

Other Critics:

TREATMENT OF TOWN WAS KINDLY

There was little doubt in the minds of the national newspaper critics that West Bromwich deserved their win, but Luton were treated quite kindly.

The critics agreed, too, that considering the icy conditions it was an attractive match.

Here are some comments:

"Both teams tried all the time to play thoughtfully and constructively. Luton were inclined to rely too firmly on the short pass, and showed less elasticity in their tactics than Albion." The People.

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"But this was no easy victory for Cup-hunting Albion, and Luton really made them work for the points."—Empire News and Sunday Chronicle.

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"The sprightly Albion forward line had Luton worried in the early stages."—Sunday Express.

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"Luton seem to have a complex about playing conditions. As soon as the mud came they faltered. Now the mud is frozen and for the first quarter of an hour they didn't like that, either: Then they found the pitch wasn't as bad as it looked and they began to stroke their way through some delightful football."—News of the World.

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"Luton sorely missed their skipper, centre-half Sid Owen."—Sunday Pictorial.

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"To sum up, Albion had much the better of matters on a sticky wicket."—Sunday Dispatch.

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"The third goal knocked all the fight out of Luton who had been attacking constantly after a quiet first half, and Albion held the upper hand."—Reynolds News.

FOUGHT BACK AFTER A SHOCK START

Town Look As If They Are Regaining Form

By Chiltern

WEST BROMWICH ALBION 3, LUTON TOWN 1

That the Town should come as close as they did to saving a point at The Hawthorns on Saturday after the shock of being two goals down inside 12 minutes is a tribute to the way in which they fought back.

In the end, though, the handicap of that bad start during the spell when the defence was finding its feet on the difficult going, proved to be a little too much for them, although they had their chances of reaching equality before the Albion eventually put themselves safe near the end.

Considering that the game was played on a thin covering of snow on hard-frozen turf, the teams put up remarkably good entertainment for 25,220 fans who included quite a crowd from Luton.

Those who make the journey must have seen some encouragement for the future in much of the football played by the Town and, while they were not at their best, their form was a big improvement on recent displays.

There was more freedom of movement in attack, despite the fact that the left wing was very much out of joint, and little or nothing came from this quarter.

A hint of the trouble that was to come was given in the first minute when only a great save by Baynham prevented Williams from giving Albion the lead and a minute or two later, the goalkeeper kept out a shot from Lee made from only a few yards range.

In view of the way in which the Albion began, it was no major surprise when they went ahead in the seventh minute

when GRIFFIN was allowed to come through, with defenders apparently expecting him to pass and no-one making a real tackle.

Instead, Griffin kept going and finished his run with a shot that was leaving Baynham all the way.

No-one was more surprised than the scorer himself when LEE increased the lead five minutes later for his shot appeared to be going wide until it swerved, then popped up on the hard ground and deceived Baynham to whom the whole happening was completely unexpected.

Ominous though the situation looked, the Town hit back and with 18 minutes gone, put themselves back in the game.

TURNER headed through a Cullen centre for the Town's first goal in competitive football since the turn of the year.

Although there was a deal of forcefulness about the Albion attack, they could not match the Town's clever midfield play which, unfortunately, could not be carried to what would have been a logical conclusion.

SLENDER THREAD

Twice, Morton nearly wiped out the lead which appeared to hang by a very slender thread at half-time.

It nearly disappeared altogether early in the second half when Pearce dropped the ball on top of the bar. Morton was just wide on two occasions and Adam missed a good chance after Howe had made a mistake.

Hope remained until eleven minutes from the end when Lee made a shot that Baynham could not hold and the ball bounced out to WILLIAMS who had no difficulty in tapping it through.

Just before this happened, the Albion had been handicapped by an injury to Setters, who switched with Griffin.

Even then the Town made a bold bid to save the game and only a one-handed save by Sanders prevented Pearce from scoring which Cummins should have done when he sliced the ball wide from right in front of goal.

RIGHT WING PAIR SHONE

One of the features of the match was the return to form of the right wing pair, with Cullen leading Millard a real dance and Turner distributing the ball and taking up the open space in his old style.

These two and Morton who did a tremendous amount of work, including a deal of foraging down the right wing where he linked up well with Cullen, were the best of the forwards.

Cummins was very much out of touch and Adam hung on to the ball continually and, almost invariably, was caught in possession.

The re-organised half-back line did well, with Pearce strong and forthright in yet another position and Pemberton having his best game for some time.

From Kelly there was another adequate display, once he got the measure of the somewhat unorthodox Barlow, and although Dunne was the more prominent full-back, Aherne put up a successful, hard-fighting display.

So far as Baynham was concerned, there were extenuating circumstances about the second goal, but he should not have allowed Williams the chance to obtain the third.

Still, he made several excellent saves and mistakes were easy on such going.

WEST BROMWICH ALBION: Sanders; Howe, Millard; Dudley, Kennedy, Summers; Griffin, Setters, Barlow, Williams, Lee.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Aherne; Pearce, Kelly, Pemberton; Cullen, Turner, Morton, Cummins, Adam.

Referee: J. W. Topliss, Grimsby.