

WENT LIKE LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

Town's Midfield Sparkle Soon Fizzled Out

By CHILTERN

PRESTON NORTH END 2, LUTON TOWN 0

ALMOST without a bleat, the Town went like lambs to the inevitable slaughter at Deepdale on Saturday in a match that was memorable only for the emotional atmosphere engendered by the last appearance of Tom Finney.

Had it not been for that, this would have been a typical end of the season offering, with both teams trying to play constructive football in conditions that were all against accuracy.

A hard, dry pitch that produced puffs of dust when the ball bounced, made things difficult for both teams, but the Town, in the first half an hour, did manage to play some football that was well ahead of their lowly position in the League table.

However, it proved to be the same old story of skill in midfield, but no punch in front of goal. In approach, the Town looked good, but it all amounted to nothing when the region of the penalty area was reached.

Except that Preston tried to give Finney as much of the ball as possible, there was little urgency about the play of either team.

The crowd had come to see the England player sparkle, but their enjoyment was lessened by the way in which Daniel approached his difficult task.

Rightly he lay off Finney, waiting for him to make the first move and this paid off so well that Finney was seldom in the picture in the first half.

EMPHASISED HIS PROMISE

Later, he did come more into it, but throughout the piece, Daniel played him well and emphasised his rich promise for the future.

This was one of the few crumbs of comfort the Town could take from this match and even the least discerning observer could have little difficulty in seeing why there is to be Second Division football at Luton next season.

There was almost a complete lack of punch at close quarters and what shots reached Else were mostly from the comparatively harmless 25-yards mark.

For 35 minutes, goals seemed far away and then Preston made a sudden break in which mistakes in quick succession by Morton and Kelly let in ALSTON, who was left with an easy task to beat Baynham.

Three minutes after half-time, SMITH sealed it when he half hit the ball into the net after Milne had allowed a Finney centre to run on to him.

After that, there was little hope that the Town would salvage even a point, though McBride missed a couple of snap chances and Cummins struck a post.

McBRIDE WAS HELD

Even Bingham failed to strike the form that has made him one of the outstanding wing-men in the country and, with Turner showing a continuance of his lack of confidence in front of goal, the right-wing pairing was below par.

Nor was Tracey sufficiently go ahead on the other wing, and much of Cummins's clever mid-field scheming came to nought.

especially as McBride was closely held by Dunn.

Even though his distribution was not so accurate as usual, Brown was the best of the half-back line, because Kelly was flustered into mistakes by the bustling Alston, and Morton was not so decisive as he can be.

Daniel came through as the Town's outstanding player and Dunne did his part well, too, while Baynham accomplished what little he had to do with much confidence.

PRESTON NORTH END:
Else; Wilson, Walton; Fullam, Dunn, Smith; Finney, Milne, Alston, Sneddon, Taylor.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Daniel; Morton, Kelly, Brown; Bingham, Turner, McBride, Cummins, Tracey.

Referee: A. J. Hemingway, Pontefract. Attendance: 29,781.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"Luton, doomed to relegation, tried to snatch points before the emotional fervour stirred in everyone had worn off, and twice almost succeeded in beating Fred Else with snap shots. But as soon as Preston collected themselves and set about the job, there was obviously only one result. For the rest of the game Luton were too occupied in keeping Finney and company quiet to do more than spasmodic probing of weaknesses which did not exist."—"Sunday Express."



"Luton, their relegation fate already sealed, relaxed after weeks of tension to play some entertaining football, and their defence kept a firm grip on Preston's forwards for much of the match."—"Sunday Dispatch."



"The game did not matter at Deepdale. It was Tom Finney's last, and nearly 30,000 people went there to say farewell to one who has delighted them and millions of others with his football genius for 20 years. The match was very much an exhibition affair, with Preston never in danger of defeat."—"News of the World."