

1-2-3-4! TOWN CRACK 'EM IN TO WIN

ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS IN SIX MINUTES

Preston Attack Always Well Contained

LUTON TOWN 4, PRESTON N.E. 1

THERE was a wet sort of start to the football season at Kenilworth-road this afternoon, which may or may not have helped the attendance. Probably the rain encouraged those who had been thinking of summer activities, but discouraged others, with the result that five minutes before the start the attendance was way below the 20,000 mark hoped for.

As it happened, bright, warm sunshine greeted the appearance of the players, and the Town, led out by their new captain, Ronnie Cope, received a terrific reception.

Cope was one of two new players in the Town team, the other being Jack Lornie, the former Leicester City centre-forward, who received his chance because injury kept out Tommy McKechnie.

This led to a reshuffle of the inside-forward trio, with Turner switching to inside-right and Ashworth teaming up on the left wing with Fleming.

Preston, relegated from the First Division last season and who, in fact, were the Town's last Division I opponents, also fielded two newcomers.

They were All Biggs, £18,000 signing from Bristol Rovers, who was in the unaccustomed position of centre-forward, because most of his career with the Rovers was spent at inside-right.

Other new signing was David Barber, former England youth international, who was secured from Barnsley during the close season.

When the Town played the Yorkshire club last season in the F.A. Cup, Barber was prevented from appearing by injury.

PERFECT PITCH

The pitch looked in perfect condition, as it always does at the start of the season, and the morn-

ing's rain had freshened it up considerably.

Towards the start, the terraces were filling up and it looked like being the sort of crowd to offer some encouragement for the future.

Cope won the toss and the Town defended the Oak-road end.

Early running was made by Preston and Baynham was the first goalkeeper in action, cutting out a strong centre by Alston. Straight from this the Town broke away and Ashworth, losing his stride on the slippery turf, just failed to get through in time to take advantage of some filtering by the Preston defence.

A minute later, Ashworth did collect a through pass and from a fairly sharp angle shot just wide of the far post, with Kelly beaten.

Settling down, the Town looked dangerous and a neat centre by Walden was met by Lornie's head but Kelly interposed to snatch the



Honour of scoring the Town's first goal of the season fell to Ashworth, who, in the sixth minute, squeezed the ball in from an almost unbelievable angle.

Forty-eight minutes later the inside-left put on the Town's third goal.

TOWN'S FIRST

The worrying tactics of Lornie forced Singleton to give away a corner that was only partly cleared by Wylie, so that Morton contrived to make one of his incisive dashes into the penalty area and his attempted cross was deflected for another corner.

Morton was again prominent in this, and his neatly-judged pass brought a centre from Walden that was deflected to safety.

With six minutes gone the Town took the lead through ASHWORTH, who squeezed the ball in from an almost unbelievable angle from the inside-right position after Fleming, who had also wandered out to the right wing, had threatened but then lost the ball in a tackle by Wilson (R.).

However, Ashworth saw the possibilities and as the ball ran loose momentarily he flashed it goalwards.

Kelly appeared to be taken completely by surprise, as, possibly, was not unexpected because the angle was certainly severe and it may have been that Ashworth's main hope was to get the ball across.

PRESTON GOAL DISALLOWED

It was a goal that cheered the crowd immensely and a great start for the Town who, three minutes later, appeared to have lost their advantage when Biggs side-footed the ball into their net following a corner by Alston.

Jubilation by the Preston players was short-lived, because the referee disallowed the goal and put the ball down for a free kick to the Town on the six-yard line which seemed to indicate that it had gone out of play in its line of flight from the corner flag.

Preston protests were of no avail.

Preston were now becoming more threatening and Bramwell, in timely fashion, headed the ball off the goal-line after Wilson (D) had turned it in.

Before the danger was finished Fleming gave away a corner, which was cleared, and then we saw the speed of Lornie who raced down the wing, outpacing Singleton, but rather wasted it all by blinding the ball over the bar. For all that, however, he was looking a real live wire.

Up and down play was the rule for a time, and Ashworth tried to emulate his previous feat by racing through on a pass by Fleming. His long, high centre went across to Walden whose return was headed wide by Lornie, who was needing careful watching.

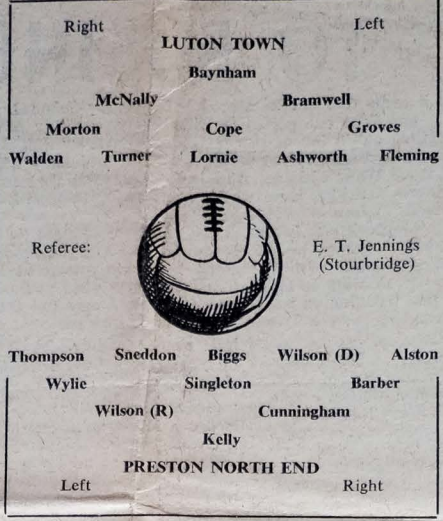
For a time there was nothing very decisive about the work of either attack, but the Town had a bit of luck when Biggs went up high to meet a centre by Thompson and the ball struck Cope, to roll to safety when it might have proved a problem to Baynham.

