

TAIT'S BRACE

LUTON TOWN'S RECOVERY AT ALDERSHOT

Brighter Forwards

(By Crusader)

ALDERSHOT TOWN 2
LUTON TOWN 2

ALDERSHOT. — Robb; Wade, McDougall; Armory, Middleton, Lawson; Proud, Lane, Gamble, White, Fishlock.

LUTON. — Imrie; Kingham, Mackey; Keane, McGinnigle, Fraser; Roberts, Nelson, Tait, Rennie, Rowe.

Referee.—Mr. F. Smith, Walsall.

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SHOCK tactics in the opening were responsible for Luton Town failing to gather their first brace of points on opponents' ground at Aldershot on Saturday. It was a fine achievement to share points after such a poor start, but unquestionably the Town should have won. They had the better of the exchanges after the first twenty minutes, and in the second half they were far the superior side, and but for good goal-keeping by Robb they would have won. I don't know whether it was the journey by motor-coach that deprived them of initial energy, but I hardly think so, for it was not a long trip, and they arrived in good time. The little party from Luton soon made themselves heard, and no wonder, for Aldershot went into the

game with such speed and virility that they threatened to sweep the Town off their feet. Nevertheless, the two goals should have been prevented, and it was because Imrie suffered from the general complaint of inertia in the early stages that the goals were scored. Still, the goalkeeper must not have all the blame; the point was that the defenders were not sharp enough to check the shock methods.

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ONCE the team got warmed up, however, they were cleverer than Aldershot, and though for a long time they were disposed to hang on the ball and do pretty-pretty stuff, when they began to open out the game and keep the ball moving from wing to wing they were a great deal better than their hosts. I notice in one report that Luton were "too frequently pulled up for fouling." This is incorrect—very much so. The greater number of free kicks were given against Aldershot, and there should have been a penalty kick given against Wade for an attack on Tait; indeed, the pair nearly resorted to fistcuffs as a result of Wade rushing at

Tait and roughly pushing him during a scuffle in the goal-mouth. The referee consulted a linesman, but that worthy gave so little to the Town in any way, and made some awful blunders, as a consequence of which the referee was led into error, and no penalty kick was awarded, neither was a goal later, when Robb seemed to hook the ball out when it had passed under the bar. The Fates were not kind to the Town at all, but the way they could be masters of their fate would be to start with a little more vim, and to make better use of their scoring chances.

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BY the manner in which the Town got going from the kick-off, we thought they would take an early lead, and Fred Kean made a dribble half the length of the field to win applause, but his shot was inaccurate. The home left wing showed the right way to goal immediately, and then the ball was swung to the right, and McGinnigle got his head in front of a centre from Proud, and the ball went for a corner kick. Proud placed this well, and Imrie should have got it away, but he did not, and FISHLOCK dashed in and scored with a great header, to the delight of about 4,000 spectators. The Town had a turn, but were checked, and then there was a quick dart up the middle by the home forwards, and Lane cunningly lifted the ball forward; there was a shout of "offside" against Gamble, but he played to the whistle; Imrie came out of goal, but only half-heartedly, and GAMBLE lifted the ball almost out of his hands, and it dropped just under the bar. The crowd went almost wild, and shouted for more, but the Town began to see the serious side of things, and the ball was moved about a bit, the right wing being very aggressive, but Nelson wanted to do a little too much. However, from one movement, Rennie had an opening, but he kicked

the ground as he tried a shot, and the ball only trickled into Robb's waiting hands.

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HOWEVER, there was much promise in the way the ball was swung about and Rennie suddenly whopped a low pass up the middle to TAIT; he beat Wade and ran a few yards, and then—thank goodness he did not try to walk the ball into the net—he shot from about ten or a dozen yards range, and although Robb made a gallant effort, and managed to touch the ball, the pace was too hot, and a fine goal it was. Both sides now began to swing the ball from wing to wing, and there was much merit in the way Roberts got the ball and across, and once Tait all but beat Robb, who was applauded for a full-length save. Play was fast and vigorous, and the referee had to speak to players of either side having quite a lengthy lecture for Lane and Rennie. The goalkeepers had about equality of work, though while the Town did rather the more attacking as the interval approached, there was real menace in the attacks of Aldershot, because of the wiles of Lane and the ferocity of Gamble. Once he nearly crashed Imrie against the upright as the goalkeeper was punching the ball, but the referee gave no free kick. Robb was lucky to save his goal two or three times, one header by Nelson being touched only just enough to divert the ball on to the post, whence it ran behind. Considering the holding state of the ground, the pace was good, and the football interesting, but the Town should have been on level terms before crossing over, as they were attacking fiercely before the breather.

