

TONIC FROM TORQUAY

LUTON'S VICTORY AUGURS WELL FOR CUP-TIE

(By CRUSADER).

SUCH a tonic as Luton Town gained at Torquay on Saturday, should do much to hearten those supporters who believed that there would be only one round for the Luton team this season. That it will be a keen struggle, and the Town will have to pull out their very best if they are to pass into the next stage there can be no doubt. They will not lose if the defence keeps the form of Saturday, for I am fairly sure that Swindon's attack is not so good as Torquay's, but that alone must not be the source of dependency.

* * *

THE principal need is that the forwards should be able to carry on the fine work of the men behind. There was some improvement on Saturday, and it was invaluable, for it encouraged the halves and backs during hectic moments. But much more is wanted. The attack was not well balanced all through the game. Had the right wing employed the same methods as the left wing, the score must have shown a much bigger margin in favour of the Town.

* * *

INITIATORY schemes among the forwards usually came from the left wing, and while Rennie frequently gave that devastating long pass from inside left to outside right, there was no balancing move to the left from the right, unless Kean took a hand, and often he did so, with the result that the left wing, without appearing dangerous so often as the right in the matter of scoring chances, yet were the chief force in aggressiveness.

* * *

MAKING due allowance for the rough state of Plainmoor, which is very much worse than the Town ground, though better drained, there were many occasions when the home defenders were completely drawn out of position to the right, but the ball was not sent across to Yardley or his left wing when they were waiting for the ball and had a clear shot. If this fault could be remedied there would not be much cause for complaint of lack of goals.

* * *

TORQUAY have a strong side, and though we have had a lot of reading about their weakness in front of goal, the fact that they had scored twenty-five goals before this game proves that they are fairly efficient, and their forward line, as disposed on Saturday, was reckoned to be the best the Club have ever had. The ball was swung about splendidly, and there was not one of the Town defenders, halves included, that did not receive a shaking up at some time during the game, so enthusiastic were the United forwards.

* * *

IT was this exuberance that gave them their goal, but while I often think that referees are prone to give the goalkeeper a protection that is not provided in the laws, jumping into a custodian as much an offence as jumping at any other player. That BIRKETT jumped into Imrie was proved by the fact that his knees struck Imrie in the mouth, splitting his lip, so that it bled profusely. Still, the goal was allowed, and it seemed to put both teams on their mettle.

* * *

THE United made strong efforts to increase the lead, but the Town defenders stood up to the gruelling, and when the forwards took up the running gain and made the ball do the work or which it was meant, they soon gave the home rearguard a severe ordeal. The goal had narrow escapes, and certainly should have fallen sooner, but one could wish for a prettier goal when it came. Rennie whipped out a beautiful pass to Turner, who was able to get away with a clear course, though suggestions that he was offside were ridiculous. He had half the home side in the right side of him when he started.

* * *

AT the end of his run I thought Fowler would beat him, for the back lithered at him feet first, and nearly of the ball, but Turner nipped round him, and then, as Tapp and Butler dashed across, the winger slipped the ball all along the ground for RENNIE to meet first time, and it travelled rapidly, right away from the goalkeeper, and even the ranks of Torquay supporters had to applaud.

* * *

IT was a ding-dong fight until half-time, and either goal might have fallen

but for the vigilance of the defenders. Corners were forced at each end, but the Town goal was the scene of the more encounters, for the home forwards never hesitated to take a shot at a venture, but Imrie collected neatly, and so the change-over came with the teams level.

TORQUAY	1
LUTON	1

* * *

THE second half was fought with just as much energy, and time after time each goal was jeopardised, but while the Town defenders got the upper hand by skilful interception and packing of the goal area when the threat became unusually keen, the United backs were often drawn into false positions by the open passing of the Town forwards.

* * *

THE better opportunities came to the Town, but were not realised because of the consistently close work on the right. M'Nestry had one great shot saved by Wright, and he just missed the goal after a grand pass by Yardley had given him a clear run through. Rennie and Turner also missed narrowly, and Yardley in vain strove to bore through into goal.

* * *

WHEN the winning goal came it once more demonstrated the wisdom of quick, long passing. A series of throws-in on the left resulted in the ball being lifted into the middle. Yardley and Fowler went for it together, but the Town centre-forward just managed to deflect the ball beyond the full back, and M'NESTRY rushed in and kicked it into the net.

* * *

THE United battled away with tremendous vigour after this, but the Town withstood the assaults, and in further raids came near scoring. There were two notable efforts by the United, Trotter being the factor in each. The first time he shot finely from among a crowd of players, and was only inches wide. The second time Clayton put in the shot, and this time Imrie, diving at full length, turned the ball behind. The end was more exciting than the beginning, and though Torquay were naturally disappointed, they had fought a good fight, and were not disgraced.

* * *

THEIR rearguard is strong, and fairly sound, though the halves were not brilliant. Hutchinson, however, did very well, and quite enough to show that he is a natural footballer and it seemed to me a pity that such a youngster was allowed to go. Trotter is still a fine leader, and the line altogether a difficult proposition. I should not be a whit surprised to see the team do well in the Cup Competition.

* * *

OUR defence was good as ever, and in spite of hard knocks Imrie played magnificently. Kingham and Hodgson had to work very hard, but they came out with much credit, while the halves did their part well, both in attack and defence. Rennie was the pick of the forwards, with Turner a splendid partner, able to get the ball across nicely, and if he will find Rennie with such passes as the one that brought the goal, it will be a good thing for both. It was the sort of thing we had from Lewis Bedford when Rennie ran up his big goal bill.

* * *

YARDLEY found some tough opponents, but he was always on hand when the ball came across, and it was his part, more than any other's that enabled M'Nestry to score the winning goal. Chapman had a match which should do him a world of good. He must learn to get off the mark quicker, and to vary his game by a sweep to the left. He is disposed to hang on too long. Still, he is sure to do well. M'Nestry showed fine form in the first half, and had he centred more in the second when he had drawn the defence, there would have been more reward for his outlay of energy and speed. There were 5,000 spectators.

LUTON TOWN	2
TORQUAY UTD.	1

LUTON TOWN.—Imrie; Kingham, Hodgson; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; M'Nestry, Chapman, Yardley, Rennie, Turner.

TORQUAY UNITED.—Wright; Fowler, Tapp; Hutchinson; Butler Smith; Birkett, Clayton, Trotter, Cooper, Hemingway.

Referee: Mr. E. R. Westwood, Walsall.