

STRANGERS TO GOALS IN LEAGUE MATCHES

Ideal Opportunity Of Mastering 'Babes' Missed

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 0, MANCHESTER UNITED 2

IF ever a team had an ideal opportunity of jumping in to take advantage of the Busby Babes' additional commitments in the European Cup it was the Town on Saturday.

Here were United, battered and bruised after their experience in Madrid only two days before, maybe mindful of important events in future and fielding three reserves.

On the other hand, it might be said that the Town had come through a mettlesome match against Bedford, and also were lacking key-men such as Owen and Dunne.

Even so, the dice were loaded in their favour and a goal in the first half might very easily have clinched a victory that would have set United struggling to achieve that long-sought-after objective of the double.

However, these days, goals and the Town in League matches are strangers. Their forwards, lacking confidence skill in approach and finishing power are no sort of a scoring force, with the result that although they had the better of the first-half play, the occasions when they seemed likely to get the ball into the United net seemed few and far between.

Cullen certainly went close with a rising shot, and Brown headed not all that far wide but, in the main, it was a mid-field struggle which was being dictated by two powerful sets of wing-halves.

So diffident were United in the first half that at half-time there seemed not a great deal of anxiety about the Town coming out of this match with at least one point.

That, at least, was the way in which we were thinking during the interval because Manchester seemed to be carrying a heavy hangover from their Spanish expedition.

READJUSTMENT OF IDEAS

Readjustment of ideas came seven minutes after the resumption when an apparently harmless passing movement between Edwards and Goodwin suddenly brought a well-placed lob from the latter.

This, Kelly misjudged and TAYLOR, whose role had been inconspicuous previously, was on the spot to breast down the ball and drive it past Baynham from near point-blank range.

That settled United down and, afterwards, there was a "deep red line" look about their defence. Whenever the Town attacked in strength which was all too rare because of their muddled, hesitant approach work, the penalty area seemed to be packed with red shirts.

Davies, Adam and Brown forced Wood to make good saves, but that was just about the measure of the Town's

attempts to bring the scores level again.

In the main, through the agency of their powerful half-backs and not so much through their much-vaunted forward line, United went serenely along and they sealed what was a vital victory for them 14 minutes from the end when TAYLOR headed a second goal.

FOLLOWED A FREE-KICK

This time, it followed a free-kick excellently placed by Berry after Kelly had fouled the centre-forward. Up went Taylor, with Kelly badly positioned, and headed the ball well wide of Baynham's left hand.

Remainder of the proceedings were merely academic and United had won two points without appearing to exert themselves unduly.

The more one thinks about this match, the more one comes to the conclusion that here was one encounter that was here for the winning.

However, the Town showed a continuance of their hit and miss tactics in attack, with both Turner and Brown again below par, Davies trying his hardest to make the most of meagre support and all three often getting in each other's way.

WING-HALVES THE STARS

Recalled again, Cullen was still far too unprogressive and Adam was the winger with the greater potentiality.

Stars of the Town team without doubt were Morton and Pearce, non-stop workers, who tried to galvanise this weak attack into motion and Kelly's contribution, capable this apart, was marred by the blame that had to be attached to him for both goals.

Scheme to switch Jones to the left to cope with Berry worked out very well because the England winger was not much in the game and McNally held Scanlon very well until the young reserve began to go on the outside soon after the start of the second half. Then, the full-back found that he had his hands full.

From Baynham there was another demonstration of how to cut out high, dangerous centres, but direct shooting was at such premium in this match that he really did not have a great deal to do.

However, he was powerless to do anything about a drive by Edwards that rocketed off the inside of the post and sent the ball back into play just before the end.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Jones; Morton, Kelly, Pearce; Cullen, Turner, Davies, Brown, Adam.

MANCHESTER UNITED: Wood; Foulkes, Byrne, Goodwin, Blanchflower, Edwards; Berry, Viollet, Taylor, Charlton, Scanlon. Referee: P. G. Brandwood, Kidderminster.

Attendance: 21,227.

Other Critics Had: ALIBIS FOR UNITED, NOT LUTON

"Limp," "luke-warm," "sterile," "scrappy," "too bad to be true," "completely lack-lustre" — these were just a few of the many uncomplimentary adjectives used about Luton's attack on Saturday.

National newspaper critics were all disappointed with the form shown by Manchester United, but all agreed that the tough match of the previous Thursday, when United played Real Madrid in Spain, was an alibi.

But they could find no alibis for the Town.

Here are some quotes:

"Manchester United looked exactly what they were — a team which two days previously had played a hard game in Madrid Against a side as sterile as Luton, however, the champions still had quite enough in hand to win." *The Observer*.

"Through the first half Luton held their own with no trouble at all and could have scored a couple of goals had their forwards shown any punch at all." *Sunday Express*.

"The Busby boys didn't touch champion form. But even Manchester's mediocrity was too much for lank, limp Luton." *The People*.

"Luton will find themselves in relegation trouble if they don't show considerable improvement in the holiday matches." *Empire News and Sunday Chronicle*.

"Take into account an ice-cool United defence which coped easily with a luke-warm Luton attack, and you have the story of a disappointing game." *Reynolds News*.

"Due to the efforts of the wing-halves Luton came back into the game. But their forwards, now without a goal in five consecutive League matches, just did not have the punch." *News of the World*.

"United were too much for this scrappy Luton side." *Sunday Dispatch*.

"Luton's attack was too bad to be true, despite some excellent prompting by wing halves Bob Morton and Reg. Pearce." *Sunday Pictorial*.

"Manchester looked a bit jaded — understandably so — but not half so jaded as a completely lack-lustre Luton." *Sunday Graphic*.