

POOR TOWN YIELDED FAR TOO EASILY

Forward Muddle Meant No Drive Or Punch

By CHILTERN

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 2, LUTON TOWN

AWAY defeats are only to be expected to come the way of a team and, in meeting them, the way in which they come about is all-important.

Had the Town put up a tremendous fight in going down at Sheffield, no one would have been disposed to complain, but the plain truth is that they failed to reveal even a fraction of the fighting spirit that had much to do with bringing their two victories.

This fact was most marked in an attack that was so innocuous that, during the whole 90 minutes, Springett had only two direct shots to save, and both those were speculative efforts from longish range by Cummins.

Just how a forward line can go through a match without producing a drive that brings hope of a goal, goodness only knows, but the Town forwards managed it on this occasion.

Against a defence that looked vulnerable to the through pass, the Town seemed to have no pre-conceived plan, and the result was just muddle.

Far too often the ball was passed back, and it seemed that it just had to go any other way than forward in order to make progress, and there was just no drive and punch at all.

Too close passing and failure to take up position in the open space meant as easy an afternoon as the Wednesday defence are likely to have this season.

Neither Turner nor Brown made any memorable contribution to this match, and the former, in particular, was too often waiting for the ball instead of going in to meet it.

INTERNATIONAL IN MIND

Probably the thought of the International match on Saturday weighed heavily on Bingham, who did not reproduce his normal form, though he had rather more success than did Brown when he switched into

the middle mid-way through the second half.

This left Cummins as the man from whom the football might be expected but, perhaps, because others were not moving, he kept the ball too close in midfield, and we saw few of the through passes that were so devastating at Manchester.

There was determination from Barry Hawkes when he was put in possession, which was not all that often, and he showed his courage by insisting on returning to the field after being taken off with concussion.

Maybe, the shock of conceding a penalty after only 10 minutes upset the Town's confidence, and it was rather an unfortunate affair when Dunne made a late tackle from the wrong side on Finney, who went headlong.

After some hesitation, the referee pointed to the spot, and CURTIS did the rest.

Enough of the first-half play came the way of the Town for them to have equalised if they had had a forward with a shot in his boots, and hope vanished completely a minute after the interval.

Straight from the kick-off, Wednesday swept into the attack and FANTHAM went through a hesitant defence to beat Baynham with a shot that went in off the far post.

After that it was nearly all Wednesday, with Baynham saving many times, and the Town had difficulty in getting over the half-way-line for long periods.

When they did, a chance cropped up to Turner, but he failed to hit the ball properly and it trickled wide.

In vain, Morton, who played strongly throughout, tried to rally the Town, and he received good support from Kelly, who was in dour mood against the dashing Shiner.

Ken Hawkes did quite well against an inexperienced winger, but Groves was below his best and Dunne was led a merry dance by Finney.

Which left Baynham as the man who saved this struggling side from a much heavier defeat.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY:
Springett; Martin, Curtis;
McAnearney (T), Swan, Hill;
Quinn, Froggatt, Shiner, Fantham,
Finney.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham;
Dunne, Hawkes (K); Morton,
Kelly, Groves; Bingham, Turner,
Brown, Cummins, Hawkes (B).

Referee: F H Gerrard, Preston.
Attendance: 25,138.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"Luton's attack was even more disjointed than Wednesday's. It relied on wing raids . . . for the inside-forwards were almost completely blotted out by Wednesday's strong half-backs."—"The People."



"There was hardly a redeeming feature about a side that at times struck one as being rather dispirited."—"Sunday Express."



"It was largely because of Baynham's consistency and Kelly's dour defence that Luton escaped comparatively lightly. They were seldom in the picture as an attacking force until the closing stages when Bingham went into the middle."—"Sunday Pictorial."



"Only the sure hands of goal-keeper Ron Baynham prevented Sheffield Wednesday running up a big score. He made at least half-a-dozen England-class saves and it is a tribute to him that the score flatters Luton."—"Sunday Dispatch."



"The fact that Wednesday's half-backs were so often up with their forwards was an indication of Luton's own lack of thrust. Springett in Wednesday's goal almost had a holiday."—"News of the World."



"On this showing, Luton have already booked a ticket to the Second Division. But for the brilliance of Ron Baynham, they would have been crushingly beaten."—"News Chronicle."



"Syd Owen, the Luton manager, missed the game at Hillsbrough. And for his peace of mind, it was probably as well, for he would have returned home with a heavy heart."—"Daily Express."