 1938, when a Division II team, and were making their first appearance here as members of the senior League.

They, too, had two changes owing to international calls and injury.

Their goalkeeper, Ron Baynham, was getting his first "cap" in Copenhagen, and in his absence Bernard Streten was recalled.

Streten, too, is an international goalkeeper, both as an amateur and professional. He earned "full" honours in 1949, but this was his first League appearance since last April.

The second change was that at inside right. Turner, injured in training, was replaced by Groves, son of Arthur Groves, former Derby County inside forward.

MANCHESTER UNITED.—Wood: Foulkes, Bent; Whitefoot, Jones, Goodwin; Berry, Blanchflower, Taylor, Webster, Pegg.

LUTON TOWN.—Streten: Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Cullen, Groves, McEwan, Cummins, Adam.

Referee: W. Heselton (Durham).

Members of Eire F.A. were present to check up for international purposes, several of the Luton players being available.

United won the toss but there was little to be gained and Luton were first in action with some grand work on the right wing, but Bent conceded a corner which was cleared, not without difficulty and soon afterwards Jones made a timely clearance when he intercepted a pass from Groves intended for McEwan.

Berry put in the first dangerous shot of the match when he raced forward to a pass from Webster and drove in a terrific ground shot, which Streten saved by diving at full length.

Soon afterwards Whitefoot crossed a long ball to Taylor, which Owen just managed to reach with his head to put the ball back to the goalkeeper.

In doing so, however, he might easily have put the ball into his own net and Streten had to be very quick to reach it.

The crowd, which was about 30,000 were seeing some very interesting football by both

By
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teams and there was very little in it.

Some of Luton's approach work, in fact, was brilliantly executed, and outside left Adam caused a flutter in the United camp, when he beat Foulkes and was only held up at the last minute by a timely tackle on the part of Jones.

Off his toes

On two occasions Luton were held up by offside decisions and then Groves was bursting his way through when Jones again conceded a corner kick, kicking the ball off his toes just as he was becoming dangerous.

And it was Jones who headed clear from this situation.

Luton, newly promoted to the First Division, are certainly in their class in higher circles, judged on their early play.

There was great understanding in everything they did and they varied the short pass with the long ball, so much so that there were occasions when the United defence was inclined to get a bit hot under the collar.

United's attack was not moving fast enough, either with or without the ball and when players did move into the unmarked position the ball seldom came to them.

Much nearer

Blanchflower was adopting the deep-lying role with Webster more at inside right than anything else and Taylor at inside left, but there was little to commend the plan, whatever plan it may be called, for generally speaking the United passing was anything but accurate.

Indeed, on one occasion Blanchflower had all the room in the world to make a pass and all that came of it was a long ball, straight to the feet of Luton's right back Dunn.

He came much nearer some time afterwards, with a long down-the-centre ball which Taylor just failed to gather and Streten running out, picked up and cleared.

Then, in the 20th minute, United found themselves a goal down as the result of a penalty.

Foulkes was beaten by Adam and then the wingman came cutting in along the by-line until he had reached a position a few yards inside the penalty box. Here Goodwin came across to tackle him and, as he challenged Adam fell over his feet.

I don't think the offence justified a penalty, but the referee had no doubt and CUMMINS, who took it, deceived Wood and the ball went into the net, giving the goalkeeper no chance.

Determination

The referee spoke to Cummins when he and Whitefoot both went up for the ball.

Pegg sent in a centre which went a long way off its mark, and it was sheer determination on the part of Webster, United's best forward, which gave United a shooting chance.

Webster had chased the ball over to the right corner flag and got a throw-in. From this the ball was sent right across to the far side, where Pegg, running in, put in a grand ground shot which Streten only saved with difficulty.

Then came a really narrow escape for Luton. Again it was a long ball from the right wing and when Pegg got it he pushed a low centre-cum-shot across the face of the goal.

Taylor put out his foot and Streten was well beaten, but the

ball curled a couple of inches over the bar. This was bad luck for Taylor.

Next Foulkes came racing through to try a shot which was yards wide, and Whitefoot beat this when he also put the ball yards away from its target.

Aherne and Berry both went for the ball together and there was a crash as the United wingman went down. A free-kick was awarded United after the referee had spoken to the Luton left back.

Bent was having a pretty arduous task against outside right Cullen. In fact the whole of the United defence was up against a very fast-moving line, and the Luton attack was streets ahead of United.

And so we came to half-time with Luton deservedly in the lead, even though it took a penalty kick to do it.

Second half

United began as they had left off, with more indifferent passing and then when they did get away it was through the agency of Bent, who came upfield and then centred perfectly.

Taylor and Owen both went up for the ball and I thought that Taylor was fouled, but Owen got away with it.

McEwan was able to go away on the left wing, hotly chased by Jones, and as Wood came out of goal McEwan shot right across the face of the goal with nobody there to apply the finishing touch.

Straight from this United went on to equalise. It began with a dribble by Berry, who cut in and then slipped the ball inside to Webster.

Webster went on and actually dribbled the ball round Streten before placing it into the net.

This was in the 54th minute and it encouraged United a great deal. But there was still a lot to be desired about the play of the attack.

They were trying all kinds of switches of positions, but nothing tangible came from them and Luton continued to be far the more methodical side, finding their men cleverly and quickly and showing the brand of football that emphasises their splendid coaching.

In the lead

United could offer only token resistance as the Luton boys attacked again and again.

Even Goodwin, who can usually be relied on to pass the ball with the maximum of position was off the mark again with a long cross-field pass intended for Berry, but which went straight to Dunn.

Berry had a dribble which ended when he tried a pass which was off the target. And then in the 65th minute, just when he least expected it, United took the lead.

And it was followed by a third goal, two minutes later. Both these goals came following good work by Pegg. On the first occasion he burst through and centred low across the face of the goal.

Webster deflected it and it appeared to me to be over the goal-line before Taylor applied the finishing touch.

The ball had come across from the left wing and on the other side of the field a corner kick was earned. From this, well placed by Berry, TAYLOR got his head to the ball as Streten came out and missed and away into the net it went. Time 67 minutes.