

TOWN'S FORWARD LINE LACKED IDEAS AND PUNCH

HAD THE CHANCE TO SHAKE SAINTS

But Finish Was Not There At The Vital Stage By CHILTERN

NO-ONE watching the dull affair at The Dell, Southampton, on Saturday would have been able to guess from what went on that only five teams in the Second Division have scored more goals than have the Town this season.

Lacking ideas, constructive ability and almost every semblance of shooting power, the Town forwards gave a shoddy display from which only Turner could be exonerated and it is perfectly true to say that had they possessed someone to give the leader more support, they could have had at least a point.

CONSIDERING that the result was of far-reaching importance to Southampton in their fight to gain promotion, theirs was a curiously uneven display in which, after missing several first half chances, they allowed the Town to get off the hook.

When Reeves scored from what was almost an impossible angle in the 18th minute, the result seemed a foregone conclusion, especially as the home forwards were moving well and had the Town defence in trouble several times.

Indeed, it required some brilliant saves by Baynham to prevent disaster, but there was nothing much he could do about the Reeves goal.

Baynham Stuck Out A Despairing Foot

SO severe was the angle as he closed along the left dead-ball line that the goalkeeper must have been set for a centre.

Instead, Reeves let go a low shot and all Baynham could do about it was to stick out a despairing foot off which the ball flashed into the back of the net.

Gradually, the Town began to have a better share of the play but, apart from a shot by Turner, taken on the volley, Godfrey was never seriously troubled.

Even so, Southampton were forced back on to the defensive towards half-time and the pattern was repeated after the interval when the Town pressed.

Only Serious Effort Was Brilliantly Saved

HOWEVER, there was no one with the exception of Turner to scheme openings and, far too often, the ball was pushed through hopefully and merely resulted in a Southampton defender being given a free kick.

What might have changed the whole course of the game and was probably the turning point so far as Southampton were concerned was when Ashworth flicked in the ball from close in.

It looked as if the equaliser had arrived but, somehow, Godfrey reached it to pull off a sensational save.

As things turned out, that was the Town's only serious effort to get on level terms, but the game was wide open at that juncture.

Ted Bates Admitted He Was Worried

NOT only had the Town gained the upper hand, but the Southampton machine seemed to have become clogged and, afterwards, the Saints' manager, Ted Bates, admitted that he had been worried about the situation.

Not until 22 minutes from the end was he able to breathe with any degree of ease and then it was O'Brien, who had passed a fitness test a few hours before the kick-off, who brought the relief.

Swooping on to a through pass from Paine, he had the ball in the back of the net almost before Baynham could move and, after that, Southampton never looked back and the Town just faded gently out of the picture.

Mulgrew Was Left With Easy Chance

FIVE minutes later came their third goal when Mulgrew was left with the simplest of chances of rolling the ball into the net after Baynham had been hampered by McNally as he went up to clear a centre by Paine and merely succeeded in pushing the ball out.

To the Town fans who were there, this was a vastly disappointing Luton display and there was scarcely any resemblance between that fighting combination which earned the Cup replay at Ipswich and this rather pallid looking outfit.

Obviously, more forward changes there must be and Tommy McKechnie, who had the role of twelfth man, will be available for Saturday's home match with Charlton.

Jardine Looked Out Of His Depth

ALMOST certainly, he will have benefited from his rest and the Town will need all the forward power on which they can lay their hands in order to overcome Charlton who are putting up a desperate fight to avoid relegation.

Certainly, the choice of Jardine to replace McKechnie was not a happy one, because the young

FOR THE RECORDS
SOUTHAMPTON 3
Reeves, O'Brien, Mulgrew
LUTON TOWN 0
SOUTHAMPTON: Godfrey; Patrick, Traynor; Clifton, Knapp, Huxford; Paine, O'Brien, Reeves, Mulgrew, Penk.
LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; McGuffie, Cope, Pacey; Walden, Ashworth, Turner, Jardine, Fleming.
Referee: E. T. Jennings, Stourbridge. Attendance: 13,037.

Scot seemed much out of his depth, a fact that was admitted 20 minutes from the end when he was switched with Fleming.

Badly, the Town need someone in one of the inside positions with the ability to hold the ball and create openings.

Opportunist Turner Is Being Wasted

AT the moment, Turner is trying to do it with the minimum of support, whereas he could be a far more valuable asset to the Town in his old role of goal-snatcher.

Now, in his endeavour to get things moving, he is finding the

open spaces on the wings, and the result in this match was that there was no real challenge down the middle.

This is something that has been forced upon Turner through sheer necessity, but it seems a waste of one of the best opportunists in the business.

Ashworth did a lot of ceaseless chasing which did not amount to much in the end, and he is suffering from the general lack of construction.

Little Came From The Wings, Either

NOR is anything much coming from the extreme wings, where Fleming, whose tenure as the occupant of the left-wing position is probably drawing to a close now that Legate is fit, again showed little finishing power.

Nor, for that matter, did Walden, whose bright displays are becoming more isolated and interspersed with sub-standard showings of this sort.

If anyone were going to score for the Town, and if they could have got a goal at the start of the second half, Southampton might have folded up, it seemed most likely to be Pacey.

Pacey Stood Out In The Town Team

IN his strong, determined way, he came through several times, seeking a shooting opening, but

could not quite get one on the target.

However, Pacey, working tremendously hard, was the outstanding Town player and he has maintained this excellent form over quite a long period.

Basically, there is not a great deal wrong with the Town defence but, at the moment, they are building up quite a lot of trouble for themselves by the fact that they are playing too square and that the full-backs are not pivoting as they should.

Saints Had Trend To The Right Wing

POSSIBLY, Bramwell felt that he had his hands full in coping with Paine, who has brought sorrow to a succession of left-backs this season and who started off in great style.

However, Bramwell gained a grip on him with his strong tackling and blunted quite a lot of the threat.

McNally was not faced with such a difficult task because there was a definite trend by Southampton to play to their right wing and, as a result, there were ironical cheers from the crowd during the second half when Penk was brought into the game.

Brilliant Display By Baynham

THERE was another highly useful display from McGuffie, who kept on trying to find the men in front of him by the use of the through ball, and his passes were not always as inaccurate as they looked because of the lack of anticipation of some of the forwards.

Cope never looked either assured or in command of the situation, though he made some good interceptions.

Things could have gone badly for the Town early on had it not been for the brilliance of Baynham, who pulled off some

'PICTORIAL' WEEK-END SPORTS SPECIAL

sensational saves and risked injury more than once by throwing himself at the feet of an oncoming forward.

Late Goals Clinched It For Reserves

TWO goals in the last 10 minutes gave Luton Reserves a respectable 3-0 win, which they just about deserved, against Ipswich Reserves on Saturday.

But full marks must go to the Luton defence, in which Standen, Kelly and Lownds were outstanding, for staving off the Ipswich attack, which made some dangerous raids, with the experienced Rees as the spear-head.

After Lornie, who did not have a happy time against Laurel, had switched to the right wing at the start of the second half, Clarke scored the first of the Luton goals from close range as the result of a defender's mistake.

The other two Luton goals, which came in the 80th minute through Legate and the 83rd minute through Fairchild, were also of a gift nature.

Watford and Reading had representatives at the match, and Lornie was their main interest.