

Town Forwards Had No Cup-tie Punch

Villa's Tough Defence Looked Impregnable

COURAGEOUS FIGHT THE ONLY SOLACE

By Chiltern

ASTON VILLA 2, LUTON TOWN 0

Of P interest of the Town, all too brief this season, ended at Villa Park yesterday, and there was no luck story about it.

Villa were the stronger, but the Town defence did extraordinarily well, after taking something of a hammering in the first half, to hold out until the 60th minute.

The second goal—both were scored by Dixon—finally settled it, but before that happened there had not seemed much hope of the Town's equalising. Their forwards, although they had more of the play in the second half than before the interval, could not make much of this tough, strong Villa defence, and the number of times they brought goalkeeper Sims into action was strictly limited.

Once in each half Turner went close to scoring, but that apart, there were few anxious moments for the Villa fans, and although McLeod worked himself into the ground and worried Dugdale quite a lot, the forward line did not show much punch.

Not a lot came from the and, generally, Town's attacks took too long to develop, and unmistakably were halted before the penalty area.

The defence did its part well, with Kelly showing considerable improvement on his display of Saturday, and he had the measure of Pace from start to finish.

There was little sign of McParland blossoming forth as the match-winner, because Duane held him so closely, and Stretton made a number of excellent saves. Both Pearce and Shanks were kept at full stretch and did a tremendous amount of work, although they never really succeeded in dominating the middle of the field.

McNally was again noticeable

for his hard tackling, but even so, Smith managed to be one of the danger men of the Villa front line. It really was a disappointment from the Town point of view, because the forwards seldom played the football of which they are capable, and this Villa defence looked impregnable for the most part.

Again it was a tough, hard struggle with many minor infringements, but one consolation that the Town can take is that they fought courageously.

The teams were the same as on Saturday.

Estimated attendance: 30,000.

Although Villa Park pitch was heavy in the middle, where it had been liberally sanded, as had been the goal areas, it was a picture compared with the mudbath we had at Luton on Saturday, and the Town players were very pleased by the improved conditions.

Villa were dangerous in the opening minutes, and Smith headed just over.

How The Goals Came

DIXON for Aston Villa after 60 minutes.
DIXON for Aston Villa after 82 minutes.

Then, with the Villa pressure continuing, Stretton, harassed by Pace, dropped the ball but made a good recovery.

Town attempts to make ground in these early stages were frustrated by some keen tackling.

Improvement by the Town followed, and Villa's defence once or twice looked uneasy when the pressure was on, but no shot reached Sims.

As had been expected, the middle of the field was cutting up quite considerably.

A weak shot by Cullen, who was wandering a lot, was the first positive Luton scoring attempt, and then Pace missed a chance for Villa by failing to get hold of the ball properly after a smart movement begun by Smith had left him well placed.

A steady spell of Villa pressure, in which Smith shone, had the Town in trouble in a terrific scramble in front of goal, and then when the Town broke away by a solo dash by Morton, Dugdale and Sims between them cleared.

VILLA MORE IMPRESSIVE

Villa continued to look the more impressive, without bothering Stretton much.

Shanks got up limping after a collision with Crowther, who received a knock on the head, but both were soon mobile again.

Town were finding difficulty in reaching Villa's penalty area.

Shanks was pulled down unceremoniously when trying to break through, and best shot for Town so far was one by Davies that cannoned off a wall of defenders.

Sims had to jump high to

punch away from Morton, and then when the Villa broke away there were terrific claims for a penalty when McNally tackled Smith, who went headlong and had to have attention. The referee waved aside appeals, and Smith had to be helped to the touch-line for further attention.

Quite a furious Villa attack came immediately after this, but there had been remarkably little shooting by both teams.

A fine run by McLeod suddenly worried the Villa, and it was as well for them that Aldis was there to cut off his centre.

