

Other Critics Were:—

SURPRISED BY TOWN'S FADE-OUT

All the national newspaper critics agreed that Luton's first-half display against Manchester City was football at its brightest and best.

But they all agreed, too, that the second-half transformation was almost too complete to be believable.

However, they seemed to consider that the good points outweighed the bad, although, as one writer put it, "It was easy, in the frustration of the second half, to forget the promise of the first."

Here are some more quotes:

"At half-time Luton were three goals in the lead and apparently toying with Manchester City. . . . As they did last season while the grounds were firm, Luton have so far been playing effective and attractive football, and yesterday they soon showed that their emphasis is on attack." — "The Observer."

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"On their first-half form few teams could live with Luton, who played excellent football despite the absence of Owen and Morton." — "Sunday Express."

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"Manchester City, with an amazing miss in the closing seconds, lost the chance of picking up a point from a game in which they had made a wonderful recovery." — "Sunday Graphic."

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"That first half was so easy that Luton seemed merely to walk through it, and no one was prepared for the transformation that came immediately after the interval." — "News of the World."

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"A fighting second-half rally by Manchester City . . . almost brought them a point. Not that there should have been any Luton scare." — "Reynolds News."

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"This Luton team can move like sprint champions. But like sprint champions they are spent too soon. At the final whistle it was Luton and their fans who heaved sighs of relief." — "The People."

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"Luton's method is to go for the quick knock-out, and, if the effort caused them to flag in the second half of this occasion, it usually pays dividends." — "Sunday Dispatch."

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"City's soccer looked stagnant compared with Luton's pacy, accurate play. Luton, at full strength, can still be a match for the best." — "Sunday Pictorial."

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"At half-time Luton appeared to have this match all sewn up. They were three goals in front, had played football superior to that of the City's in every respect, and thoroughly deserved their lead. But what a transformation after the interval." — "Empire News and Sunday Chronicle."

CLASSIC FOOTBALL THEN A DECLINE

56/57

Defensive Mistakes An Aid To City's Rally

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 3, MANCHESTER CITY 2

SELDOM has the character of a match changed so much as did this one at Kenilworth-road on Saturday. For 45 minutes, the Town in almost majestic style were giving the Cup-holders a football lesson.

Then, with only nine minutes of the second half gone, the whole situation altered completely and, in the end, the Town were hard pressed to keep the points, and, in point of fact, a little fortunate to do so.

Right from the time when PEMBERTON scored after eight minutes, following a cannily-headed back pass from Pearce, the Town called the tune, and their crisp, accurate football exposed ominous gaps in the City's defence.

ADAM obtained a second goal from an acute angle after 23 minutes, and when TURNER put on a third when he took a through pass from Pemberton in his stride 20 minutes later, the Town were waltzing home and looked a good thing to give their goal average a real lift.

But the whole situation changed after two quick blows by the City in the opening minutes of the second half. With four minutes gone Streten lost possession of the

ball after vainly seeking room in which to clear, and McADAMS made the most of a gift opportunity.

RIGHT BACK INTO THE GAME

Five minutes later, with Town defenders arguing instead of paying their whole attention to the game, Revie carved out a chance for HAYES, who had no difficulty in putting the City right back into the game.

The quality of the Town's football made the first half a classic, but they lost much of it during the amazing transformation that the second half brought.

From looking a completely beaten team without a lot of fight, the City, encouraged by those two snap goals, worried the Town a lot, and in the last minute they nearly completed what would have been a remarkable rally when McAdams had a shot diverted inches wide after Streten had made another mistake.

After the good football we had seen earlier, the second half was a sharp disappointment, and it was not helped by the fact that there was some evidence of frayed tempers and also by the tendency that the Town forwards showed for getting offside.

DID NOT HELP THE CAUSE

That Cummins allowed his feelings to get the better of him did not help the Town's cause, because, as the "needle" increased, their football deteriorated and Cummins's clever footwork had been one of the reasons for their first-half superiority.

However, there was a fade-out by the Town forwards in the second period and it was all in marked contrast to their smooth, fast-moving work earlier.

Only Turner looked consistently like obtaining the goal that would have relieved much of the tension and their play was punctuated by an epidemic of misplaced passes, many of them by Adam, who thus spoilt an improved first-half display.

Before the interval, Pearce, though lacking punch, did by no means badly as the leader, for he kept the line moving and was never afraid of hard work. Again, there was good understanding between Cullen and Turner and the strange thing was that much of this excellence should disappear in the last 45 minutes.

A DIFFERENT STORY

Before the City hit back for the first time, the Town defence was in no sort of trouble, coping easily with the City's movements that were so deliberate that it seemed that they were almost in slow motion.

Afterwards, when the real hope of salvaging a point from what had looked like being a very substantial wreck presented itself, there was a different story, and the defence, missing once again the influence of Owen, had a hard job to hold on.

Yet Kelly, in a stopping role, came through quite successfully and Pemberton shone with the excellence of his distribution and his interceptions.

Much of the switching by the City forwards affected their right flank, which made Aherne's task rather more onerous than that of Dunne, who succeeded in keeping Clarke very quiet.

Shanks got through a lot of work and Streten's two mistakes blotted what was otherwise a most workmanlike display.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Dunne, Aherne; Pemberton, Kelly, Shanks; Cullen, Turner, Pearce, Cummins, Adam.

MANCHESTER CITY: Savage; Leivers, Little; Barnes, Ewing, Paul; Johnstone, Hayes, Revie, McAdams, Clarke.

Referee: P. F. Power, York.
Attendance: 21,625.