

TOP-OF-TABLE TOWN FACE TEST

BRILLIANT CUMMINS STAKES A CLAIM

But Will Policy Be To Disturb Winning Team?

By Chiltern

TURSDAY was quite a day for the Town. Not only did they realise an ambition by seeing themselves on the top of the First Division with a lead of 100 points as the only remaining 100-per-cent team, but their five teams won.

Now, with three consecutive victories behind them, they go to Wolverhampton tomorrow for what is likely to be not only their stiffest match so far but, quite probably, the most difficult assignment they will have to face this season.

A line can be taken from last Wednesday's meeting between the Town and the Wolves, with the Wolves back on the winning side after two narrow defeats at home.

Most certainly, the Town will be before the biggest crowd that has watched them this season and there is the added bonus that they will be sampling delights in a League match for the first time.

At 7 o'clock kick-off and the lights will be used for the second half.

Cummins's Brilliance Poses A Problem

FURTHER his brilliant display for the Reserves on Saturday, George Cummins, who has now won two serious trials since leaving from his knee trouble, forced his way into consideration for a place in the team.

Assuming that the player considers himself now to be 100 per cent fit, and he said after Saturday's match that he thoroughly enjoyed it, the problem facing manager Dally Duncan would be whether to change a team that has reached maximum points.

Yesterday, he was not committing himself on the point, but the manager must obviously be given time to think before a decision is made later today.

Is This The Best Time For His Return?

WHETHER a game against the Wolves, a strong, robust - tackling sides, all out for revenge, could be the best type of chance for Cummins's come-back to First Division football is something that has to be weighed carefully. With two home matches due

next Saturday and Wednesday, it could be that it will be deemed wise to delay his return, but at this point it can be nothing more than a matter for conjecture.

I know that John Groves is not completely happy about some slight back trouble he had before the season began, and about which he complained during the interval at Charlton on Saturday.

Only One Wolves Player Was Hurt

NO team announcement can be expected until this evening, but there are no serious injuries to first team players though, of course, several have had slight knocks.

Much the same position obtains at Wolverhampton where Manager Stan Cullis was not available yesterday and no team decision has been made.

An official said that few changes are expected from the side that did duty at both Luton and Blackpool and the only injury in the latter match was to left-back, Bill Shorthouse, who was off the field for five minutes, but came back and did not seem to be unduly troubled by it.

Must Guard Against High Pressure Start

IN their only previous home match this season, Wolves overcame Manchester City by 3-1, with Jimmy Murray scoring four times.

Having prevented their forwards from scoring at Kenilworth-road the Town defence will fancy their chances to repeat the dose, but they will have to guard against the high pressure start which the Wolves favour and which they tried without success last Wednesday.



GEORGE CUMMINS

was in brilliant form for the Reserves on Saturday. Will he be recalled for the Wolves match tomorrow?

Anyway, after their brilliant start, the Town should not lack confidence in their task and if they can come away with a point it would be a most satisfactory performance and a big state booster for the Cup-holders' visit on Saturday.

Looked Like Taking Complete Command

IT was not the vintage Town that we saw at Charlton with the exception of the opening quarter of an hour when they looked like taking complete command and were unlucky not to score even before Morton gave them the lead in the sixth minute from Dunne's accurate down-the-middle pass.

To all appearances at that stage, it would be all too easy for the Town, but if their supporters had visions of another big win, they received a severe jolt after 15 minutes. Then Hurst, allowed to go through from an unmarked position, put Charlton on terms with a low drive from what looked to be a near-impossible angle.

Hurst Took Stretton By Surprise

BY shooting, he foxed everybody, including Stretton, who was expecting him to square the ball which got in between the goalkeeper and the near post.

Effect was to put the Town out of their stride and things might have gone badly for them had not the far post saved them when Hurst again strode through and beat Stretton with another cracking drive.

During this spell, there was a certain amount of uneasiness in defence and not much progress by the forwards, but Charlton's shooting was weak and their ideas were too stereotyped to make them a really dangerous force.

Cullen Sized Up The Situation

AT the same time, towards the interval, things were looking none too bright from the Town point of view until, with a minute left, Cullen brought the smiles back to the faces of the fans with a neatly headed goal.

For it he deserves credit for sizing up the likely situation so accurately for, when he saw Pemberton striding down the right wing, he raced across to position himself near the far post in readiness for the centre.

