

BRILLIANT TOWN ROSE FINELY TO THE OCCASION

CHANGES WORKED LIKE A CHARM

Hawkes Took His Chance: Groves Schemed Well

BY CHILTERN

THROUGH the years, there has been a tendency on the part of the Town to strike their best form when they have been meeting the better brand of opposition. Time and again, we have seen them rise to the occasion and confound the prophets with a brilliant victory against the odds.

A lot of people did not give much for their chances of being the first to defeat West Bromwich in an away match, especially after that five goals defeat the previous Saturday, but how badly wrong they were proved.

PLAYING their most brilliant football of the season, the Town were full value for their four goals margin, and it must have done Manager Dally Duncan's heart good to see how smoothly his changes on the left flank worked.

There could scarcely have been bigger ordeal for Hawkes than to have to face such a dangerous wing pair as Griffin and Robson in his first League game, but this player, who has been kept in obscurity for so long, turned in a first-rate performance.

Yet he might so very easily have left the club during the close season.

Hawkes's Display Was A Real Tonic

SO well did Hawkes play that he must now be rated first choice for the position, a radical change of fortune so far as he is concerned.

Rightly, he adopted forthright methods, got into the tackle without waste of time, and continually made crisp clearances that sent the ball well out of the danger zone.

After the halting, over-deliberate style of play we have been seeing in this position, Hawkes's performance was a real tonic, and there was none of the use of the too short pass that so often got the defence into trouble in the recent past.

Groves Filled His Role To A Nicety

SO, too, did the other change bring a marked improvement, with Groves filling the role in which he was cast to a nicety, once he had settled down.

In midfield he did a tremendous amount of work, manipulated the ball cleverly, and was always seeking to push it through.

As a result, Brown and Turner were largely relieved of the necessity of coming back to forage for the ball and were enabled to concentrate on being a double-pronged threat to the West Bromwich defence.

There has never been any doubt

never has been in the same class as Turner, to my way of thinking, was rarely in it.

Even though he was not quite at his best, Turner thrived on the supply of through passes he received and was always a potential source of danger.

But, perhaps the biggest improvement was at outside-right where Adam produced form well in advance of anything he has shown previously this season.

Nearly always, he is good in approach but so often his finishing lets him down.

Adam's First Goal Of The Season

ON this occasion it did not and his made-to-measure centre from which Brown headed his goal was a typical example of the way in which he got the ball into the goalmouth.

Refreshing to see such service coming from a Luton wingman because it makes all the difference in the world to the inside men.

More than that, it was Adam who opened the scoring after 25 minutes when McLeod went determinedly into a tackle on Howe, came out with the ball and Sanders could not wholly cut off the centre which went to Adam, who had closed in and he swept the ball into the net. This was his first League goal of the season.

Two Hammer Blows For The Albion

THE excitement this caused was dampened a little four minutes later when almost for the only time in the match the Town defence was caught wide open and Robson raced through the middle to shoot in as Baynham came out.

However, West Bromwich were not long on level terms before they were struck two hammer blows.

First came from Brown after 32 minutes with a header that rocketed the ball into the net from Adam's centre.

Saunders went up with Brown, but the centre-forward's head was there first. Both were slightly injured in the duel.

No Answer To Town's Speed And Accuracy

THREE minutes later, Turner obtained the first of his goals, making no bones about crashing the ball in from close range after Groves had lobbed it across.

At this stage the West Bromwich defence had no answer to the speed and accuracy of the Town forwards and Kennedy was continually bothered by the thrusts of Brown.

It was as the result of one of these that the Town gained their fourth goal on the stroke of half-time when the centre-half, seeking to prevent Brown reaching a through pass by Pearce, turned the ball back well wide of Sanders and into the corner of the net.

Albion Were Innocuous In Front Of Goal

ALTHOUGH West Bromwich had quite a lot of the early play in the second half, the Town never relaxed the grip they had obtained and, certainly, the



West Bromwich goalkeeper, Sanders, catches a long centre from Jimmy Adam, as Allan Brown rushes in.—R2271R

visitors did not look as if they possessed an all-international inside-forward trio.

In front of goal they were innocuous and the covering of the Town defence was so good that few clear-cut openings came their way.

The last success of the Town after 64 minutes was typical of their new-found directness, with Groves passing to Brown, who, with Turner tearing down the middle, made his pass with slide-rule accuracy so that the inside-right was left with only Sanders to beat.

Town Middle Line Was Dominating

BEFORE the match, we were saying that this would be a battle of two powerful half-back lines, especially as West Bromwich's three have been boosted so highly this season.

However, it was the Town's middle line who did the dominating, with brilliant showings from Morton and Pearce in which they simply snuffed the West Brom inside-forwards out of the game.

Pearce was perhaps a little more prominent and some of the things he did in the second half almost came in the "cheeky" category, so supremely confident was he.

Throughout, he covered a tremendous amount of ground and two of the goals were a direct result of his work.

Allen Was Well Held By Owen

HOWEVER, Morton did everything that was required of him in top-class style and Owen completed the superiority of the middle line by making a great job of holding Allen, who is the man on whom West Bromwich mostly rely to make the scoring openings for his colleagues.

Hawkes fitted neatly into the general scheme of things and, with Horobin receiving very little change out of Dunne, the defence had a sound, resilient look, with

the covering always immaculate and Baynham, whose handling was again very good, was not kept all that busy.

Moved The Ball About In The Mud

ON this form, the Town would beat any side at Kenilworth-road and they did the right thing by moving the ball about on the muddy surface and using the quick pass accurately right from a defensive position, with the result that West Brom found difficulty in making tackles.

Much of their midfield work was brilliantly executed and this, plus the way in which the chances

were snapped up, made it a joy day for the Town fans.

Brown Was Always A Danger

IT cannot be merely coincidence that Brown has had two splendid matches since Groves has been playing alongside him, and he continually worried the opposition by his strong, speedy runs, and he distributed the ball finely.

Indeed, if this sort of service can come his way regularly, then the Town can forget that they have had a centre-forward problem.

Forward who was not quite up to the standard of the others was McLeod, who was opposed

For The Records

LUTON TOWN 5
Adam, Brown, Turner (2),
Kennedy (own goal).
WEST BROMWICH A. . . 1
Robson

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Hawkes; Morton, Owen, Pearce; Adam, Turner, Brown, Groves, McLeod.

W.B.A.: Sanders; Howe, Williams; Setters, Kennedy, Barlow; Griffin, Robson, Allen, Kevan, Horobin.
Referee: N. C. Taylor, Westbury.

Attendance: 15,340.

by Howe, one of the few West Bromwich players to play up to his reputation.

McLeod found him very difficult to pass, but he earns marks from me for his determination and the way in which he never shirked a tackle.

Where Were The Missing Fans?

UNFORTUNATELY, McLeod bruised a knee in the closing stages, but it is expected that he will be fit by the week-end, when the Town begin their hectic holiday programme of four matches in eight days.

The one disappointing feature about Saturday was the size of the attendance, which dropped to the 15,000 mark again, and only twice has there been a smaller crowd on the ground this season.

Difficult to discover just why an attraction like West Bromwich did not draw more support, but the whole question of the missing football enthusiasts at Luton still remains wrapped in mystery.

In any event, those who stayed away missed a great game and a tremendous Town victory.