

Spurs Outstay Luton in the Mud

By A Special Correspondent

Tottenham Hotspur 2 Luton Town 1

IT was good Christmas fare at White Hart Lane yesterday morning. Indeed, it was much like Christmas morning itself when the stocking is taken from the end of the bed and the presents tumble out. There were certainly plenty for yesterday's 41,000 crowd and with them two valuable points for the Spurs. They need them.

Tottenham just about deserved the victory, though once more they found the second half a searching test. Two up at the interval, they found themselves with their backs to the wall for most of the later stages, but they hung on. It was their stamina and strength in the deep mud, plus the skilful leadership of Blanchflower, a true captain, that just got them home.

Yet Luton, for all their accent on attack, struck one as not quite at their happiest in the conditions. Physically they lacked some of the power of men like Duquemin, Robb and Smith, recently of South-West London's Chelsea but now migrated to the Northern climes of the Metropolis.

Smith, in this his first game for his new club at inside-left, certainly added youthful punch and liveliness to the Spurs attack and may well make his mark. Tottenham, at least, are happy at this moment over their acquisition.

An individualist

But of all the Spurs' forwards the best was Brooks. Here is a young man with a flair for the unexpected. Here is an individualist. Only two or three weeks ago he scored a startling goal against Blackpool by doing the unexpected. He repeated the performance yesterday. But more of that later. Meanwhile, Tottenham are still playing football in a cool, measured way and they are a side clearly in a false position in the lower reaches of the League.

To say it again, Luton in the mud were not quite what they can be. All their pattern-weaving skill was there, all their spirit and all their angled passing. But too many of their movements came unstuck—or should it be stuck?—in the deep slime. But never mind results. Luton are interesting to watch.

Shanks, at left-half, a terrier always probing; Dunne, an Irish full-back who loves nothing more than joining into attack when there is a cause to be rescued; Cullen and Adam, clever wingers who have the ball and the job on hand at their fingertips as it were. And best of all Morton, an all-round footballer who is one of the more probing of centre-forwards.

Taking the conditions into account it was a fine match. There was a tidy shape to it. It was grueling, too, and one could not help feeling sorry for players who might have to plough through such seas of mud tomorrow and on Tuesday as well.

At the 16th minute Duquemin, taking Hopkins's through pass and beating Dunne in one movement, sent a lobbed shot from the left to the far corner of the Luton goal. Baynham just got his fingers to it, but the ball hit the post and volleyed home with the lively Smith diving into the net at the same moment.

Five minutes from half-time Tottenham scored again. Now it was Brooks's moment. Receiving from Blanchflower, he broke loose with a quick dribble, passed three defenders, created his own gap by body-swerve, went through and his low left-foot shot, slowed by the mud, just crept in past Baynham's left hand by way of a post.

Half-time and the Spurs two to the good. That was something to build on. But Luton grew stronger and stronger as the second half progressed. Adam and Morton were their focal points of attack now. They gained an overall lead of eleven corners to five but the early goal they needed would not quite come.

However, five minutes from the end they narrowed the gap at last. Morton's chipped pass was played by a Spurs' defender on to Turner who looked very much off-side. But he whipped it past Reynolds and the goal stood. More than that Luton could not do but the Spurs knew that they had been in a game.

LUTON LEFT TOO MUCH TO MORTON

'Spurs 2, Luton 1 : By ALAN HOBY

AS this is the time for seasonal messages of good will and what-have-you, here is one I would like to pass on to 'Spurs after watching them beat Luton : Bring back Eddie Baily to scheme the openings. Put your new £15,000 "buy," Bobby Smith, at centre forward—not inside left—and the New Year will soon see you soaring to safety.

Balderdash ? Not at all.

What Tottenham's attack badly needs is PUNCH. (Perhaps that's why they introduced the team to boxing promoter Jack Solomons before the game !)

Gags apart, the thick-set, dark-haired Smith has been brought to Tottenham with one elementary idea—TO GET GOALS. To achieve this happy result, however, he must have someone behind him to draw defences and lay on the right kind of through pass.

So bring back the perky Baily—pronto !

The Soccer sermon over, let me say at once that, considering the ghastly gluepot, much of the football was surprisingly good entertainment.

And in Luton's cultured, roving Bob Morton was the best footballer afield—surely he must play for England?—young Bobby Smith need not be ashamed of his first game in Tottenham colours.

Maybe Bobby is still a little slow on the turn ; but he heads the ball well, his anticipation is good, and he can shoot—although several of his efforts yesterday alarmed the photographers more than England goalkeeper Ron Baynham.

Luton were not at their happiest

on the stickfast. Not only was the defence more shaky than usual—but the attack badly missed the subtle scheming of Irish international George Cummins.

Even so, the mobile Morton, with hardly any support, gave Tottenham's Harry Clarke a thoroughly disturbing morning.

After Morton, the most fluent footballer on view was Johnny Brooks.

Johnny, who fought for every ball, got an extraordinary goal after Len Duquemin had celebrated his return to the side by scoring his first League goal of the season, a cunning lob which completely deceived Baynham (18 minutes).

The Brooks goal came five minutes before half-time. After an elegant 20-yard run in which he swerved past three men, Brooks rolled the ball past Baynham and it hit the foot of a post to rebound into the net.

Bad marking—a glaring 'Spurs fault—allowed Gordon Turner to hook the ball past Reynolds for Luton's goal ten minutes from the finish—that and Morton's brilliant cross shot which paved the way.

Owen, Morton, Shanks, and Dunne were Luton's pick. Danny Blanchflower, Norman, Marchi, Brooks, Smith, and Reynolds starred for Tottenham.