Twice the Town looked in vain for offside decisions against Alston and each time it was Cope's head that came to the rescue by clearing his lines.

Then the Town swung back into the attack, with Groves harassing Kelly into a mistake as he went up to deal with a high centre from Fleming. As it was, the ball went outside and Turner was penalised for pushing.

FAST AND FURIOUS

Twice, Baynham's handling of longish-range shots caused concern because each time the ball



The Town's second goal was some time in coming, and then it was due to a perfect header by Gordon Turner in the 41st minute.

broke away from him but he was able to recover before real danger could occur.

Walden received a nasty smack on a knee in a tackle, which caused a stoppage and the appearance of Frank King to give him treatment.

Play continued on fast and furious lines, with the lively ball tending to do tricks, and difficult to control.

Baynham came out in a hurry to snatch the ball away from Wilson (D) and fortune smiled on him in that it broke the right way.

A long through ball by Fleming and a first-time shot taken on the run left-footed by Lornie brought the next excitement, and Kelly had all his work out to push the ball around the post.

Next casualty was Ashworth, who had to have attention for a damaged right leg, though he was soon all right again.

At this stage there was more apparent threat from both sets of forwards than the real thing, and more goals did not look imminent, though the Town continued to look the freer moving and more dangerous.

A fierce centre by Lornie from the right was turned for a corner, which McNally wasted by running the ball out of play after Walden had pulled it back to him.

EQUALISER AVERTED

Preston had a chance of equalising when a splendid pass from Biggs split the Town defence and Wilson (D) collected it. However, before he could steady himself and make his shot, Groves raced across to make a despatch but successful tackle.

Apart from odd thrusts, chiefly down the middle, the Town defence was containing the Preston forwards well, and slender though it was, the Town's lead did not seem to be in much danger.

Good work by Biggs sent away Alston, who was brought down by Groves some yards outside the penalty area on the right flank. The free kick came across menacingly from Sneddon, and Thompson, who had closed in, headed too high.

Towards half-time, there was some Preston pressure and Wilson (D) from rather an optimistic range, sent the ball well wide.

A mistake by Cope nearly let in Sneddon but good defensive covering got the Town out of

what might have been considerable trouble.

Then, with the Town looking for an offside decision which did not come, for by no means the first time, Alston was able to go away with a clear field. His centre landed the wrong side of the near post and in any case was safely covered by Baynham.

Preston had a remarkable escape from further arrears after a quick-free move, begun by Groves. It was carried on by Fleming and finally it fell to Turner to apply the finishing touch.

This he did, firmly and with assurance, but Wylie had dropped back and he cleared off the goal-line.

PERFECTLY JUDGED HEADER

A minute later, during an exciting spell, Ashworth hooked the ball against the face of the cross-bar and then, with the excitement continuing, and 41 minutes gone, TURNER increased the Town's lead with a perfectly-judged header right into the corner of the net, well out of Kelly's reach, from a centre by Fleming.

The Town were definitely on top now, with the Preston defence wearing a more worried look, and there was nearly another goal when Walden flashed the ball across and Turner just could not reach it to apply the touch which was all that was needed.

It had been a satisfactory first half from the Town's point of view, and although Preston hit back with a good deal of spirit they were not allowed to reach close quarters.

The ball remained in the Town half of the field for a time, until Morton came across to hook away a centre by Biggs. Even then, Preston came again, but Alston with one harassing him, drove the ball well wide.

Half-time:
LUTON 2
PRESTON 0

First moves of the second half were by Preston and Baynham had to throw himself to reach a shot by Sneddon which I thought was going out, but Baynham did right in playing safe.

A corner to Preston came right across from Alston, and Thompson, racing in, met it squarely with his head, but steered it the wrong side of the post.

It was not long, though, before the lively Town forwards were on the move again, and Kelly was only just in time to pull the ball away from the feet of Ashworth as he raced in to try to make contact with a header from Lornie.

PRESTON BACK IN GAME

Much interchanging was going on by the Town inside the half of which was effective and there was certainly plenty of freedom of movement.

Then came what was really a surprise and Preston not firmly back into the game with a goal scored by THOMPSON after 52 minutes.

