

TORQUAY TAKE THE TRICK.

LUTON TOWN DEMORALISED.

IF any business were transacted by the several officials of other clubs who visited the game on Monday evening, it is unlikely that it concerned any of LUTON TOWN'S players. Possibly there were advances in regard to a couple of the youngsters of TORQUAY UNITED, though they had nothing of note on their side. That could be well understood, perhaps, since they were playing four reserves in their side, due to injuries sustained in the struggle at Merthyr on Saturday. The debacle of Saturday had its effect on the gate, for there were only about 3,000 present. It also seemed to have demoralised the Town team, for they gave a very poor exhibition.

Torquay rose to safety on the League table as a result of the victory, and none would deny them the credit of a hard, unflinching game. They were not clever, and did not try to be. They just went wholeheartedly into the fray, and, though fortunate to escape defeat on the run of the game, merited the points because of their spirit and pluck. But for the defeat at the hands of Fulham, this would have been a staggering blow for the Town supporters, but they were probably prepared for something of the sort.

The Town had the better of the exchanges even when playing against the stiff breeze and in face of the cold rain, but there was again a sore lack of team spirit, co-operation, stamina, and intelligence. Fulham won because they were a more polished combination; Torquay because they did not trouble about polish; they saw the ball and booted it; saw an opponent and gave him no peace until he parted with the ball or had it taken from him; never hesitated about going for the man or the ball, or both, and there was no free target for any Town forward.

In the second half it was much the same, and although we were all pretty confident that the Town would win comfortably when they had the advantage of the breeze and the rain, they never rose to the standard required, and could not flury a stout and unyielding defence. It was do or die with Torquay and they refused to die. They played as if defeat were entirely out of their horizon, and as though faring for promotion stakes, instead of trying to escape the bottom of the table.

Gough made many good saves in the first half. Now and then he was fortunate that shots from Rennie hit defenders, and was also lucky to get at headers from Woods and Yardley, while one from the former nearly took the paint off the bar. Most of the efforts of the Town, however, found a billet against the broadsides of the visitors' defenders. On the other hand, in their few raids, the visitors came near scoring several times, and Banes made one fine save from Waller while Hill narrowly missed with a fine shot.

KELLY, the former Derby County reserve player, scored the only goal of the first half, and a good goal it was. Forbes was indirectly responsible, for he went down with his hand outstretched to intercept a pass, and from the free kick Smeaton put to Humphreys, who passed across to the scorer, and a first-time drive beat Banes that was raised, and Torquay had the lead at the retirement.

TORQUAY UNITED 1
LUTON TOWN 0

The Town showed no general improvement in the second half. They attacked often enough to have scored half-a-dozen goals, and again Gough made fine saves, but there was little combinative effort, and when the inside forwards positioned for shot they were usually covered by opponents. Moreover, much time and position was lost by dallying, both at half and forward, and instead of a quick transfer while the visiting defenders were scattered, there was hanging back, and opportunities were spoilt.

Daly was the most conspicuous of the Town forwards, and made many runs, largely because he got some nice passes from Black, and because Yardley was striving might and main to do some sort of damage. It was a movement on the right that led to the equalising goal, for Daly got the ball across, and Bedford compelled Gough to concede a corner. The left winger dropped the ball right in front of goal, and YARDLEY had the easiest possible chance.

We hoped the Town would accept this as a tonic, but it acted the reverse way. The visitors had always given trouble when they did get a move on, and Banes had made two capital saves, while Hill had gone very close with a sharp shot, but now they opened out again. Edmunds and Waller were both very troublesome, and eventually the latter and Kelly took advantage of a mix-up near the corner flag, and Kelly cleverly centred for HUMPHREYS to head a nice goal, and this was sufficient to give the visitors the points.

The Town continued to try in a ragged sort of way, but never again troubled Gough as seriously as before, and retired a crestfallen side. Banes and his backs were not to blame. The goalkeeper did his part well, though somewhat crude at times; Kingham was not always safe, but Richards played well throughout. Black passed cleverly, but Millar was right off form, and neither flank half mastered the opposition. Forbes did moderately well as a debutant, but he did not improve on Fulton. He showed strength and courage enough, and worked mightily all through, but has much to learn. The forwards were off colour generally, but got little help from the men behind.

Torquay had a sound defence. Gough keeping goal as coolly as one expects from a player of his experience and reputation, while Cann and Fowler were busy and strong-kicking backs. The middle men were industrious, and in the forward line there was pace and eagerness, though little finesse. Hill, who was secured from Leeds United a little while ago, was a dangerous centre-forward.

TORQUAY UNITED 2
LUTON TOWN 1

LUTON.—Banes; Kingham, Richards; Black, Forbes, Millar; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Woods, Bedford.

TORQUAY.—Gough; Cann, Fowler; Carrick, Smeaton, Smith; Waller, Kelly, Hill, Humphreys, Edmunds.

Referee.—Mr. W. E. Russell, Swindon.