

BLACKPOOL WAS NOT SO BRACING FOR THE TOWN

FIRST HALF SHINE SOON RUBBED OFF Forwards Again Failed To Find Goal Punch

By Chiltern

PROBLEMS facing the Town are mounting fast. They are in a spell which is not quite so bad as that which they struck during the January and February of their first season in Division I when, with Sid Owen out through injury in that ill-fated Cup-tie with Leicester City, they met with six consecutive League defeats. After the latest setback at Blackpool, their run of non-success this season has now reached five and there must be some measure of improvement from the forward line if they are to end it against Dally Duncan's hard-hitting Blackburn Rovers' team next Saturday.

DALLY was in touch with the Town party during their stay at Blackpool and he will be without his star right wing pairing of Brian Douglas and Pete Dobing. The former was due to see a specialist yesterday about the knee he damaged a few weeks ago and which is not making the hoped-for progress, while Dobing is required for an Army representative match. But, back to Saturday's match. Of which 45 minutes are the Town selection committee to take note when they meet to choose their side for Saturday? The first half suggested that the Town had regained their smoothness in approach, at any rate, but there was no noticeable improvement in the quality of the shooting.

Worried By The Offside Trap

HOWEVER, movements of the type that should lead to goals were produced, but a couple of chances went astray and they found the operation of the offside trap consistently by Blackpool a tremendous obstacle. There were times when I thought Blackpool received the benefit of the doubt in hair-line decisions and at least two occasions when I thought, along with the Town players, that they had been hard done by. However, this sort of trap can be sprung if the right tactics are used, but Blackpool got away with it most of the time. In addition to these unattractive tactics, Blackpool were very strong, covering well and dominant in the air.

Had Early Chance To Lift Morale

THERE was a lot to admire about the Town's football in the first half, when they produced much that was cultured and effective until it came to the point of finishing off the work. An early goal that would have lifted the morale of this struggling

Brown, who was following up. Only other really clear-cut chance fell to Turner, but his shot was kept out comfortably enough by Farm. While this clever work by the Town was going on, Blackpool's forwards, with Matthews missing, were struggling to find some rhythm.

Blackpool Goal Came Out Of The Blue

MOSTLY it was through dash that they tried to make progress, but they did have a couple of chances that should have been accepted.

One went to Barnes and the other to Charnley, but each time the finish was weak. Just as it was beginning to look as if the Town, even if they had not gained the lead they had earned, would reach half-time on level terms, there came a Blackpool goal out of the blue.

There was nothing in the early work to suggest such a happening, but Perry gained the ball from a throw-in on the Town right and, with the Town defence not well positioned, Mudie jumped high to head his centre wide of Baynam.

One Setback Assumes Great Proportions

AS things turned out, that was the end of the story for the Town, who never looked the same constructive side afterwards, and the second half was a bad one for them, in which they really looked the part of strugglers.

One goal should not have been enough to enable Blackpool to get so much on top, but such is the lack of power in attack these days, that even a minor setback like this assumes great proportions.

When the second goal came after 55 minutes, then the game was as good as finished because the Town never even gave a hint that they could materially improve their position.

Crashing Shot Gave Perry Dramatic Goal

FAILURE to clear by Terry Kelly led to the ball being picked up by Durie, and his through pass went to Charnley, who, although challenged, forced the ball through from close range.

CHILTERN'S FORECASTS

DIVISION I	
Arsenal v Aston Villa	
Birmingham v Blackpool	
Bolton v Newcastle	
Burnley v Tottenham	
Everton v Portsmouth	
Leeds v Nottingham Forest	
Leicester v Wolves	
Luton Town v Blackburn	
Man. City v West Ham	
Preston N.E. v Man. United	
West Brom. v Chelsea	
DIVISION II	
Bristol Rovers v Sheffield Utd	
Derby v Brighton	
Fulham v Charlton	
Grimsby v Rotherham	
Leeds U. v Grimsby	
Lincoln v Bristol City	
Scunthorpe v Liverpool	
Sheffield W. v Middlesbrough	
Stoke v Huddersfield	
Sunderland v Cardiff	
Swansea v Barnsley	
DIVISION III	
Accrington v Reading	
Bradford C. v Plymouth	

