

ANOTHER BRACE FOR LUTON

HARD FIGHT WITH TORQUAY

(By Crusader)

ONLY after a grim struggle, in which there was not much that was inspiring, except the pluck and tenacity of the majority of the players, LUTON TOWN took the points from TORQUAY UNITED at Luton on Saturday. It was such a different sort of game that spectators became almost fretful, and sometimes very impatient with the Town players. Torquay made a great fight, and the game might well have provided one of those surprises that provide the shock head-lines.

ALL the goals came after the interval, and the first just at the time when the crowd had begun to think there would be no score, or that Torquay would manage to snatch a goal in one of their frequent strong rushes. There was a case for a penalty kick in the first half, and the award was duly made, but Rennie failed to beat Maggs with the shot, or even with his second essay on securing the rebound from the goalkeeper.

TAIT had also struck the bar, and had hit the goalkeeper with a shot, but against this must be laid the fact that Kingham had once cleared from the Town goal when Harford was unable to get near the ball, and another shot by Birkett which struck the post with the Town goalkeeper prone and nowhere near saving. Though the Town had the better of the play generally, it was not by a big margin, and Torquay's pluck probably merited equality at the change of ends.

THE game had been very vigorous, as instanced by the fact that no fewer than five players had been laid out, and the worst blow of the lot was sustained by Tait. In a fierce tackle by Tennant he was twice fouled, and that was the reason for the penalty kick, and both players had to be helped from the pitch, though they resumed after about five minutes' treatment. As Tait had turned out heavily bandaged, it was obvious that his handicap was the greater.

THAT led to changes in the constitution of the Town attack for the second half, and we had visions of Rennie reproducing some of those scoring feats of three or four seasons back, for he began well, and had two or three shots very close to the mark. So close, indeed, that thereafter the big pivot of the visitors, Martin, stuck to him like a leech. I am not sure that closeness had not favourable effect on the change in the fortunes of the Town.

IN any case, Hutchison was able to score both goals, and the first came as the result of the pluck of Tait. Hobbling about at outside-right, nevertheless, he made the first goal an easy one for the scorer, for he beat the opposing back and placed the ball dead in front of goal for HUTCHISON to score at his ease. The second came as the result of a brilliant shot by HUTCHISON, taken quickly after neatly beating an opponent.

TORQUAY'S goal was scored a minute later, and was due to a misunderstanding in which McGinnigle was less concerned than Kean and Kingham. Well up the field, Kean allowed the ball to go to Kingham to clear, and the latter did not realise his colleague's intentions quickly enough, so that Bird

was able to run away from him and centre just right for STABB to beat Harford at close quarters.

THE Town had the better of the game after this, as far as chances could be reckoned, but they were given some gruelling moments by the business of the Torquay attack, which never lost an opportunity of harassing the defence, and showed any amount of thrustfulness and energy. However, Rennie was only foiled from scoring by the perception of Maggs, while a clear case of handling by Tennant occurred on the blind side of the referee.

IT was a case of all's well that ends well, perhaps, but the Town supporters were not comfortable, especially with the attack showing very poor ideas against an unceremonious lot of defenders. It was disquieting, but, fortunately all teams have not such physical proportions as the visitors. They were a big lot of fellows, especially at half, where Martin was a tower of strength. Maggs also was a very good goalkeeper. Their forwards also showed a lot of nippiness, and were very pushful when near goal.

FOR the Town the middle men formed the most reliable part of the team as usual, even if not so conspicuous as in some games. Kean played like a captain, and it was the wit of himself and Fraser, and the tireless and strenuous exertions of McGinnigle that spoilt so much of the United's intentions. Kingham and Mackey also did very well, and the latter may be better as a back than at centre-half. Harford also did his work well.

HOW far Tait's injury affected the forwards from the beginning is difficult to estimate, but there was nothing like the confidence and the skill that was seen at Brentford. Tait was cautious from the kick-off, for he had not the speed and thrust of previous games. There is no pluckier player in the League than the Town leader, and, all things considered, he did exceedingly well, and if there were a full line as plucky and as versatile we should be wealthy. Even when a cripple, operating at outside-right, he could do the right thing if he had the chance, and made me think of the times I said last season that he would be an asset in that position.

HIS further mishap completely dislocated the line, and the efforts of the others were disjointed. Little seemed to come right for them for a long time, though Hutchison redeemed himself by scoring two goals, and Mills worked very hard and sometimes successfully at inside-left. When the ball was made to do some of the work the Town were always the better side, but against such a fierce and stubborn opposition there was too much holding on.

LUTON TOWN 2
TORQUAY UNITED 1

LUTON.—Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Mills, Hutchison, Tait, Rennie, Rowe.

TORQUAY.—Maggs; Tennant, Tapp; Anderson, Martin, Robinson; Birkett, Orr, G. H. Stabb, Hutchinson, Bird.

Referee: Mr. J. M. Wiltshire, Sherborne.