

ELEMENTARY RULE FORGOTTEN BY TOWN

Not Playing To Whistle Cost A Vital Goal

By CHILTERN

62/63

LUTON TOWN 2, ROTHERHAM UNITED 3

FORGETTING one of the elementary rules of football—playing to the whistle—cost the Town one point, perhaps two, at Kenilworth-road on Saturday.

After having looked a well-beaten side when Kirkman scored his second goal after 57 minutes, the Town suddenly roared back into the game with two goals in a minute from Lornie, only to fritter away the advantage they had gained by standing still to appeal for offside while McIlmoyle headed the ball into their net.

Whether McIlmoyle was offside or not and, admittedly, from a not very good angle, I thought he was, the Town defence, and Baynham in particular, had no right to survey with such detachment a situation that was obviously fraught with danger.

Baynham made no effort to stop McILMOYLE'S header, showing, possibly, too much faith in the infallibility of the officials who control the game.

Whether they were wrong or not, can only be a matter of conjecture now, but the point is that the game is on until the whistle goes, and it did not do so until a goal was signalled.

I doubt if this is an error that will be repeated, but it was costly because, otherwise, the Town might have gone on to gain spectacular victory.

Afterwards, they were unlucky not to equalise because Pacey shot against the bar, and there seemed good grounds for a penalty award when Turner was pulled down by Lancaster.

At the same time, Rotherham were value for their win because they were more solid in defence and showed more imagination in attack.

LORNIE'S TWO IN A MINUTE

Until LORNIE burst upon the scene with his goals in the 59th and 60th minutes, Rotherham had tamed the Town forwards, though

Turner allowed a couple of chances to go astray.

KIRKMAN'S first goal came after 19 minutes when he was allowed to complete a long run without being challenged effectively and drive the ball past Baynham, and his second with a header from almost under the bar after the ball had been whipped across smartly from the right following a throw-in.

Then came Lornie's hammer blows, the suggestion of reprieve for the Town and then the presentation, literally, of the winning goal to the opposition.

Had they gone on to win after being two goals down, the Town would have regained many much-needed friends, but, as it was, they only managed to increase the general disquiet among a large section of their supporters.

MORTON WAS MISSED

Seldom in this match did the Town forwards obtain the commanding grip they achieved in the second-half at Southampton on Wednesday, possibly because they missed the driving force of Morton for whom Clarke was a useful, but not sufficiently strong deputy.

Although Walden was the more effective winger, he did not approach his Southampton form and Fleming was a disappointment again.

So, too, was Turner, who is showing little of the opportunism which has brought him over 200 League goals for the club, and this is a severe handicap to the team as a whole.

Goldie looked as if he had the ability to achieve something if only some support was forthcoming because he has splendid ball control and the ability to beat a man in a narrow space.

From Lornie, there was much hard work, and his two goals raised hopes that he will now live up to the reputation as a marksman he had when he was signed.

As things were, Pacey probably had more shots at goal than anyone, and was always trying to drive on his forwards to better things.

Far from assured and, indeed, often ill at ease, was Kelly, as a result of which a gap frequently appeared down the middle and both McNally and Bramwell, with the latter slowed down by injury, were kept at full stretch by two lively wingers.

That third goal was a blot on the Baynham copy-book but, otherwise, he was full of confidence.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Clarke, Kelly, Pacey; Walden, Turner, Goldie, Lornie, Fleming.

ROTHERHAM UTD.: Ironside; Jackson, Morgan; Lambert, Madden, Lancaster; Weston, Kirkman, McIlmoyle, Houghton, Butler.

Referee: H. New, Havant.
Attendance 8,664.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"Luton appeals were in vain, though in fairness to Luton, McIlmoyle looked a couple of yards offside. After that, Luton had two slices of bad luck when Pacey crashed the ball against the bar and Turner was tripped in the penalty area and the referee waved play on.

"Yet they could not complain about the result because Rotherham were the better balanced, more ordered team. They had the defensive stability that Luton lacked and the cohesion and ability to find the open space in attack which Luton could not match."—"Sunday Telegraph."

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"Alert and imaginative in attack, sound in defence, Rotherham United were far and away the better team. Luton Town were outclassed. Rotherham impressed as a competent cohesive combination which will again make a strong challenge for promotion. But Luton . . . Oh, dear, what problems for manager-coach Bill Harvey.

"Admittedly, experienced right-half Bob Morton had to drop out at the last minute with blood poisoning and left-back John Bramwell was slowed by an early injury. Yet they still revealed too many faults."—"The People."

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"Goldie could be a match-winner, and another happy factor for Luton was the return to form of Lornie, who was one of McIlmoyle's rivals at Leicester.

"His two goals were well taken and he was unlucky with another fierce drive. Maybe Luton have reason to feel unlucky, but there are many problems to be tackled.

"Even the defence was jittery under pressure, possibly because Bob Morton was missing, and his deputy, young Alan Clarke, lacks experience of League football."—"Sunday Express."

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"Luton's new manager, Bill Harvey, has some problems ahead, judging by the evidence of this game. Though Luton came back well after being two goals down, they could hardly complain at the result.

"Rotherham were a more workmanlike side with more ideas than Luton, whose forwards were too often guilty of inaccurate passing and haphazard shooting."—"News of the World."

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"Luton fans might have just cause for complaining that they were robbed of their first full League points of the season. When Hugh McIlmoyle calmly headed home Rotherham's winning goal after 67 minutes he looked a good yard offside, and when Luton's Gordon Turner was brought down by two United defenders in the penalty area a few minutes later there appeared good grounds for an appeal."—"Sunday Pictorial."