

LUTON'S LIKING FOR EXETER

HOLD THEIR OWN—ON THIRTEENTH VISIT SINCE WAR

Loasby's Usual

(By Crusader)

EXETER CITY 1
LUTON TOWN 1

EXETER. — Davies; Gray, Miller; Clarke, Childs, Barber; Armfield, Purcell, Varco, Halliday, Doncaster.

LUTON. — Imrie; Kingham, Hodgson; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Cupit, Tait, Loasby, Yardley, Turner.

Referee.—Mr. W. E. Russell, Swindon.

EXETER were very fortunate to share the points. The spectators were telling each other so, and the Pressmen frankly admitted it. There was little to choose between the teams in the first half, but in the second the Town had a good deal the better, and especially in the last half-hour. I wish those followers of the Town matches who have fallen into the habit of yelping at individual players almost from start to finish of every match at Luton could have been at St. James's Park. Firstly, that they could have seen the Town playing such fine football, and, secondly, to take a lesson from the home crowd. The most astonishing incident occurred at half-time. Just as the teams turned out for the second half the half-time scores were hoisted, and showed that Brentford and Fulham were losing. That meant that the City, leading by a goal, would brighten their prospects of promotion if they could beat Luton, and so the spectators set about doing their part. For nearly a quarter of an hour they kept up a terrific din of encouragement, and the City players leapt to their task as though victory in this particular game meant promotion for a certainty. It was all very thrilling, except for the Town defenders, who took a lot of nasty bumps in stemming the City's rushes. Yet even when the City were having to fight desperately to retain one point, the supporters never gave up, and I never heard one word of discouragement for them during the match.

VIGOROUS PLAY

Play was quite vigorous enough, and two or three times Mr. Russell had to speak to players. The City's methods were robust largely because of the tactics of the halves, who kicked as fiercely as full-backs, and as the ball dropped near the Town goal there was a rush of forwards threatening to sweep all before them. At one period in the second half there were a lot of fouls, because the Town were beginning to hit back; they had been very patient, and tried to make advances by orthodox football, but any attempt at close work met with a speedy disillusionment, as the home halves and backs would not have it. Still, there was a distinct improvement of the Town forwards and halves in this respect—they kept the ball on the move, got their reward, and with just a little better fortune would have won by a flattering score. Of their second-half superiority there could be no question, and St. James's Park once more proved to their liking. I should add that the spectators, though very keen on the City achieving success, were not slow to recognise good play by the Town, and the equalising goal, disappointing as it was to them, elicited a hearty cheer, as did subsequent efforts that nearly won the match.

WINGERS' WORK

There was a rather quiet opening, but within five minutes the twenty-two were at it, hammer and tongs, and the ball travelled from end to end at a tremendous pace. The City had a little the better of it in the first half; they did not have more of the ball, but did the more pressing, thanks to their hard booting and the exuberance of their forwards and halves. Childs was quickly in the picture with forceful work, and McGinnigle kept a tight grip on the virile Varco, who was also caught napping cleverly by the Town backs after bright manoeuvres on the home left. The Town's first big threat was when Yardley gave Turner a beautiful pass; Gray sensed the danger, for he promptly swept the winger's feet from under him. Each goalkeeper had to take long, dropping shots, and Imrie had to fist away once from Armfield, whose pace was a

danger, but, fortunately, he was inclined to more haste than craft. I had been afraid of the City left winger, but most danger came from the right wing, whereas the Town's best work was done on the left, because they had more of the ball. Cupit did not see much of the ball for a long time, and then Tait sent him through with a perfect pass, and the little winger tricked Miller and swung the ball to the opposite wing, where Turner took it on the run, but fired much too high. Turner returned the compliment, but a couple of opponents lay on him, and the ball was scrambled away.

CITY'S CHANCE

The Town defenders were on form, and the halves were playing as well as in any game this season, and though the home forwards swept to the attack time and again, they were repelled by skilful work, and neither goalkeeper had much to trouble about. After a persistent struggle by the City forwards the Town front line took a hand, and the home defence was hard pressed. Turner shot over, and Tait headed just wide, but whenever Loasby tried to get through he was overwhelmed by numbers, and the ball did not come his way very nicely. There appeared to be no danger during midfield exchanges when Yardley received from Fraser, and then tapped the ball back to him; Fraser was not expecting it, and before he or Yardley had realised the danger, Purcell snapped up the ball and went away. He had an easy course in connection with Armfield, and when he received the ball a dozen yards from goal, and to the right, there was a clear line for a shot. He took it, and Imrie dived at full length, but the ball carried a lot of power, and twisted out of his hands, and DONCASTER rushed in and kicked the ball into the net.

AN ESCAPE

On the signal of a linesman, Loasby was wrongly pulled up for offside when he burst through to take a pass from Tait. Then Kean and Tait completely beat the defence, but Cupit was not quick enough to centre, and Miller was able to save the situation at the expense of a corner kick. The little winger placed the ball so that it was dropping under the bar, but Davies, with a clever back-hand swipe, sent it to the left, and Turner sent behind. A moment later there was another hot attack, and this time Turner got the ball over splendidly, and Cupit was heading when bundled into by Miller, and he had to receive attention before he could resume. The Town were now having slightly the better of the exchanges, but, try as they would, could not beat a defence that was packed at the slightest sign of danger. Shortly before the change of ends, Armfield, who was well offside, was allowed to go on, and he turned the ball inside to Varco, who had all the goal to shoot at, but unaccountably lifted it over the bar.