Brentford v Rochdale	
Chesterfield v Norwich C.	
Hull v Colchester	
Hull v Doncaster	
Mansfield v Bury	
Newport v Bournemouth	
Norths. Co. v Southampton	
Southampton v Stockport	
Swindon v Q.P.R.	
Wrexham v Tranmere	
DIVISION IV	
Aldershot v Bradford	
Barrow v Northampton	
Cardiff v Crewe	
Coventry v Hartlepool	
Darlington v Chester	
Exeter v Southport	
Gateshead v York	
Gillingham v Torquay	
Millwall v Port Vale	
Oldham v Workington	
Shrewsbury v Watford	
Walsall v Crystal Palace	
SCOTTISH LEAGUE	
DIVISION I	
Aberdeen v Motherwell	
Airdrieonians v St. Mirren	
Celtic v Stirling Albion	
Dunfermline v Dundee	
Falkirk v Third Lanark	
Hibernian v Partick Thistle	
Kilmarnock v Raith Rovers	
Queen of the South v Clyde	
Rangers v Hearts	
DIVISION II	
Berwick v Montrose	
Brechin v East Stirling	
Dundee U. v Albion Rovers	
East Fife v Dumbarton	
Forfar Ath. v Ayr United	
Hamilton Acad. v St. Johnstone	
Morton v Arbroath	
Queen's Park v Cowdenbeath	
Stranraer v Alloa	
SELECTIONS	
TEN HOME. — Arsenal, Bolton, West Brom., Fulham, Sheffield Wed., Stoke, Brentford, Southampton, Coventry, Hartlepool.	
FOUR AWAY. — Wolves, Liverpool, Plymouth, Port Vale.	
THREE DRAWS. — Birmingham v Blackpool; Lincoln v Bristol City; Chesterfield v Norwich.	

For The Records

BLACKPOOL: Mudie, Charnley, Perry 3
LUTON TOWN: Baynam, Dunne, Hawkes; Kelly (1), Owen, Groves; Blagburn, Turner, Brown, Cummings, Adam.
Referee: E. T. Jennings. Stourbridge. Attendance: 14,146.

and his shot was deflected by the foot of a defender.

When Perry scored the most dramatic goal the Blackpool crowd will see this season nine minutes later, it looked as if the Town were in for a real drubbing.

Perry, who has been having a thin time as a marksman this season, collected a headed clearance by Dunne, got into his stride and from 30 yards crashed the ball into the top far corner of the net, with Baynam never having a chance of saving it.

Blackpool Made Use Of Their Chances

TO Brown fell the chance that might have increased the Town's confidence in staging a successful rally, but, from the region of the penalty spot, he pulled the ball wide with his left foot.

So there it was, Blackpool made use of their chances, the Town did not, and the home side looked altogether more assured once they had got their heads in front.

There were opportunities in the first half for the Town to have gone much of the way towards ending their dismal spell.

From that showing, other than the finishing, some hope for the future can be drawn, but after the interval they did not suggest it.

Wing-halves' Absence A Handicap

NATURALLY, it was a considerable handicap for them to have to go into this match without both their regular wing-halves, Morton and Pacey.

It seems pretty certain that the former, who had recovered sufficiently from his attack of laryngitis to attend the match, will be fit for Saturday, but there will be a doubt about Pacey until late in the week.

Particularly, I feel Morton was missed for his strength in attack and mobility in defence.

That is not intended to decry the work of Terry Kelly, brought in at the eleventh hour in a position which he does not occupy regularly.

Added Strain Put On The Defence

WITHOUT being too ambitious, though he did try to use the ball, I thought he was effective in the first half, but rather suffered in the general decline of the team as a whole afterwards.

At the same time, the covering was not so good as when Morton is playing.

Groves did a tremendous amount of work in defence and kept Mudie quiet, without being completely dominant, but he is a capable wing-half deputy.

