

TOWN HUMILIATED BY THE SAINTS

Mistaken Tactics And Errors Brought It About By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 1, SOUTHAMPTON 4

61/62
THIS was a prime example of how a match can be lost decisively through a combination of mistaken tactics and defensive mistakes which added up to humiliation for the Town before their own supporters.

In the end, Southampton literally walked it and thoroughly deserved to do so through what was, on the day, superior ability and a better appreciation of what was necessary to achieve success.

Yet, the Town opened well enough, though even in the early stages, there were signs of the too close play which became of near epidemic proportions later and had the effect of clogging the Town's machine so that it never functioned properly.

Why so many of the Town players thought it necessary to run with the ball and attempt passes which were so short as to be of no value whatever, is a mystery, especially in view of the fact that they have shown that they are capable of playing constructive, open football.

While the Town were trying to make ground the hard way, Southampton were playing it simple, progressing by dint of making every use of the open space and keeping the ball on the move continually.

Admittedly, they had the confidence of a shock goal by O'BRIEN after 19 minutes, followed by another from the same player, 15 minutes later, and they proceeded to hammer home their advantage.

In addition, the faltering Town defence had some narrow escapes, and the feeling at half-time was one of relief that the position was not worse.

Hopes were, of course, that the Town would be able to mount a rally and wipe out these arrears, but there was never a chance of that because, with only three minutes of the second half gone, O'BRIEN completed a most meritorious hat-trick and four minutes later, PENK beat Baynham with a screaming drive into the far corner of the net.

To all intents and purposes, that was the end of the struggle and although the Town put up some semblance of a fight and contrived to have a fair share of the play, their spluttering forward line could not produce the uncertainty in the visitors' defence that had

been only too obvious in that of the Town.

One or two chances cropped up and Ashworth once fired over when it seemed easier to score, and their orphan goal did not come until 16 minutes from the end when TURNER was left with a simple chance after a shot by McKechnie had rebounded off the foot of the post.

There is no disguising the fact that this was a shabby Town display, with so many weak spots apparent that some doubts must have been raised in the mind of Manager Sam Bartram.

First and foremost something must be done to tighten up the defence, especially in the middle line, because, although both Morton and Groves worked hard, they did not take the required grip on the middle of the field, and O'Brien, in particular, found himself with yards in which to operate.

Nor was Cope the dominant figure we are looking for at centre-half. His heading of the ball was not impressive, and much of his work was of a hesitant, indecisive character.

As a result, an extra burden was thrown on Reed and Bramwell, and the latter, in particular, had a difficult afternoon against the speedy Paine, who was a continual source of danger.

It was a pity that Reed should have this unfortunate occasion on which to make his League debut, but he did quite well in the circumstances, showing ability to use the ball, but still not demonstrating that his tackling is strong enough for regular Second Division football.

Forward, it was a rather depressing story, with only the dashing Ashworth looking a continual source of danger because Knapp took a grip on Turner early on, and the centre-forward could never shake it.

There were some bright bits from McKechnie which did not occur often enough to make him a success, but he may have been handicapped by the preoccupation of his partner, Fleming, in running into trouble because he persisted in carrying the ball too far.

As it happened, Fleming saw a lot more of the ball than did Walden, who, however, found great difficulty in making progress, and created only occasional openings.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Reed, Bramwell; Morton, Cope, Groves; Walden, Ashworth, Turner, McKechnie, Fleming.

SOUTHAMPTON: Godfrey; Davies, Traynor; Clifton, Knapp, Huxford; Paine, O'Brien, Reeves, Mulgrew, Penk.

Referee: H. P. Hackney.
Barnsley. Attendance: 13,209.