

Charlton sparkles for champions

By an Old International

Manchester United 3, Luton Town 0

The feature of Manchester United's comfortable 3-0 victory over Luton Town at Old Trafford on Christmas Day was a sparkling display at inside forward by Charlton—the self-appointed and irrepressible leader of the revels.

Though he himself only scored one goal—a rather lucky, though violent, in-off caused by the ball striking a defender—he was the mainspring of most attacks, the victim of the alleged trip which led to the award of Edwards's shattering penalty kick, and the instigator of the furious bombardment which so softened up the Luton defences that Taylor was left eventually with a simple opening for the third goal. Others did their share, of course, in taking advantage of this weakened Luton team from which Owen, Martin, and Turner were all missing, but none could hold a candle to Charlton for fire, enthusiasm, and enterprise.

It should be noted that United's remodelled forward line has so far only encountered weak teams so that too much need not be read into its performance. It has been able to enjoy the maximum support from its wing half backs and that means a lot when Colman and Edwards are at the peak of their form. Nevertheless it has given the greatest pleasure if only because of its go-ahead business-like air and its willingness to have a go at every conceivable opportunity.

The men who would testify feelingly to the striking power of United's young forwards would be Luton's backs, Dunne and Hawkes, and goalkeeper Baynham—especially Baynham. This most graceful of English goalkeepers had a most thankless task. He was beaten by a blistering penalty kick from Edwards which he never saw; he was beaten by a shot from Charlton which he did see, and actually covered, but which was diverted out of his reach by an accidental collision with someone's ribs; and when finally Taylor beat him he was lying prostrate after being shot down by what must have seemed to him a burst of gun-fire in gangster warfare. Yes, Baynham was the hero of this match from the Luton point of view and he will remember with great respect the strength in the limbs of a boy called Charlton.

Gregg deceived

As for Gregg, he too showed that he can misjudge high centres from the wings with the best of them, though his two most glaring mistakes, committed when he was six or seven yards out of goal, were spared full exposure by the failure of the Luton forwards to profit by them. Gregg is a goalkeeper in the Bartram tradition. He loathes inactivity, craves for bustle and excitement, and is not averse to going to the uttermost limits of the penalty area in search of it. For the time being his roaming adventures are regarded as a novelty, a harmless display of high spirits, and long may they remain so. There will be time enough to stress the foolhardy aspect of them if and when Gregg has the misfortune to give goals away in any number.

Morgans plays the right-wing game as "Jocky" Simpson used to play it, depending on plain commonsense and meticulous accuracy in the use of the ball rather than on showy and intricate footwork. But he has still a long way to go before he can be said to have supplanted Berry. And the same may be said of the competition for places between Scanlon and Pegg.

MANCHESTER UNITED.—Gregg; Foulkes, Byrne; Colman, Jones, Edwards; Morgans, Charlton, Taylor, Violett, Scanlon.

LUTON TOWN.—Baynham; Dunne, Hawkes; Pacey, Kelly, Pearce; Adam, Grove, Gregory, Brown, McLeod.