

STUFF THAT MAKES FOR PROMOTION

65/66

PORT VALE 1, LUTON TOWN 2

THIS was the match which Town manager George Martin said must be won, or words to that effect, if the Town are to emerge as real live promotion hopes.

Well, at Vale Park this afternoon, in a game that was not quite the thriller that was expected, the Town did it with a workmanlike display. More than that, they deserved it for the way in which they set about their task after the interval following a first half in which they seemed to find it difficult to get into their stride.

This was a magnificent performance, let there be no argument about that, because the Vale are one of the strongest teams on their own ground in the Fourth Division, and they were set on preserving their unbeaten home record.

Fortunately, the Town defence had a splendid day which enabled them to keep out some quite ferocious attacks by the Vale during the first half. In this, they were helped by some fine saves from Tinsley. He brought the house down with one wonderful save at point-blank range.

This was just after Town's first and decisive goal. I say the decisive goal because, the one which Whittaker obtained two minutes after the interval seemed to have the effect of making the Town's forwards really believe in themselves and give them the confidence they needed.

O'Rourke laid it on and scored the second himself—this was confirmed after some first doubts—and so brought his total to ten in the last six matches.

For the remainder of the game, the Town with command in the middle, held on to their lead without much difficulty.

Town's unbeaten run now covers six matches, in the course of which they have collected 11 points. That is the sort of form which makes for promotion.

Even though Thomson was bothered occasionally by Tayler's speed, he did extremely well, as did Jardine. Centre-half Rivers looked much more comfortable than in some recent matches, and Reid and Moore were dominating in mid-field.

O'Rourke and Whittaker came well into the picture in the second half and there was some hard, battling play by Read. Fry distributed the ball neatly after an out-of-touch first half, and French, in quieter vein than last Saturday, began to harass the home left flank.

It was a most encouraging performance by Town, full of fighting spirit and determination, and it is these two factors as much as pure football that can put the team into the hunt for honours this season.

Attendance: 6,058.