

# DARK SHADOW STILL HANGS OVER TOWN

Other Critics:

## FOUND TOWN IN THE DOLDRUMS

National newspaper critics found nothing — absolutely nothing — to enthuse about after Luton's sorry display against Huddersfield on Saturday.

Luton's latest lack-lustre performance had the critics talking, for the first time this season, of a relegation threat.

Here are some of the depressing quotes—and they do not make very entertaining reading:

"A re-shuffled Luton team faired miserably against a side struggling to avoid relegation. There was little teamwork and planned moves were lacking." — "News of the World."

"With six consecutive defeats behind them and 10,000 of the faithful fans missing from the terraces, Luton are right in the doldrums. Fiddling and poor shooting marked their poor display against a team who still may be booked for relegation." — "Sunday Dispatch."

"Manager Dally Duncan has a big problem. What is his next move? He has tried every possible combination and still Luton haven't gained a point this year." — "Reynolds News."

"Luton's forwards were pathetic and had absolutely no finishing power. Luton are still looking for their first success in 1956, and unless they improve quickly they will be looking for a long time." — "Sunday Empire News and Chronicle."

"There was hardly a worthwhile shot from disjointed Luton . . . a side that seemed to have too many left feet." — "Sunday Pictorial."

"The position at Luton is going from bad to worse. Bereft of confidence, teamwork and intelligent use of the ball, they looked really down and out against Huddersfield." — "Sunday Express."

"In their sixth successive League defeat Luton played without confidence, without a hint of the skill they showed on dry grounds. What a contrast there was between their tip-tap methods and Huddersfield's direct approach." — "The People."

## No Encouraging Signs In The Latest Defeat

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 1, HUDDERSFIELD TOWN 2

NO sign of the dark shadow that has hung over Kenilworth-road for so long being lifted yet. If there was one match to which the local fans looked forward as a means of the Town getting back on the winning way, this was it, but all it produced was more acute disappointment.

Nor was there much of an encouraging nature that could be drawn from another ragged display by the Town and switches, changes and experiments have failed to bring about the solution.

Whether all will be well when the better grounds come along remains to be seen, and that, failing the buying of replacements, must be the main basis of the club's hopes of arresting their downward drift.

While this has not brought them actually into the relegation struggle, it has had the effect of putting them dangerously near it, and, unless a halt is called soon, then there will be real cause for anxiety.

In their form before Christmas, the Town would not have given this moderate Huddersfield team the slightest chance of picking up invaluable points in their fight to avoid the ignominy of a drop into the Second Division.

But, on the day, Huddersfield adapted themselves more ably to the conditions, which were tricky, with a carpet of snow on top of hard-frozen turf.

Not for them the tip-tap tactics on which the Town pinned their faith, but, quite successfully, they made the ball do the work, though the finishing of their forwards was little better than that of the Town front line.

### HAD ONE MARKSMAN

They won because they had one player in International right-half McGarry, who shone as a marksman, and his feat of scoring both goals from this position was an unusual one.

On the other hand the Town seemed to have no-one with a really clear idea of where the goal lay, or sufficient accuracy in shooting to cause more than a mild heart-flutter for Huddersfield.

McGARRY opened the scoring in 12 minutes with a drive from the edge of the penalty area that beat the unsighted Baynham, and although the Town had a good share of the first half play and forced numerous corners, it was not until a minute from half-time that they equalised.

That long-awaited goal came through the agency of a penalty kick, awarded when Cummins was brought down in a joint effort by Kelly (L.) and Quested, and TURNER beat Wheeler easily for Luton's first goal at Kenilworth-road of 1956 and, in aggregate, it had taken them nearly 5½ hours to do so.

From that record it is easy enough to deduce where the trouble has stemmed from and

the forward line was an incohesive affair that moved only in fits and starts.

### LACK OF CONFIDENCE

Attacks broke down repeatedly through passes being intercepted or players caught in possession and there seemed to be a complete lack of confidence in the finishing.

Opportunities created by the mastery which Adam gained over Gibson were wasted time after time because the winger's final pass was almost invariably faulty or he tried to shoot from an impossible angle when colleagues were waiting unmarked.

In vain did we look for the stream of through passes which Cummins used to serve up in the palmy days. They just were not forthcoming and MacEwan and Turner, lacking support and much out of touch anyway had a thin time.

Nor did Davies really justify the confidence that led him to be preferred to Cullen, for his finishing was no better than that of the rest of the line and a goal to the Town seldom seemed more than a remote possibility.

As it was, just when the game seemed to be petering out, McGARRY suddenly enlivened the proceedings by coming through with the ball and securing the winning goal from over 20 yards with another great drive with only five minutes left.

This brought a surge of confidence to Huddersfield and afterwards Cavanagh hit the inside of the post and Baynham saved one-handed from Davie, who was as effective a forward as the visitors possessed.

### HALF-BACK SUPPORT NOT GOOD

Part of the troubles being experienced by the Town attack may well stem from the fact that the service from the middle line is much below the quality it was.

Kelly is doing an effective enough job, but purely as a stopper, and there is no doubt that the dominance of Owen is being missed.

In holding Hickson so well, Kelly could take a lot of credit, but he has little constructive power and there was not so much of this from Pearce as had been expected.

Perhaps the switching about that has come his way has affected him, but he was not so successful as in his previous outings at wing-half.

Best distribution came from Pemberton, who was stronger in defence than in the previous match at Blackpool.

No-one in defence did better than Jones, who took a grip on the speedy Marriott and Dunne also came through capably enough against Simpson.

To be beaten twice from longish range does not look too good for a goalkeeper of Baynham's calibre, but I think he was more a victim of circumstances on both occasions.

He was efficient except that a couple of punches at high crosses were rather out of character.

**LUTON TOWN:** Baynham; Dunne, Jones; Pearce, Kelly (T), Pemberton; Davies, Turner, MacEwan, Cummins, Adam.

**HUDDERSFIELD TOWN:** Wheeler; Gibson, Kelly (L); McGarry, Taylor, Quested; Marriott, Cavanagh, Hickson, Davie, Simpson.

Referee: J. W. Malcolm. Leicester. Attendance: 15,331.