NARROW MISS BY TURNER

Turner missed the post by inches with a quickly-taken shot from the edge of the penalty area. Someone deflected the ball in flight just enough to send it to safety, though whether it was the outstretched Sims who got a hand to it I could not tell.

Smith returned in time to play a leading part in a Villa raid, which Kelly checked by tackling Pace. Then, with play still around the Town penalty area, Pearce stepped in smartly to stop McParland. For some minutes there had to be steady defensive work by the Town, but it could not be said that the Villa really looked likely scorers.

Then came a narrow escape when McParland came right through the middle, shot as Stretton dived desperately, and sent the ball a couple of feet wide of the vacant net.

ANOTHER CLAIM FOR A PENALTY

Another great howl for a penalty came when Pearce floored Smith, but again the referee was having none of it.

The Town's breakaway were now few and far between, and in one of them Turner was pulled up for offside, though he did not look as if he was.

Then the referee gave Villa a free kick when Pearce brought down Smith, and another when McNally fouled the same player. The first brought a terrific drive, just wide, from Lynn, and the second, a lob by Smith that Stretton punched firmly away.

The referee had a word to say to McNally, and this was again a tough game with the Villa still having more of the play, but the Town defence was putting up a sturdy show.

A somewhat comic situation developed when Shanks obviously pushed Sewell, and the referee gave a free-kick against the inside-right to derisive shouts from the crowd.

TOWN FALL BACK ON DEFENCE

Stretton was in action again, punching one-handed a centre by Smith, and the Town forwards, with the exception of McLeod and Davies, were now back helping in defence.

From a corner placed low to the feet of Dixon, only a daring dive by Stretton on to the inside-forward's feet prevented Villa from going ahead, and with the pressure continuing, there was another corner, hotly disputed by the Town. This was headed in by McParland, and the ball curled just over the bar, with Stretton badly obstructed, finishing in the back of the net.

Yet another free kick came when Kelly bundled Pace off the ball, and this McParland drove powerfully straight into Stretton's hands. The Town defence was certainly taking a hammering now. Half-time:

ASTON VILLA 0
LUTON TOWN 0

In Villa's first raid of the second half Kelly stepped in decisively to stop a shot by Seward, and then he saved the Town from going into arrears when, on the line, and with Stretton beaten, he stopped a shot by Smith.

Villa thought Kelly had handled, but again the referee's decision was against them.

In the early part of the second half the Town forwards were seeing more of the ball than they had previously, but their moves were taking too long to develop. One that didn't was that in which Shanks slipped into the inside-left position to take a pass from Morton. Unfortunately, with the Villa defence pulled out of position, he squared the ball straight to Dugdale. However, the Town were playing better in attack, and Davies shot just over from McLeod's pass.

VILLA TAKE THE LEAD

When Villa attacked again, McNally had to give a corner to stop Pace, and from this Pace glanced the ball with his head, narrowly wide.

Then, with exactly an hour gone, the Villa took the lead. As on Saturday, it was DIXON who drew first blood, and again it was with a header that flashed the ball past Stretton from a cross from the right by Pace. The Villa certainly deserved their lead, and to me the wonder was that the goal had been

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delayed so long. Yet the Town hit back and Shanks nearly put them back on terms with a deceptive lob for which Sims was too far out of his goal, but somehow he managed to push it over one-handed.

This solid Villa defence was seldom allowing the Town to reach shooting distance, and Villa's lead, slender though it was, looked safe enough.

DIXON SCORES AGAIN

Then, with 82 minutes gone Villa, apparently made the game safe when DIXON shot a second goal after Stretton had saved at point-blank range from Smith.

Turner nearly put the Town back in the game when, somehow, from on the deadline, he hooked in a cross by McLeod, and Sims got down just as the ball was about to creep inside the near post.

Davies was kicked on the head when Lynn raised his foot to gather a head-high ball, but he needed only brief attention, and from the free kick Turner brought Sims into action. Result:

ASTON VILLA 2
LUTON TOWN 0