Of course, with the forwards in this goal-shy mood, there is added strain on the defence, and Owen continues to carry a heavy burden.

Matthews' Absence Was A Relief

MOSTLY he was on top of Charnley, but he was forced to do more covering than should have been the case.

Not at all certain under pressure at times was Dunne, who was a bit erratic in his clearances and he is not at his best at the moment.

It was probably a relief to Hawkes that he was not called upon to face Matthews, and he found Barnes, a straightforward player, a different proposition altogether.

These are the sort of tactics Hawkes can combat comfortably, and he stemmed much of the threat from this quarter.

There was nothing Baynam could do about any of the goals and he was confident enough and

competent enough in all his work.

Cummings Was Probing All The Time

SO we come to the forward-line story which, during the first half, I hoped would be altogether different from the recent past.

Then, some brilliant midfield work and probing by Cummings always looked dangerous, and he continually tried to find gaps in the home defence by means of plugging the ball through to Brown and Turner.

Unfortunately, there was not the desired result, and although Turner's dashes looked promising, the dual effect of the off-side trap and the generally good covering prevented them from becoming any more than that.

Bingham Was The Most Consistent

WITH the tables turned, Cummings was not so prominent

in the second half, and it was left to Bingham to earn the tag of the most consistent forward, taking the match as a whole.

After the interval he was almost the only source of danger to Blackpool, though Turner tried to live things up when he switched into the middle, without meeting much success.

The main problem is still lack of drive and punch in the middle, with Brown signally unable to hit his last season's form.

There had been hopes that he would do so in this match against his former colleagues, but he seldom looked the part of a goal-scorer.

What Will Be This Week's Answer?

FOR one thing, Gratix gave him very little scope, and the quick burst which used to be so dangerous was missing.

Another disappointment was Adam, who, even taking into

account the fact that he did not receive as much of the ball as in recent matches, made few openings.

Just what the answer will be when the team for Saturday is announced can only be a matter for conjecture, but the Town cannot afford to go on losing matches much longer or they will slip down the table very quickly.

Ideally, the answer would be the injection of new blood in attack, but the question is, where is it to come from?

Reserves Learn Their Lesson

AT last Luton Reserves seem to have learned an elementary Soccer lesson: That hard, first-time shooting brings goals.

They shot hard and often against Portsmouth Reserves, and had they not slowed down the tempo in the early stages of the second half, their victory margin would have been far more handsome than 4-1.

Portsmouth were out-schemed, out-paced and generally outclassed by the young Luton side, and not once throughout the 90 minutes did they seem likely to contest the Town's supremacy.

Luton took the lead after 10 minutes through a clever goal scored by centre-forward Mike Dixon but engineered by amateur left-winger Horne.

Lucky Pompey Equaliser

YOUNG Horne nipped on to a loose ball on the halfway line, but instead of making an orthodox run down the wing, he centred the ball high over the head of Rutter, Portsmouth's pivot. Dixon saw his chance and raced round Rutter to slam a hard shot past the advancing goalkeeper.

But Luton held the advantage for only two minutes. Inside-left Weddle, who scored five goals against Swansea Reserves the previous week, obtained a somewhat lucky equaliser when he beat Collier with a speculative shot through a ruck of players.

By this time, however, the Luton men more than had the measure of their opponents and goals from Dixon and Horne won them a well-deserved 3-1 interval lead.

Gregory Scored A Great Goal

PORTSMOUTH improved a little after the change-over, especially in their midfield approach work. But their forwards were still too slow to catch the tight-marking Luton defence off guard.

After relaxing the pressure during the early stages of the second half, the Town turned the heat full on after the 60th minute. They ripped the jittery Portsmouth defence to shreds and their scoring ambitions were kept in check only by the curtain of luck that seemed to veil the Pompey goalmouth.

But Portsmouth's luck ran out in the 69th minute, and Tony Gregory scored Luton's fourth goal—and what a grand effort it was. The inside-right snapped up a stray pass just inside his own half and beat three men in a scintillating close dribble before he rounded the goalkeeper and pushed the ball into an empty net.

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