

BOXING DAY GOAL RIOT

THE LUTON NEWS
Thursday, January 1, 1959

Bingham, Gregory Found Arsenal Gaps GUNNERS REVENGED BEFORE 56,000 GATE

By CHILTERN

IN view of their depressing recent record, combined with the fact that both Turner and Morton had to stand down because of illness, few Town fans could have been confident about their team's chances of accounting for Arsenal at Kenilworth-road on Boxing Day.

Yet, in a thrilling match, they succeeded by 6—3 and the margin would have been wider had it not been for Kelsey's brilliant goalkeeping.

On the following day at Highbury, the Town's handicap was increased by the fact that Dunne and Owen were not available, but, due to some stout defensive work, they lost by only a single goal and could have won had their forwards shown more finishing power.

Rather surprisingly, the attendance at Luton was only 21,870, but the return drew the biggest gate of the day, 56,501.

LUTON TOWN 6, ARSENAL 3

In a shock start, both teams scored within the first five minutes and Arsenal were rocked when, in the third minute, Gregory, brought into the side at the last minute, streaked down the left wing, pulling the defence across so that, from his centre, ADAM had merely to tap the ball through.

It was JULIANS, late signing from Leyton Orient, making his Arsenal debut, who secured the equaliser after Baynham had made a point-blank save from Ward.

However, the Town, never regarded as expert exponents on this glue-pot type of pitch were the more dangerous and Gregory again provided an unmissable opening when he took Fotheringham out to the right wing and crossed the ball for BROWN to score from close range.

Shortly afterwards, there came a strange decision by the referee when, after he had turned down justifiable claims for a penalty, Gregory crashed the ball through but the goal was disallowed on the grounds of offside, so the referee informed me afterwards.

That could have been a serious turn of affairs for the Town who were unlucky not to increase their lead through Bingham and Cummins before half-time.

SENSATIONAL START

Like the first half, the second brought a sensational start because, with only two minutes gone, BINGHAM jumped above Evans to head through a finely placed cross from John Groves.

Three minutes later, Arsenal struck back through EVANS who scored from the penalty spot after Pacey had brought down Vic Groves, though whether or not the offence took place in the area, was open to argument.

At that stage, there seemed to be some doubt about a Town victory, but then came a burst of scoring that brought them three goals in 12 minutes.

First was obtained by GREGORY following good work by Cummins and a sliced shot by Pacey. This was quickly followed by the best goal of the match, from BINGHAM, who ran on to a centre from Adam and crashed the ball low into the far corner of the net.

More good work by Cummins enabled BROWN to secure his second success of the match and, with 23 minutes still to go, it seemed that the Town might reach their highest score in the First Division.

However, Arsenal, though their defence was still weak, fought back, and BLOOMFIELD made things look a little better from their point of view by heading through a centre from Clapton after 76 minutes.

But there were no other signs of further Arsenal successes, and it was Cummins who came closest with a tremendous drive that was no more than inches wide.

For this somewhat unexpected victory, the Town owed much to their appreciation of what was necessary on this occasion. Noting the weakness of Fotheringham, who was very slow on the turn, they exploited the through pass, and with Bingham obviously having the beating of Evans, made use of the Irish International's speed.

Bingham was in brilliant form,

always difficult to hold, and had things really run his way he would have had at least two more goals.

However, the eye-opener was Gregory, whose speed and dash

was altogether too much for this crumbling defence, and this was easily his best showing in the first team.

Many attacks were begun by Cummins, despite the fact that he sometimes hung on too long, and there was a material improvement by Brown, who ploughed through the mud with some of his old effectiveness.

Somewhat spasmodic, but still a highly potential danger, was Adam, and this forward line really went to town in no uncertain style.

TOWN DEFENCE MORE SOLID

Conditions, of course, were all in favour of forwards because of the difficulty defenders found in making a quick turn.

Much more solid than that of their opponents was the Town defence, with Owen holding JULIANS pretty comfortably and John Groves turning in another of those fine performances we have come to expect from him at wing-half.

With Pacey completing a strong line, the Town had a considerable pull here, as they did at full-back.

In view of the fact that Dunne seems to be on the way back to his best form, it was unfortunate that he should be injured, and, with Hawkes in determined mood, there was little scope for the Arsenal wingers.

Not half so many opportunities came the way of Baynham to show his skill as Kelsey had, but both goalkeepers really looked what they are—in the top class.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne; Hawkes; Groves (J), Owen, Pacey; Bingham, Brown, Gregory, Cummins, Adam.

ARSENAL: Kelsey; Wills, Evans; Ward, Fotheringham, Docherty; Clapton, Groves (V), JULIANS, Bloomfield, Henderson.

Referee: K. Stokes, Newark.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

BOXING DAY

After a long spell in Soccer's doldrums, Luton hit peak form against the high-flying Arsenal Gunners. The Town ran up their highest goals tally of the season—and also ran the Arsenal men off their feet. "This was Luton at their best," was the view of most daily newspaper critics.

≡

"Had it not been for Jack Kelsey, in his international form, Luton's forwards could have created a cricket score. Although Billy Bingham beat him twice early in the second half, there were equally good shots—if not better—that Kelsey saved from him."—News Chronicle.

≡

"Larruping Luton without Bob Morton and Gordon Turner produced their best display of the season. Luton did everything right on the glue-pot pitch; they cut out the frills, cut out the close work and made the ball do all the running."—Daily Herald.