

BOLD ATTACK MOVE WAS A FAILURE

Bingham's Goal Brought A Badly-Needed Point

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 1, BLACKBURN ROVERS 1

THAT bold move of bringing Brendan McNally for his first outing in a League match for over 12 months, not at his usual place of right-back, but at centre-forward where he has figured only infrequently in the reserve team, proved to be ill-fated.

Not that McNally can be blamed for that because, after knee trouble, he had a long fight to regain fitness and form and has only recently got back to his best in his own position in the reserve team.

It might have been a different story had he come into a team, full of confidence, rather than into one that was struggling to end a string of defeats.

Another move that did not succeed was that of playing Brown out of position at outside-left. Here, he looked so patently unhappy, that this is a switch that surely must be deemed certain not to be repeated.

So, with these weaknesses, there was little wonder that the line did not achieve a fluent look and yet, had the luck really been running with them in the second half, they could have won.

There did not really seem to be a lot of point, either, in switching Turner and Cummins from their customary positions, and it was noticeable that they changed about a good deal during the match.

After Blackburn had had the edge before the interval, the Town made a fighting rally afterwards to force the Rovers back on to the defensive, but they had not the punch in front of goal to achieve a complete recovery.

For all that, they deserved a point and might very well have been awarded at least one penalty for handling during the second half.

There were some redeeming features about the forward display, with the main one being that Turner looked more like his old self although he did not find the net.

He moved more confidently in

midfield and was unlucky not to secure the winner with a header five minutes from the end that Leyland somehow reached one handed.

BINGHAM was the most dangerous of the forwards, giving the experienced Eckersley a worrying time and it was he who secured the equaliser in the 63rd minute from a shrewd through pass by Turner.

JOHNSTON had given the Rovers the lead after 29 minutes when a bad clearance by Dunne was collected by McLeod and his pass to the centre-forward caught the defence wide open.

Conditions, which were the heaviest of the season, were against clever football, but Cummins managed to produce some though, at the same time, he tended to hold on to the ball and to run with it.

What was needed in the mud was a more forthright style of attacking play.

MUST TACKLE PROBLEM

Maybe, this partial success will be a matter of encouragement to the Town, but the centre-forward problem must be tackled, not only realistically, but quickly.

In the main, the defence on which there has been so much extra strain recently, did well, with Owen battling away successfully against Johnston and receiving splendid support from his wing-halves, Morton and Groves.

Both tried hard to get the forwards moving in the second half, but too many movements broke down in the middle or on the left wing.

Below his best for some weeks, Dunne was again erratic in his clearances and, in their present circumstances, the Town cannot afford the luxury of giving away goals through elementary mistakes.

Still doing a thoroughly workmanlike job is Hawkes whose clearances were crisp enough in difficult conditions and Baynham, who had a fairly hectic few minutes at the start, was both sure and clean in his handling of the greasy ball.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Hawkes; Morton, Owen, Groves; Bingham, Cummins, McNally, Turner, Brown.

BLACKBURN ROVERS: Leyland; Taylor, Eckersley; Clayton (R), Woods, McGrath; Isherwood, Cairns, Johnston, Vernon, McLeod.

Referee: J. W. Hunt. Emsworth, Hants. Attendance: 13,475.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

Brendan McNally, Luton's 23-years-old reserve full-back, is NOT the answer to the Town's centre-forward problem. This was the unanimous opinion voiced by Soccer critics who watched the Town draw with Blackburn. Nor, they say, is Allan Brown likely to make a success of the left-wing position.

"Brendan McNally, converted from full-back to centre-forward, was a failure, as was Allan Brown at outside-left. Just why some reconstruction of the forward line has not taken place sooner is perhaps a clear indication of the way things are going at Luton." — "News of the World."

"Their (Luton's) move in playing Brendan McNally, a reserve full-back, at centre-forward was a complete frost against a big, strong centre-half like Blackburn's Matt Woods. And Allan Brown had an equally bad time as a left-winger." — "Sunday Dispatch."

"Luton ended their run of five defeats with a draw. But their nightmare centre-forward problem has still to be solved. The experiment of playing full-back McNally in the position for the first time in his career didn't pay off." — "The People."

"From looking as if they might be the team of the year, Luton have degenerated into a shambling, aimless outfit. Whoever decided that full-back Brendan McNally could take over the leadership of the attack must have been very red-faced long before the end of this match." — "Sunday Express."

"I know they are needing a centre-forward. But I don't think Brendan McNally will ever be the answer." — "Daily Express," quoting Dally Duncan, Blackburn's manager.