

UNCONVINCING, BUT TOWN GAINED POINT

Never reached smooth form of home matches

By Chiltern

BRADFORD CITY 2, LUTON TOWN 2

WHEN a team gains a point away from home, despite the fact that they reached nothing like the form of which they are capable, then they are entitled to think that things are beginning to run their way.

That is what happened to the Town at Valley Parade on Saturday when they were way below the form of their last two home matches, and which drew the biting comment afterwards from Manager George Martin, "They cannot play much worse than that."

Be that as it may, this was an invaluable point and one which had to be fought for because, and again to quote the manager, "Bradford were no mug team."

Anyone who gave the matter thought realised before the start that this was a difficult assignment for the Town. Here they were meeting a team at the bottom of the League who had been the victims of some pretty heavy defeats.

In effect, they were on a hiding to nothing because if they won, then everybody would have said, "and so they ought," whereas defeat would have been taken as a sign of disaster.

That it was the middle course that came the way of the Town for the first time this season, at least emphasised that there are no easy victories to be acquired in Division IV.

If anybody, indeed, had any false idea that this was going to be easy, then the happenings in the early stages, must have come as a severe shock.

Looking determined, City should have scored in the first few minutes when Hall shot wide, but they were ahead after 12 when first Rivers, then Moore, erred and ELLAM was left with an easy chance.

TINSLEY OFF WITH A HEAD INJURY

There was atonement by MOORE six minutes later because when the ball fell loose to him 25 yards from goal, he hammered it into the roof of the net for a glorious equaliser.

With 34 minutes gone, Tinsley was carried off with a head injury, Read took over his old job in goal and Stark came on as the substitute.

Four minutes later, the Town took the lead when O'ROURKE pounced on a mistake by Smith to go on to beat White easily, but danger signals were flying for the Town three minutes after half-time when ELLAM levelled matters.

Soon afterwards, Whittaker should have restored the lead and the Town would have been in deep trouble had Ellam from no more than six yards out kept his shot down when left with the perfect chance to complete a hat-trick.

Possibly, the Town were bothered by the down to earth play of the home team, but there was little of smoothness in attack that was a feature of the recent home matches.

More than that, they showed a distressing tendency to be caught offside which did not improve matters at all.

FRENCH NEEDS BETTER SUPPORT

Potentially, O'Rourke was always the man from whom the Town could expect most threat, but the openings were just not created for him and insufficient use was made of the wingers.

When French was brought into it during the first half, he showed clever footwork

and the ability to use the ball well, but he scarcely received a worth-while pass afterwards and much the same applied to Whittaker.

Read's withdrawal from the attack, I suspect, did not help matters because Harber and Stark were much of a muchness at inside-forward.

Defensively, there must still be a certain amount of anxiety about the way in which gaps are occurring and again, Rivers was pulled out of the middle with too much facility.

Because both full-backs and Jardine, in particular, were much preoccupied with keeping quiet their wingers, there was not the pivoting on the middle there should have been with the result that the defence was too often square.

So, it was left largely to Reid to do the covering, especially as Moore had been given the job of putting the shackles on Hannah.

BRADFORD CITY: White; Ingle, Cooper; Stowell, Parry, Smith; Hall, Hannah, Brownlee, Ellam, Newton.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley (Read); Thomson, Jardine; Reid, Rivers, Moore; French, Read, (Stark), O'Rourke, Harber, Whittaker.

Referee: G. W. Grundy
Grimsby. Attendance: 2,635