This, there is no doubt, Marsh should have cut out, but he remained anchored on his goal-line and Cullen, jumping, easily nodded the ball downwards into the net.

Charlton Raids Were Met Resolutely

THAT, we thought, would settle the Town again into their smooth working, but after some early raids which looked promising enough, they seldom produced the football of which they know they are capable.

Desperate Charlton made plenty of heavy raids, met so resolutely by the Town defence that except when Stretton's brilliance was necessary to save the situation at the last ditch, there was not a great deal of danger of a point being dropped.

In the last 15 minutes, there was more activity from the forwards, with Cullen looking suitably disappointed when offside was given him after he had got the ball in, and both Morton and Turner going close.

"Like Stale Beer After Champagne"

VIEW of the officials was that the Town suffered reaction from their thriller with the Wolves three days earlier and as one said, "It was like stale beer after champagne."

Certainly, there was much of a scrambling nature in the game, played in difficult conditions after a heavy storm just before the start.

The top of the turf was greasy and slippery and the ball a good deal heavier than is usually the case at this stage of the season.

Nor do the Town usually reach their best against the more moderate footballing sides and Charlton certainly were no more than that because they showed dash and hard endeavour rather than a deal of football skill.

Modest Contribution By Inside Forwards

WHILE there was no doubt about them being the more constructive team, the Town forwards attempted to do just that little too much with the ball and were too often caught in possession.

Nor did the through pass come as often as it should which meant that the material for Turner to chase down the middle was not forthcoming.

As a result, his contribution to this match was modest, as it was in the case of Groves, who did not get into the tackle quickly enough nor produce the crisp passes on which the Town have founded their plan.

In fact, the down-the-middle route was never exploited sufficiently, especially in view of the possibilities exposed by that early goal.

Cullen Was Best Of The Forwards

MOST dangerous of the forwards was Cullen, with Morton next in line though he, with McCarthy tailing him and Hewie close in support, and lacking material, too, often found that he had a tough job on his hands.

But the centre-forward kept moving and fighting and Charlton could never afford to relax when he was around.

Some clever footwork by Adam in midfield was not allied to much authority or punch in finishing and this is a weakness to which he should pay serious attention.

Yet, though there were grounds for criticism, the solid fact remains that two more points were collected and there will be times this season when the Town will play a lot better and lose.

Dominant Owen Did A Great Service

SOME gaps which had been liable to appear in defence during the first half were eradicated afterwards and a firm start to this state of affairs was made when Abernethy marked Hurst closely in the second half and so removed the potential danger from this quarter.

Owen did his side a great service by the way in which he dominated the middle and he was continually in the picture breaking up attacks and Ayre, wander though he did, did not find much scope.

Another to come through very creditably was Pemberton, who made some very timely interventions and who was always seeking to use the ball usefully.

Town Owed Much To Stretton

WHENEVER Charlton were pressing, Shanks was always in the thick of it, covering wherever necessary and Dunne, perhaps a little out of touch early on, came back to be very consistent afterwards.

In the end, though, the Town owed a great deal to Stretton who has made a wonderful comeback to League football.

Several times he saved at point blank range, cut out just about everything that came across and never hesitated to race out of his goal even if collection of the ball meant a daring dive at an on-coming forward's feet.

CHILTERN'S FORECASTS

DIVISION I

Arsenal v West Brom
Aston Villa v Blackpool
Bolton W. v Tottenham H.
Burnley v Birmingham C.
Leeds Utd. v Chelsea
Luton T. v Manchester C.
Manchester Utd. v Portsmouth
Preston N.E. v Cardiff C.
Sheffield Wed. v Newcastle Utd.
Sunderland v Charlton Ath.
Wolves v Everton

DIVISION II

Barnsley v Sheffield Utd.
Bristol R. v Stoke C.
Fulham v Huddersfield T.
Leicester C. v Middlesbrough
Leyton Q. v Bury
Lincoln C. v West Ham
Liverpool v Grimsby T.
Notts C. v Doncaster R.
Port Vale v Bristol C.
Rotherham Utd. v Blackburn R.
Swansea T. v Nottingham Forest

FOOTBALL

LUTON TOWN F.C.
WEDNESDAY, 29th AUGUST
Football Combination

LUTON RESERVES

WEST HAM

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Kick-off 6.30 p.m.
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Hurst
LUTON TOWN: 2
Morton, Cullen
CHARLTON ATHLETIC:
Marsh; Campbell, Town-
end; Hewie, McCarthy, Ham-
mond; Hurst, Gould, Ayre,
White, Kierman.
LUTON TOWN: Stretton;
Dunne, Abernethy; Pemberton,
Owen, Shanks; Cullen,
Turner, Morton, Groves,
Adam.
Referee: A. A. Howlett,
Swindon. Attendance 19,014.

