

TOWN HIT THE GUNNERS FOR SIX

FORWARDS SPARKLE IN THE MUD

Bingham Stood Out And Gregory Had Best Game

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 6, ARSENAL 3

FOR anyone who had not had a good Christmas, this was the complete compensation.

Even though they were struck hard blows before the kick-off because neither Gordon Turner nor Bob Morton was able to play because of illness, the Town produced the most scintillating display for several weeks—before their recent bad patch began.

This was the Town firmly back on the goal standard again and they owed a considerable debt to Tony Gregory, brought in at centre-forward at the last moment to have his best game in the first team.

Showing speed and determination, he set the Town on the victory path with two brilliant dashes in the opening minutes.

The first, after three minutes, pulled the Arsenal defence so much out of position that all ADAM had to do was to tap the ball into the net, with Kelsey hopelessly placed.

So panic stricken was the Londoners' defence that Fotheringham nearly put through his own goal a minute later and then came an Arsenal thrust that brought an easy chance for newcomer, JULIANS, after Baynham had made a point-blank save from Ward.

Goals always looked like coming on this gluepot of a pitch on which defenders found it impossible to turn quickly and, after 15 minutes, Gregory did it again, taking Fotheringham out on to the wing and laying on another great chance of which BROWN made the utmost use.

Throughout the half, it was mostly the Town who were the more dangerous, with Kelsey making brilliant saves from Bingham and Brown and then came the controversial decision of the match which, fortunately, did not turn out to be serious in the end.

GOAL DISALLOWED

During a goalmouth scramble, during which the Town had a

claim for a penalty, and a justifiable one at that, turned down, Gregory cracked the ball in.

Delightedly, the crowd cheered this deserved success, but, to everybody's amazement, the referee disallowed the goal. Just why, was far from clear, but at half-time, he told me that Gregory was a yard offside.

Almost continually in action was the gallant Kelsey, and only his agility kept Arsenal in the game still with a chance at half-time. Bingham and Cummins were most unlucky not to have added to the lead which still remained slender until the change-over.

With two minutes of the second half gone, BINGHAM somehow got up above Evans, who, apparently, wanted Kelsey to come out to collect a splendid centre from John Groves and, with both defenders caught on the wrong foot, the ball went into the net off his head.

Three minutes later, there came another decision that caused argument. There was not much doubt that Pacey pulled down Vic Groves—the question was whether it was inside or outside the penalty area.

The referee's idea was that it was inside, despite the Town's protests, and EVANS came up to place the ball immaculately wide of Baynham.

GREGORY SCORES

At that stage the match was much in the melting pot, and it seemed that the Town might have lost their advantage when

hesitancy cost Brown a chance from close in.

However, as things turned out, it did not matter, because, after 56 minutes GREGORY obtained the goal he richly deserved when he swung on to a sliced shot from Kelsey and rammed the ball past him.

Cummins did the early work out on the left wing and twice got the ball into the goalmouth.

Three minutes later, the Town struck again, through BINGHAM, who ran on to a grand low pass from Adam to crash the ball low into the far corner of the net.

When, after 67 minutes, BROWN scooped in the ball after more good work by Cummins, the crowd of 21,870 was almost delirious with excitement and Arsenal looked as if they were in for the hiding of their lives.

Things did not quite work out that way, because Arsenal fought back, with the Town, perhaps, tiring because they had done so much of the work earlier, and BLOOMFIELD headed the ball past Baynham like a rocket from Clapton's tailor-made centre.

There were no other shocks after that, though, and Cummins went very near to increasing the lead.

One or two outbreaks of bad temper marred an otherwise highly entertaining match, and Docherty had his name taken by the referee.

KEPT THE BALL MOVING

It was great performance by the Town in conditions that are not supposed to suit them, but they did the right thing by keeping the ball moving forward all the time.

From the start, Arsenal were obviously wide open to the through pass and the Town used this to deadly advantage. So, too, did they make use of the drier reaches on the wings, and

Gregory showed up as a more mature player on this occasion.

If he can produce this sort of form consistently, there is no need for the Town to go waving their cheque book in the transfer market for a centre-forward.

This was his best game in the first team, and he showed real resource and speed against this leaden-footed defence.

But the star of the match was Bingham, who always had the measure of Evans, scored two brilliant goals, and had his luck really been in, would have had at least two more.

The crowd took the Irish winger really to their hearts, particularly for the way in which he went in for the half-chance when there was a definite risk of injury.

But for the illness of Turner and Morton, Brown would have been on the trainer's bench, but he came in to produce a game more in keeping with his reputation. Perhaps, now that the heavier grounds are here, he will really re-discover his old form.

Always, Cummins needed careful watching, and he managed to manipulate the ball through the mud, which became thicker and more cloying as the match wore on.

Sometimes he held on too long, but he was a mainspring in attack, constantly probing at the all-too-apparent weaknesses in the Londoners' defence.

Not wholly consistent, but still producing some dangerous thrusts, was Adam, whose finishing continues to let him down.

HAPPY AUGURY

These conditions were tailor made for forwards of the thrustful type, and it is a happy augury, with the Cup-tie looming up, that the Town found the men for the occasion.

Turning on this going was a ponderous, difficult business, but

the Town defence did its part nobly.

Owen battled away against the newcomer, Juliens, who had only his early goal to remember on his First Division debut, and there was plenty of cover from John Groves and Pacey when the down-the-middle route was exploited.

Groves had another splendid match, tackling hard and distributing the ball well, and it is perfectly obvious that wing-half is his best position.

Pacey, too, gave a splendid display, and the Town had a considerable pull in the middle line.

With two International wingers, Clapton and Henderson, facing them, Dunne and Hawkes could have been expected to be in some difficulty, but it was not until the later stages that Clapton came into the picture at all, which was a tribute to the ruggedness of Hawkes.

Dunne showed a continuation of the improved form he found at West Bromwich last Saturday, chiefly because he came in decisively to meet the ball, and Henderson had a thin time.

There was nothing that Baynham could do about the shots that beat him and, although he had nothing like the amount of employment that came the way of Kelsey, once again, he handled the greasy ball competently.

This was great holiday fare for the Town fans and the best of tonics into the bargain.

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

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

Referee: K Stokes, Newark.



The three new forwards who have done so much to bring punch into the attack of Leeds United, who are the Town's Cup-tie opponents at Kenilworth-road — Humphries (ex-Airdrie), Shackleton (ex-Burnley) and Revie (ex-Sunderland).