

MORE HOME POINTS WERE SQUANDERED

Forwards Could Have Put Town High And Dry By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 1, PRESTON N.E. 3

ONCE more, Town supporters had the mortification of seeing their team squander home points, to bring the total lost at Kenilworth-road this season to 14.

Prime, and in fact, only reason for this latest setback is contained in the old, old story of lack of thrust in front of goal. In the first half, the Town carved out for themselves sufficient chances to have made victory certain.

No team can expect to win matches if they cannot get the ball into the back of the net with only the goalkeeper to beat, and that was the case at least three times in this match.

All through the first half Preston played a slow motion type of football, good to look at, but ineffective in its end product.

On the other hand, the Town, showing signs of desperation, were the more impressive side and had enough of the play to have taken a decisive lead.

In particular Morton and Kilgannon missed easy chances, and it is fair to say that the most difficult of them all was accepted by BINGHAM just before half-time when he headed a centre from Cummins wide of the left hand of the vigilant Else.

A goal to the Town is such an event these days that it may have produced a sense of false security, but the plain fact is that the Town, throughout this season, have not been able to get sufficient goals to put them in a commanding position.

There were signs immediately after the interval that something of the sort might be achieved—if someone could find that final thrust—but it was just not there.

SET THEM ON THEIR WAY

Doubtless encouraged by the fact that they had been let off lightly earlier, Preston began to fight back and the 57th minute brought the goal that really set them on their way to two points and the top of the table position.

Taylor, who had not been much in the game, came across the field to lay on a pass for THOMPSON who, with a first-time drive, beat the diving Collier to land the ball into the far corner of the net.

That was the turning point

because two minutes later, Preston had the ball in the net again, through MAYERS this time, when he accepted a pass from Thompson to beat Collier with another cross shot.

To all intents and purposes, that was the end of the Town and almost their only militant act afterwards was a great long range shot by Brown that beat Else and, unfortunately, also the post by a mere matter of inches.

Other than that, their forwards failed to make any impression on a Preston defence that gained confidence from the revival of the men in front of them.

On the other hand, the Town defence, so strong before, began to be pulled apart by the scheming of Finney and the probing of Thompson and it was not altogether surprising when, six minutes from the end, THOMPSON accepted an easy chance from Finney's pass.

This Town finishing continues to be too bad to be true. There have been occasions this season on which the chances have not been created, but they were in the first half of this match, and then were prodigally thrown away.

The line, as a whole, showed limitations in finishing. Morton worked hard, as did Kilgannon, but both seemed to have only a sketchy idea of how to beat Else.

From Cummins there was much activity and not a lot at the end of it, and Bingham spoilt most of his clever approach work by an elementary disregard for the necessity of keeping his centres out of the reach of such a capable goalkeeper as Else.

While, in the first half, Cunningham was content to back pedal, Gregory had a most successful time, but it was a different story altogether after the interval, when the full-back decided that quick tackling was his best bet.

Until the first Preston goal, the Town defence looked a solid, compact unit, but holes began to appear when Finney started to wander, and the other forwards suddenly found the open spaces.

When that happened, Kelly looked unhappy for the first time in the match, but the responsibility for this defeat rests squarely on the shoulders of the forwards.

Both Groves and Brown were strong. Dunne showed a continuance of his recent good form in blotting out Taylor, and Daniel was impressive again, even if he tended to give Mayers too much room in which to work.

While Collier did not inspire the same confidence as does Baynham, he could not be faulted in all fairness, for the goals.

LUTON TOWN — Collier; Dunne, Daniel; Groves, Kelly, Brown; Bingham, Kilgannon, Morton, Cummins, Gregory.

PRESTON NORTH END — Else; Cunningham, Walton; Milne, Dunn, Smith; Mayers, Thompson, Finney, Sneddon, Taylor.

Referee: E. Crawford, Doncaster. Attendance: 17,174.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"Luton were so superior in the first half, it was surprising their interval lead was only one goal. Yet even that was rather fortunate, for, by my watch, the half had lasted 47 minutes—and there were no stoppages for injuries—when Billy Bingham headed a brilliant goal. But throughout this half, Preston looked almost like learners against Luton, who could well have been three goals ahead if they had taken their chances."—"Sunday Express."



"Luton are running around too much at the moment. There is no attacking balance. Tactics must be blended with tearaway endeavour. A centre-forward is needed. Or at least the striking power of Gordon Turner must be recalled to first-team duty unless Luton can afford a costly transfer buy."—"Sunday Pictorial."



"Luton can get out of their present trouble only if they can secure a forward capable of putting the ball into the back of the net."—"Sunday Dispatch."



"What a difference a goal makes! Relegation-haunted Luton, after reducing championship hopes Preston to a moderate side for 57 minutes, were suddenly rocked by a Tommy Thompson equaliser. And before they could recover, right-winger Derak Mayers rammed another goal past Alan Collier to bring about an amazing transformation."—"News of the World."

"Luton should have been three up at half-time. They would have been three up, too, with the help of an opportunist. Instead, they faced a revitalised Preston with a lead of only one goal. It wasn't enough."—"News Chronicle."

"By the time the third goal came, six minutes from the end through Thompson, Luton were demoralised. Yet in the first half, their defence had been calm and collected against a forward line that played clever football."—"Daily Telegraph."

"What's wrong with Luton? That's an awfully long story, involving, among other things, the need of a goalworthy centre-forward and an aggressive outside-left."—"Daily Express."