

ANOTHER SECOND-HALF FIGHT BACK

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 2, NEWPORT COUNTY 1

JUDGED on the last two matches, the Town are reacting to a challenge and are showing the capability to fight back in the second half after a somewhat cagey showing in the first 45 minutes.

When they can gear themselves to produce in the first half what they have shown after the interval, then we shall begin to think that they are getting somewhere but, at the moment, the team is very much in the rebuilding stage.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"Whether Luton can continue to secure success with so many square pegs in so many round holes may be open to question. Partly because of injuries, they have been driven to such outlandish experiments as playing a goal-keeper at centre-forward and a full-back at outside-right.

"Nobody was prepared to give much for Luton's chances, but suddenly they found fire and determination." — "The People."

"Manager Martin must have worked some half-time magic for Luton were altogether a more confident outfit in the second half. With eight minutes gone Reid scored from the penalty spot after McKechnie had been pulled down. Six minutes later Moore smacked home the winner.

"Newport hit back, but they seemed overawed by the new-look Luton. Their case was not helped when 20 minutes from the end Hill limped off and was replaced by Frowen." — "Sunday Telegraph."

"Luton took a long while to settle down and clearly they are far from solving all their problems. Luton's line-up included a couple of teenagers in Alan Rivers and Alan Slough making their League debut, also Tony Read who joined them from Peterborough as a goalkeeper at centre-forward." — "Sunday Mirror."

Mainly because of injuries, the team as constituted at the moment is nothing like that envisaged before the season began.

However, what the recent changes, some of them most unorthodox, to say the least, have accomplished, is to give him a team of fighters who go about their job with a grim sort of determination.

Maybe, there is not the constructive football that one would like to see, but, at the moment, the Town are in a period of transition, as any side has to be with so many changes made in it.

The first half on Saturday was a disappointment from the Town viewpoint because there were all too few moves of a constructive nature and it was largely Newport who dictated the way things should go.

They took the lead after 13 minutes when MORGAN, left with a simple chance after neglect of the elementary rule of covering, easily headed the ball into the net and there could have been other goals.

INJECTING CONFIDENCE

Manager George Martin's half-time talk was designed to inject confidence into some of the younger members of the team, two of whom, Rivers and Slough, were making their League debuts, while Edwards had been in only once before.

In particular, Rivers had been bothered unduly by the way in which Reynolds continually backed into him when he went up for high balls, but that all changed in the second half when the young centre-half took control.

Of course, the defence as a whole were helped by the fact that goals came at the other end, the first after 53 minutes through REID, who made no mistake from the penalty spot after McKechnie had been pulled down.

Six minutes later, MOORE came racing through to blast the ball low into the net from just inside the penalty area, and, thereafter, the destination of the points was just about assured.

MORE SKILL WILL BE NEEDED

I fancy that before consistent success is achieved, there will have to be more skill in the forward line because too much is being left to Reid at the moment.

Gibson's value is as a second spearhead and if Read is to get among the goals, he will need chances to be laid on for him more accurately than they are.

There is no doubting the willingness of Slough in a position that is foreign to him and he did much that was useful, but I cannot see this being more than a temporary solution to the outside-right problem.

McKechnie irritated in the first half when he persisted in hanging on to the ball too long, but released it more quickly afterwards.

There was another effective contribution from Moore, while Edwards, without being too ambitious, did himself justice and there was no fault to find with Thomson or Jardine, nor, for that matter, Tinsley.

LUTON TOWN. — Tinsley; Thomson, Jardine; Edwards; Rivers, Moore; Slough, Gibson; Read, Reid, McKechnie.

NEWPORT COUNTY. — Weare; Williams, Bird; Cooke; Rathbone, Rowland; Morgan; Pugh, Reynolds, Hill (Frewen substitute after 70 minutes); Jones.

Referee. — J. R. Osborn; Ipswich. Attendance. — 4,899.