

Smallest Crowd See Town Defeated

By CHILTERN.

62/63

LUTON TOWN 0, PRESTON 2

ANXIETY about the Town's future increased a great deal at Kenilworth-road last night when, before the smallest crowd yet this season, 6,760, they slumped to defeat at the hands of Preston.

In yielding these two points they had only themselves to blame because they missed at least four chances of the gilt-edged variety before Preston took a snap lead early in the second half.

Even after that the opportunity to hit back was there and it was only too patently obvious that something has got to be done, and speedily, about this front line.

In marked contrast to Saturday, chances were created, but the finish in front of goal was not there, and it is difficult to see how it can be obtained short of new signings.

In this respect the inside-forward trio was a disappointment. Turner gave no real sign that he is back to his old goal power. Goldie is being beaten on the score of inexperience, and Lornie's capacity for hard work does not make up for his lack of basic skill.

Nor were the wingers incisive enough, though it seemed a tactical error not to give Walden more of the ball against the jittery Ross.

Defensively the Town looked able enough until they were caught soon after half-time by a quick pass, and Preston, who relied on breaks-away for most of their second-half raids, finally settled matters 19 minutes from the end.

To say that this was a sharp disappointment is pure understatement, but the unfortunate and galling part was that this game could have been nicely sewn up before Preston ever got their heads in front.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Kelly (T), Pacey; Walden, Turner, Goldie, Lornie, Fleming.

PRESTON: Kelly (A); Donnelly, Ross; Wylie, Singleton, Smith; Wilson, Biggs, Dawson, Thomson, Alston.

Referee: A E Moore (Lowestoft).

To fill the vacancy caused by Jardine's absence, the Town switched Fleming to outside-left and recalled Gordon Turner, who was prominent early on with a shot from the edge of the penalty area that rose just too high, though in any case the whistle had gone for offside.

Then Fleming made a long run at the end of which his shot just missed a post.

Preston hit back and a cross drive by Wilson passed dangerously near to the far post with Baynham apparently beaten.

Again the Town forwards were finding difficulty in settling down to a smooth stride.

SNAP HEADER

SAVED

So far, at any rate, Preston had

How The Goals Came

BIGGS for PRESTON after 51 minutes

WILSON for PRESTON after 71 minutes

showed the more imaginative ideas in attack without causing Baynham real concern, though Alston got in a snap header from close range which the goalkeeper saved comfortably enough.

In the next minute he was in a good deal more trouble from a drive by Wylie which he managed to finger-tip over the bar only at the last split second.

Best chance came after half-an-hour and fell to Goldie following a poor clearance by Ross. Maybe Goldie was a little put off by the fact that Turner almost collided with him, but the fact remains that he had time to steady himself, instead of which he hit the ball first time and it went too high.

Another opportunity cropped up when brilliant work by Morton sent Walden away, who took the ball to the goal-line before slamming it across.

Turner threw himself at it, but failed to make contact with his head and the ball was scrambled away. At the same time the fact that two chances had been created was more encouraging, and the Town began to play with increased confidence.

Ross, who was showing signs of panic under pressure, came within inches of putting through his own goal with a badly sliced clearance that rolled tantalisingly inches wide of the post.

At this stage the Preston defence looked in real trouble and Allan Kelly just grabbed the ball off the head of Lornie when a touch would have meant a goal.

Almost on the stroke of half-time Walden, from the centre-forward position, shot narrowly wide from a pass by Fleming.

Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 0

PRESTON NORTH END 0

After 51 minutes, Preston showed the Town how to make the utmost use of a scoring chance when in a sharp break-away Dawson, on the left wing, slipped in a quick pass to the unmarked BIGGS.

The inside-right steadied himself and gave Baynham no chance with a flashing drive. It was against the run of the play, but that was small consolation to the Town, who had sufficient openings to have been comfortably in the lead.

Then Preston, who were relying on quick break-aways, increased their lead after 71 minutes through WILSON from Dawson's pass. His shot went in off the inside of the far post.

At this the slow hand-clap broke out from the Luton fans.

**SLOW HAND
CLAP**

There were some frantic efforts from the Town to improve their position, but apart from a header by Pacey, kicked off the line by Ross, there was no sign of improvement.

At the end there was more slow hand-clapping and booing some of which seemed to be directed at the Directors' box.

Result:

LUTON TOWN 0

PRESTON 2