CITY 1
TOWN Nil

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THE City launched fierce attacks, to the accompaniment of a great din among their followers, and the Town backs had to fight hard. Imrie saved several times, and then a free kick was given against Fraser for handling, though he never saw the ball. This was well placed by Clarke, and, from among a crowd of heads, Halliday succeeded, and ball went into the net, but the whistle had gone for offside, and also for Varco getting in Imrie's way purposely. There was better play again by the Town, and once Fraser made a bee-line through the middle and then shot with great power, Childs meeting the ball with his head and being laid out temporarily. Then Loasby was brought down as he was rushing through, and the Town players appealed for a penalty kick, but it was refused. The Town were now the better side, and the home team were playing desperately, chiefly in defence, but when they got away were very hard to check.

A GRAND GOAL

Following a stiff battle between

Kingham and Hodgson and the home inside-forwards, the ball was sent well up the field; with Loasby chasing hard. Gray clean missed his kick, and Loasby was past him in a trice, running along with the ball without opposition, except Davies. The big goalkeeper, however, advanced promptly; Loasby held on until the right moment, and then deliberately lobbed the ball over the goalkeeper's head, and everybody expected a goal, but there was just a little too much elevation, and the ball rose over the bar. After a brief spell at the other end the Town returned to the attack, and twice there were prospects of an equaliser, but the ball was got away. The Town were very persistent, however, and fully deserved the lovely goal that brought them level. Kean initiated the movement after robbing Doncaster, and Cupit nipped inside as Tait bore outwards; the man in possession was tackled by Halliday and Barber, but they could not deprive him, and he beat Miller with a deft touch a dozen yards out; LOASBY accepted, and, with a splendid cross-shot, had Davies beaten all the way. It was a very fine goal, from inception until the ball hit the back of the net at a great pace.

TOWN'S HARD LUCK

The home team were now forced to retreat constantly, and there was a good deal of rough play, though restricted to one or two players. Clarke was the most troublesome in this respect, and one tackle on Yardley might have been disastrous for the latter. Immediately the free kick was taken Clarke got possession, and Yardley hurled himself at the half-back and rocked him off his feet, so the referee intervened. The free kicks that followed were chiefly against Clarke, and helped the Town, who had nearly all the play now. One splendid effort by Cupit brought the best out of Davies, and then Loasby was heavily brought down by Gray well inside the penalty area, but the appeal for a penalty kick was again refused. By hard and fierce play the

City tested the Town defence again, and the Town halves and backs had to be alert. Kingham was once laid out, and Purcell also bit the dust. A quick reply and a great effort by Turner took him right through, and, from point-blank range, he shot with tremendous power, the ball skimming the bar. Loasby was knocked over as he was on the point of shooting, and a clever combined effort by Yardley and Turner enabled the former to swing the ball across goal, Loasby having the hardest luck with a header that grazed the upright farthest away from Davies. Imrie was called upon two or three times, and then Loasby was tripped almost on the penalty line, but McGinnigle shot well wide from the free kick. That was the last incident of note.

DEFENSIVE EXCELLENCE

Although there was a lot of heavy play, and few of the players escaped without bruises or abrasions, apart from one or two instances the game was not "dirty." The City simply went into the struggle with all the spirit and determination at their command. The backs and halves played very much the same sort of game—hard kicking first time, without much craft in placing. The forwards were rather better, but also went in for much individual work, and the main danger to the Town defence came from the speedy following up of the long kicks by the men in the rear. This threw out of gear very often the Town's attempts at methodical football, and brought out the best qualities of the defence. Imrie had only about three or four very difficult shots to deal with, but he did his work extremely well. Kingham and Hodgson played magnificently in their positioning, tackling and kicking, and that was why Imrie's job was not more difficult. I am sure there cannot be a better pair in the South, let alone the Third Division, when they are in this form. Even more gratifying was the vast improvement in the play of the halves by comparison with their form of the previous week. The play of Kean and Fraser

was delightful in its craftsmanship. Exeter have two fine wingers in Armfield and Doncaster, and the Town's wing halves did not master them, but had the better of the many tussles, and Doncaster in particular had a rather poor afternoon. McGinnigle was at his best, irrepresible, and yet going about his work without any ostentation. Vero must have been heartily sick of the sight of him long before the end.

I would not say that the forwards were any better; they worked with plenty of spirit, the inside wingers, Tait and Yardley, being very industrious, and certainly the bustling qualities of Jimmy made a difference in tackling the City's robust defenders. Jimmy also gave Turner some neat passes, but there was no more shooting at goal from him than from Rennie—not as much. Still, he did his part nobly, and so did Tait. The inside-right worked might and main, as usual, and Cupit did one or two good things, revealing further that he is a very promising youngster. Experience is his main need, and that requires time. Loasby was a lively leader, for, although overcrowded in the first half, he persevered, and was a telling factor in the second. With a little luck he would have had a hat-trick, and there should have been at least one penalty kick when he was brought down.

The City's best was Miller; the halves worked resolutely. Childs being a powerful pivot, while Armfield was the pivot of the forwards.

There were 7,000 spectators.

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