

TIMELY POINT FOR HANDICAPPED TOWN

Showed More Fighting Spirit, Determination

By CHILTERN

PRESTON NORTH END 0, LUTON TOWN 0

NOT only was this a very good performance at Deepdale on Monday evening, but it brought a very timely point which serves to relieve immediate worries about the Town's position at the foot of the table.

More than that, it is more than a shade of odds-on that the Town would have secured their second away League win of the season had they not had the misfortune to have Kelly injured just before half-time.

Although the total sum of Kelly's absence was no more than six minutes, his injury, which was a cut over the left eye which necessitated a stitch, forced him to move to outside-right, where he spent the rest of the match as a willing, but much-handicapped trier, with his head bandaged.

The filling of the centre-half position did not pose a great problem, because Pacey switched there to take over as naturally as can be imagined and it was a perfectly simple move to bring Morton back to left-half.

These changes brought no weakening of the defence, but the forwards did not function with the smoothness they had shown in the first half, with the result that Preston came more into the game.

However, apart from Thompson, who was chasing his 100th goal in League football, there was little danger, except when North End were awarded a penalty 19 minutes from the end.

When the referee was seen to be pointing to the penalty spot, the Town players were completely flabbergasted, and, certainly, I suggest there was nothing to warrant such an award.

JUSTICE WAS SERVED

Baynham came out to grab a through-pass and, apparently, the referee penalised Groves, who collided with the oncoming Thompson.

Maybe, a case could have been made out for obstruction, but so obscure was the whole thing that some of the journalists attributed the infringement to Baynham, who came out cleanly with the ball.

For once in a way, justice was adequately served because Baxter, entrusted with the kick, sent well wide of a post and that was really Preston's last chance of ending their depressing home run.

Much of the first half had run almost entirely the way of the Town, and they deserved a goal early on when Morton ran on to a through-pass by Pacey and crashed a left-footed drive against a post.

Securing the rebound, he had to shoot hurriedly and the ball went wide of the other post.

Playing more positive, attacking football than has been the case in League matches for some time, the Town often endangered the North End goal, but some good saves by Else, combined with not quite the full measure of punch at close quarters, enabled them to reach the interval on level terms.

Really, they were lucky not to have been two or three goals down and the Town's skilful play certainly merited them such a lead.

UNPLEASANT CONDITIONS

Conditions were most unpleasant because a biting wind swept across the ground throughout and the last 10 minutes were played in a hailstorm of such intensity that it must have been difficult to follow the ball at times.

Looking back on this display, I feel that the most satisfying factor was the determination and the fighting spirit which the Town showed.

They really fought in the closing stages to hold on to this point, despite their handicap, and a continuance of this quality in the remaining League games will see them rising up the table.

In the first half, Morton was a lively energetic leader, direct in his work and causing Mattinson a great deal of trouble, and he had fine support from Cummins, fresh from his triumph for Eire.

Cummins used the ball splendidly and pin-pointed many attacks and there was a lot of whole-hearted endeavour, but not the best of luck in his finishing, from Turner who, however, still finds his goal touch eluding him.

As an emergency outside-right, Brown did very well indeed and made far better use of the ball than did Adam who was again disappointing in this respect.

Kelly was having a splendid match until injury overtook him and with both Groves and Pacey taking a tight grip in midfield, the threat to the Town in the first half was limited to some long-range efforts, all of them too high, from the wingers and to one burst by Thompson.

Although he had been upset by a bumpy air crossing from Dublin in the afternoon, McNally was always sound and difficult to such that Baynham did not have pass, and Dunne put up a good show in what is a somewhat strange position for him.

The Preston marksmanship was a difficult match, but he did enough to show that he has full confidence again in his right hand.

PRESTON NORTH END:
Else; Cunningham, Walton;
O'Farrell, Mattinson, Smith;
Dagger, Thompson, Hatsell,
Baxter, Taylor.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham;
McNally, Dunne; Groves, Kelly,
Pacey; Brown, Turner, Morton,
Cummins, Adam.

Referee: H. Webb, Leeds.

Attendance: 10,525.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

The critics were displeased with Luton after the game at White Hart-lane on Saturday. They didn't like the way the Town men kept part of their minds on Wembley in this match.

"Luton, of course, were minus their skipper and centre-half, Sid Owen (injured), and Cummins and McNally, who were released to be in Dublin today (Sunday) to play for Eire against Czechoslovakia. But it seemed that some of their colleagues at Tottenham were dreaming of the green turf of Wembley on May 2."—"News of the World."

"... I cannot convince myself that Luton can match Nottingham Forest at half-back, even with Sid Owen in the side. This could well decide the Cup Final. Luton had three missing from their Wembley team, and others on view went to it gently. . . ."—"Sunday Dispatch."

"Now I'm giving Luton a warning. This sort of stuff before a Cup Final won't do. If they carry on like this they're going to lose morale."—"The People."

"Luton's only real forward star was outside-right Billy Bingham, who was playing as well as he has ever done."—"Sunday Pictorial."