

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

THINGS ARE GOING WRONG FOR TOWN

Shock defeat at home by the bottom team

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, BRADFORD CITY 3

JUST when the Town seemed to have reached a position which they could use as a springboard for a bid for promotion, things have begun to go very wrong and only two points have come from the last four League matches, although admittedly, three of them were away from home.

Certainly, in view of the consistent way in which the team has been playing at Kenilworth Road and the freedom with which they have been scoring, defeat to the bottom-of-the-table Bradford City was an unexpected disaster.

Not that the City, reinforced by some experienced signings, are likely to be a push-over for any team in future, but the plain truth is that the Town made hard work of this encounter.

This was particularly true of the first half when they had sufficient chances to have made certain of two badly needed points, but frittered them away and almost unbelievably turned around 2-1 in arrears.

Such command did they hold that it seemed only a matter of time before they opened the scoring, but it was the City who struck first with a free kick by LEEK awarded for a foul by Stark on Hall.

There was a strong element of luck about the goal because there was not much doubt that Tinsley would have saved but for a decisive deflection by a defender.

A minute later, the Town accomplished what they had threatened for so long and at last got the ball past the capable Wood when READ made no mistake from a pass by O'Rourke.

NO GOAL-SNATCHER THIS TIME

Unfortunately, O'Rourke was in nothing like his best goal-snatching form, otherwise he could have been the match-winner and he missed a good chance by shooting wide after Wood had half saved from Read.

Another shock for the Town came five minutes from half-time when Stowell was allowed to bring the ball through before passing to LEEK, who crashed the ball between Tinsley and the near post.

With the better going at the Kenilworth Road end for the forwards to operate on during the second half, there was not undue concern at the interval, but there certainly was when the City increased their lead four minutes after the re-start.

This time it was Ellam who embarked on a long run deep into the Town defence without a real challenge and RODON applied the finishing touch from his pass.

A SPARK OF INSPIRATION

If ever the Town needed a spark of inspiration it was then and sure enough it came in the 55th minute when RIOCH made a brilliant solo run before finishing with a firm drive that left Wood helpless.

But the inspired moment came and went all too quickly and, in the latter stages, it was the City who dictated the way in which things should go in midfield through the experience of their inside men, Hannah and Leek.

This was a match that enhanced few of the Town players' reputations and there is no doubt that the wing-half changes, one forced and one voluntary, did not help.

Riddick began fairly well in a strange position, but then got bogged down and although Rioch was rather more successful, there was not the midfield dominance that was needed.

With Thomson having a trying time through his tendency to give Thorpe too much room, Woods had an unenviable task in trying to plug the gaps and was not helped by the going which made turning difficult, something that Jardine also found a handicap.

Nor was Tinsley free from blame because his judgment was at fault at times and, certainly, the blame for the second goal has to be laid at his door.

Of the forwards, most potential danger came from Pleat and Whittaker, who could have been given better support.

O'Rourke's failings in front of goal made this a poor game for him, pretty nearly everything went wrong for Stark after a promising start, and although Read did some quite effective shooting from rather lengthy range, his general play was not good.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; Thomson, Jardine; Riddick, Woods, Rioch; Pleat, Read, O'Rourke, Stark, Whittaker.

BRADFORD CITY: Wood; Ingle, Cooper; Stowell, Fox, Ellam; Hall, Hannah, Rodon, Leek, Thorpe.

Referee: E. T. Jennings, Stourbridge.

Attendance: 5,550.

"Greater strength at wing-half clinched the match for Bradford, although much of their success must go to Leek and Hannah."

"They schemed and worked tirelessly keeping the Luton defence under constant pressure." — "The People".

"Luton promotion hopes took a bad knock from bottom-of-the-table Bradford City. However on this showing the City will not be holding all the other teams up much longer because they have secured experienced players like Ken Leek, Ray Wood and George Hannah, who are beginning to make them look a presentable combination."

"Yet Luton could have won this match hands down had they made the most of their chances in the first half when they were clearly superior but were lacking in thrust in front of goal." — "Sunday Express".

"Luton's hopes of promotion to Division III suffered a severe jolt yesterday, when they were beaten on merit by bottom-of-the-table Bradford City."

"It was no fluke victory for the Yorkshire side, who since a young and enthusiastic new Board assumed control six weeks ago have taken six points out of eight." — "Sunday Telegraph".