

Other Critics Said:

TOWN ERRED IN THEIR TACTICS

It is not very often that Luton Town get such a depressing "Press" as the one they read on Sunday after their third consecutive defeat.

All the national football critics condemned their short-passing tactics, which they stuck to religiously, and all were equally unanimous in their opinion that the team's fortunes will not rise again until they alter their tactics to the prevailing conditions.

Here are some "quotes":

"Luton are committing soccer suicide. Trying to play the short-passing game that proved so successful earlier in the season, they are finding themselves completely bogged down in the mud. Mystery is that, having experienced these conditions in three consecutive matches and lost all three by an aggregate of 9-0, they have failed to alter their style." — Sunday Express.

"Luton Town are sliding down the First Division table on a sea of mud. They have neither the skill nor the strength to adapt themselves to heavy conditions." — Sunday Pictorial.

"As for Luton, well, it was their third defeat on the run. And as far as I can see they will go on losing in the present muddy conditions if they continue to play that close-passing game of theirs to utter destruction." — The People.

"Birmingham deserved their victory. They used the right tactics, while Luton, despite the fact that they had lost their two previous games by using similar tactics, insisted on keeping the ball too close." — Sunday Empire News and Chronicle.

"Luton were disappointing. They seldom abandoned their usual style of play, so slick and profitable on firmer surfaces. On this sticky pitch their passes often failed to reach their man, and often the ball went astray." — Sunday Dispatch.

"Luton are never at their best in the mud. Manager Dally Duncan says it is next to impossible for a team that has successfully progressed by the short-passing game to adapt themselves suddenly to different tactics. However, that is what they must do." — News of the World.

BEAT THEMSELVES BY WRONG TACTICS

That Birmingham Bogy Reared Its Head Again

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 0, BIRMINGHAM CITY 1

ALWAYS, Birmingham have been something of a bogy team to the Town, but, after a couple of home victories over them in the last two encounters and a draw at St. Andrew's earlier this season, we had grounds for hoping that the tide had turned the way of Luton.

But it was not to be, for, in a disappointing game, Birmingham showed a better appreciation of what was needed in view of the heavy state of the going and were well worth their narrow success.

To a large extent, the Town beat themselves by again failing to suit their style of play to the prevailing conditions and, after three salutary lessons in less than a fortnight, they should have learned by now that short passing and dainty football do not pay in the mud.

So it went on, tip-tap, tip-tap, with little attempt to secure any variation by use of the long pass and, in the main, they fell easy victims to the strong defence for which Birmingham have always been noted.

In none of the last three matches have the Town forwards managed to score, which is sufficient commentary on their misguidedly, slavish adherence to the clever football that brought them success when the grounds were more lively.

LOOKED LIKE STALEMATE

For a long time, it seemed that the game would produce stalemate in the shape of a goalless draw, but the City forwards always had that little more thrust and the perseverance of BROWN was rewarded in the 65th minute.

A quick through pass, such as the crowd were aching to see from the Town, caught the defence on the wrong foot and the centre-forward outpaced Kelly before beating Baynham with a great cross drive from quite an angle.

Much of Birmingham's success was based on the strength of their middle line where Boyd and Warhurst were stronger and more dominant than the Luton pair and Smith looked a more

and hard and his was quite a good showing on his home debut at centre-half.

Even defenders persisted in the use of the short pass and Pemberton was a big offender in this respect, especially as a large percentage of his passes failed to reach their objective.

Shanks was the more successful wing-half because he was stronger in the tackle and, along with Dunne and Baynham, took the main honours.

From Baynham there were a couple of stupendous saves that stamped him as a top-class goalkeeper and, altogether he had a more difficult afternoon than Merrick who was seldom severely tested.

Aherne had quite a successful day and it was not at the defence for which we had to look for shortcomings, but to the forward line.

Big trouble was that neither Turner nor Cummins impressed himself upon this game. The latter persisted in holding on to the ball, frequently lost it and his distribution was faulty, while Turner is in the sort of patch when nothing much goes right.

With meagre service, Morton had little chance of gaining the mastery over the dominant Smith, hard though he tried and, with Pearce, who also suffered from lack of support, he was the most direct of the front line.

Another who cannot settle down to these conditions is Cullen, who fiddled far too much and seldom had the beating of Green.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Pemberton, Kelly, Shanks; Cullen, Turner.