Reserves Have Made Flying Start, Too

LIKE their seniors, the Reserves have got off to a flying start, and they played attractive football on Saturday to beat Tottenham Reserves, the Combination champions, 4-1.

A bad mistake by Collier, in the first minute, let Stokes in to score a simple goal and give Spurs the lead, but Luton did not let this disconcert them, and they proceeded to fight back with spirit. Legate put them on terms in the eighth minute, and 40 minutes later Gregory converted a penalty after he had been fouled by Ryden.

Once in front, Luton never looked back. Spurs were thrown on the defensive, and Cummins and Pearce added further goals.

With any luck at all Luton would have won by a bigger margin, and in the second half play was very one sided.

Two Eire Players Shone Brightly

THERE was not a weak link in the Luton side, for Collier atoned for his first-minute mistake by making some good saves from Tottenham's experienced forwards.

Brightest stars in a strong team were George Cummins, who proved that he is A1 again by playing superb football and leading the hapless Brittan a rare dance, and Brendan McNally.

Every player likes to do well on his home debut, and McNally certainly impressed on this, his first outing before his own supporters.

He was crisp and clean in the tackle, used the ball well and, when the occasion demanded, was not afraid to join in the attack. In fact he had a hand in two of Luton's goals. Altogether this was a very satisfactory game.

Cricket In Brief . . .

CHESHUNT 33 for 2, rain stopped play (v Luton).

LUTON TOWN SUNDAY XI 86 (F Winstanley 27, P Miller 20, out 18; H Wess 5 for 20).

SOUTHGATE 87 for 1 (L Thompson not out 41, D Trevelyan not out 40).

BARTON 88 for 2 dec (C Williams not out 60), LUTON ST MARY'S 43 (D Fensome 19; Edwards 5 for 16, S Nichols 5 for 26).

CHILTERN 88 for 7 dec (E Barber 20; B Lamb 4 for 25, A Evans 3 for 36), LAPORTE 3 for 4. Rain stopped play.

DIVISION III (SOUTH)

Brentford v Watford
Brighton v Ipswich T.
Colchester Utd. v Q.P.R.
Coveントリー C. v Southend Utd.
Exeter C. v Torquay Utd.
Gillingham v Walsall
Millwall v Bournemouth
Newport City. v Plymouth A.
Norwich C. v Northampton T.
Reading v Aldershot
Southampton v Crystal Palace
Swindon T. v Shrewsbury T.

DIVISION III (NORTH)

Accrington S. v Mansfield T.
Barnsley v Chester
Carlisle Utd. v Southport
Crewe Alex. v Barrow
Dunfermline v Darlington
Gateshead v Hartlepool Utd.
Halifax T. v York C.
Rochdale v Walsingham
Scunthorpe Utd. v Hull C.
Stockport City. v Chesterfield
Tranmere R. v Oldham Ath.
Wrexham v Bradford

SCOTTISH LEAGUE CUP

Airdrieonians v Dundee
Dunfermline v St. Mirren
East Fife v Celtic
Falkirk v Hearts
Hibernian v Partick T.
Motherwell v Raith R.
Queen of South v Kilmarnock
Rangers v Aberdeen
Alloa v Dumbarton
Arbroath v Montrose
Ayr Utd. v Stenhousemuir
Berwick R. v Stranraer
Brechin C. v Hamilton
Clyde v St. Johnstone
Dundee Utd. v Third Lanark
Forfar Ath. v East Stirling
Morton v Cowdenbeath
Queen's Park v Stirling A.

SELECTIONS

TEN HOME. — Leeds, Manchester Utd., Wolves, Leicester, Liverpool, Brighton, Millwall, Southampton, Accrington, Derby.

FOUR AWAY. — Sheffield Utd., Huddersfield, Torquay, Workington.

THREE DRAWS. — Burnley, Birmingham, Lincoln v Wolves, Ham, Tranmere v Oldham.

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