It was in the nature of a bolt from the blue because Thompson picked up a loose ball on the edge of the penalty area and let fly a powerful drive which, by Baynham's action, probably caught him unprepared. At all events, the ball threaded its way through a crowd of players and landed with a thump in the back of the net.

There was wim applause for Lornie after this for a great effort in which he harassed three Preston defenders into giving away a corner and it was from this corner, after 54 minutes, that the Town restored their two goals advantage.

From the corner, Bramwell, who had come right up into the attack, secured possession and took the ball along the dead line in true outside-left style before crashing in a hard centre, ASHWORTH stuck out a foot and the ball ricocheted into the net from point blank range.

NEARLY ANOTHER

There was nearly another goal for the Town when Kelly mis-kicked the ball as he slipped in front of goal, and although Lornie was very much on the premises,

How The Goals Came

ASHWORTH for Luton Town after six minutes.
TURNER for Luton Town after 41 minutes.
THOMPSON for Preston North End after 52 minutes.
ASHWORTH for Luton Town after 54 minutes.
GROVES for Luton after 76 minutes.



Taking careful aim, and with Kelly probably unsighted, Groves got the Town's fourth goal in the 76th minute.

the incident caught him going the wrong way.

Again Kelly was in desperate trouble as Turner and Ashworth converged on him from a good pass by Groves, but somehow the Preston goal escaped, and then Kelly pulled down a fierce cross by Turner.

Lornie was always in the picture when the Town forwards were on the move, and getting up high to meet a centre by Walden he glanced the ball inches wide of a post with his head.

At this stage the Town had gained command of the middle of the field and were clearly the superior side, with the result that Preston were spending quite a lot of time on the defensive.

Nor were their forwards, although they were always trying to be constructive, making much progress.

Ashworth was the next to threaten Preston, with a probing run down the middle, at the end of which he was foiled by Kelly, who was having a most anxious time because he could never be sure which of the Town inside trio would be coming through next.

DIMINISHING THREAT

There was little threat now from Preston, though Alston, cutting across the field at speed, produced a left-footed shot that Baynham seemed to have difficulty in following in flight, but in any case it flew wide.

Mistakes in quick succession by Morton and Groves, with the latter slipping at the psychological moment, left Wilson (D) with a chance to shoot, which he did. Baynham's task was made more difficult by a deflection off the foot of a defender and in the end he reached the ball at full stretch.

After this little spasm the Town began to crowd on pressure again, with the attack prompted by Groves, but it fizzled out with Kelly left with the simple task of pulling down a high lob by Lornie who had hopelessly tried to find Turner or Ashworth.

In the main the Town were winning this match hands down and with plenty to spare, particularly as Preston carried very little punch in attack to ally to some neat constructive work in midfield.

On the other hand, the more direct Luton always carried the threat when they pressed and Fleming was dead out of luck when, taking careful aim from 15 yards, he saw his shot strike Singleton and go behind, otherwise it was booked for a billet in the back of the net.

Again, the ball ran unkindly in front of the Preston goal when Walden centred low, but it ran to safety when all it needed was a tap to put the Town in an even more comfortable position.

However, almost immediately afterwards they attained that through GROVES, after 76 minutes.

He secured the ball just inside the Preston penalty area after the hard-working Lornie, again chasing something of a forlorn hope, had worried Singleton.

From him the ball went to Groves, who took careful aim, and Kelly, probably as unsighted as Baynham had been earlier, could do nothing but

watch it go in low just inside a post.

"HAVE A GO" TOWN

Cope headed out decisively when Preston, now well-beaten, tried to improve their unfortunate position, but all in all the Town forwards looked to have the more enthusiasm for the job in hand, and were willing to have a go at pretty nearly anything.

This factor brought them a corner on the left, purely because Ashworth refused to give up his hand, even though it seemed certain that he could not reach the ball.

Always Preston looked vulnerable down the middle, something the Town had spotted quite early on, and as they exploited this gap again, Cunningham had to boot the ball hard back to Kelly to prevent Ashworth from scoring again.

Again the Town had a spell of attacking, during which Lornie, anxious to crown his first appearance with a goal, showed the right idea by banging away first time, but his execution was faulty and the ball flew well wide.

Then Lornie went low to head just wide, but it was all in vain because the whistle went for offside.

Preston had faded out of the picture completely, though their defence was fighting doggedly enough.

Still it was the Town pressing away for more goals, and Fleming was wide from 20 yards.

In almost the last minute, Biggs crashed the ball into the roof of the Town net, but the referee, on the spot, promptly disallowed it for off-side.

After that a bad clearance by Baynham put his goal in jeopardy. He put the ball straight to Thompson, whose return was made much too hurriedly, and it rolled to safety. Result:

LUTON 4
PRESTON 1