

ACUTE ANXIETY NOW ABOUT THE FUTURE

Forwards Lacked Drive, Defence Faltered

By Chiltern

FULHAM 4, LUTON TOWN 2

THERE was plenty in this match at Craven Cottage to cause acute anxiety to Town officials about the immediate future of the club's status.

Lack of drive and determination in attack, combined with faltering by the defence, merely served to emphasise the unfortunate pass to which the team has come and to underline the urgent need to secure some experienced replacements.

Until this match, the blame for the Town not opening their winning account had been laid squarely on the shoulders of the forwards.

The defence had been struggling at times, but struggling with quite a lot of success. In this match, perhaps because they were feeling the strain of the forwards limitations, gaps appeared and goals conceded that certainly should have been prevented.

In the front line, only Bingham, in his most brilliant mood, enabled the Town to make any sort of a fight for it, but he received little in the way of response from his forward colleagues.

Inside forwards Brown and Cummins, though both covered a lot of ground, were not decisive enough in their approach work, and there was over-much use of the short pass in midfield.

Continually, attacks broke down before they had reached any sort of maturity and, Bingham apart, there was a complete lack of incisiveness in front of goal.

KILGANNON INJURED

Turner has not filled the centre-forward position in the fashion hoped for and, indeed, spent quite

a lot of the game switching with Brown, but the net result was that neither made any impression on Bentley.

For Kilgannon, there was the excuse that he damaged a knee early on and was sorely handicapped afterwards.

Much of the trouble that came the way of the Town defence could be traced to that brilliant winger, LEGGAT, because he obtained both the first-half goals, in the 10th and 44th minutes, each from the middle of the penalty area, and was always appearing in most unexpected positions.

A bad mistake by Macedo enabled the Town to equalise in the 26th minute, when the goal-keeper, challenged by Brown, fozzled a long, high free kick from Kelly, and BINGHAM was able to run the ball into an empty net.

Then, four minutes after half-time came a slip by Baynham, who allowed himself to be bundled over the line, still holding the ball, by DOHERTY.

Nine minutes later a casual sort of an attempt to clear by Groves enabled HILL to step in and leave Baynham helpless with a tremendous drive.

BINGHAM AGAIN

Towards the end of the match Fulham tended to ease off, and BINGHAM made the most of a chance splendidly created by Morton 15 minutes from the end.

Almost immediately after that it could have been 4—3 when a miskick by Lawler left Turner in a position from which he should have scored, but he pulled the ball wide.

Apart from Leggat, Doherty always needed careful watching, and Kelly had rather a troubled afternoon, nor was Groves as dominant in the tackle as he can be.

Which left Morton as the best of the Town's middle line, and he played most impressively, particularly in the second half. Dunne did not have so much to contend with as did Hawkes, and, in the course of a rather busy afternoon, Baynham made some grand saves which more than atoned for his one mistake.

FULHAM: Macedo; Cohen, Langley; Mullery, Bentley, Lawler; Leggat, Hill, Doherty, Stokes, Johnson.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Hawkes; Morton, Kelly, Groves; Bingham, Brown, Turner, Cummins, Kilgannon.

Referee: A E Moore, Lowestoft.

Attendance: 30,100.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"Twenty minutes from the end of this game Luton's chief, Syd Owen, one of the most worried managers in football, left the directors' box for the touch-line in an attempt to instil some life into his already well-beaten team. Unless Syd can do something quickly, Luton are a certainty for Division Two."—"The People."



"Apart from the last ten minutes, when Fulham flagged in the heat and for a moment or two looked like letting the lead slip out of their grasp, Luton were a team without drive."—"Sunday Dispatch."



"Luckily for Fulham, Luton threw away their chances in their brief period of supremacy."—"News of the World."



"Sid Owen, Luton's manager, has many problems—in defence and attack. Seldom have I seen two inside-forwards as ineffectual as Allan Brown and George Cummins were yesterday. It was a sad sight."—"Sunday Express."



"Fulham were too good for lamentable Luton; but judged on this display, Luton would take a beating from many teams. There was forward sparkle only from Bingham. . . ."—"Daily Mail."



"Wonderful Fulham . . . or are they? Certainly they're making a bright start in the First Division—but then there can be few First Division sides quite as moderate as Luton."—"News Chronicle."