ALDERSHOT 2
LUTON 1

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THE Town speedily gained the upper hand in the second half, and were persistently aggressive. The home backs and goalkeeper were kept busily engaged, and with the ball being swung about from wing to wing, and more shooting than usual being attempted, the prospects of an equaliser were bright. The Town halves were playing well up to the attack, and seldom did the home forwards get a run, while McGinnigle now had Gamble fairly well tied up. A series of corners came, and once Wade was loudly cheered for falling back and heading out when a goal was certain but for his sagacity, as Robb was right out of position. Nelson was prominent, and from a pass by McGinnigle he gave Roberts a splendid pass, and the winger, responding to the cries of the Lutonians to centre first time, got the ball across just right for TAIT to leap above both Wade and McDougall, and with a glorious header send the ball right away from Robb into the top corner of the net.

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ALMOST immediately we had visions of the lead, for the right wing again had the opposition guessing, and when Roberts lifted the ball across Tait headed it on to inside left; Rennie came rushing up for what appeared to be one of his expresses, but just as he let drive the ball rose off a bump and struck his knee, and then rebounded from Robb as the goalkeeper dashed out. This was a near thing, and the Town redoubled their efforts, and Aldershot concentrated on defence, White and Lane both falling back to give the defenders aid. From a splendid shot by Roberts, the ball was brilliantly seized under the bar just in time by Robb, and as Tait tried to kick the ball out of his hands Wade rushed at him and committed the offence referred to above. The referee consulted a linesman and then gave a corner kick. Now and then Proud and Gamble made a raid, but seldom gave Imrie anything difficult to deal with, and the Town, by open methods, had the home defence on tenterhooks.

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DURING one assault the ball was well centred by Roberts, and Tait let it go to the left, and Rennie came full tilt to shoot with all his power, and the ball wrecked Wade, who got in the way of a scoring shot. The back collapsed, and had to be carried off. Aldershot defended desperately, and Robb made many good saves, and both Roberts and Rowe centred finely during this half. Once White and Gamble got away, and the inside left had a shot, but the ball travelled over the bar. At the other end Rowe tore through and sent in a shot which appeared to be well under the bar, but Robb got a hand to it, and scraped it over, an appeal for a goal being disallowed—the linesman again having the decision. Robb took the ball off Roberts' toe when close in, and then Nelson dribbled forty yards and would have scored had he shot from seven or eight yards, but he tried to go another yard or two and was brought down in a heap with two defenders on top of him, and the ball was rushed away. Robb again saved finely from Roberts, and then, with Wade back again the home team tried to snatch a victory. Proud and Gamble were the agents, and they went through cleverly, but Imrie saved finely at the foot of the upright, and Kingham and Mackey also cleared well. The Town had returned to the attack when the whistle brought the game to an end.

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THOUGH there was some rough stuff now and then, it was not an unpleasant game. Lawson will probably receive a letter from the F.A., for his name was taken, and after that incident the crowd wanted the official to take every player's name. It was the first time I had seen Mr. Smith in action, and he would have done better had he been rather more firm and less dramatic. Still, in several decisions that were wrong he was misled by his linesmen, notably a case in the second half, when Nelson was given offside when there was a back quite ten yards in front of him. The blame for the Aldershot goals must not rest wholly with Imrie. The team generally did not strike off as quickly as they should have done, but he could have saved

the second goal. Still, he made some fine saves, and both his backs played well after the first five minutes. Kingham showed a lot of improvement, and his kicking and tackling were fine, while Mack: played a splendid game. In one match he shapes as if he did not know what a full-back was meant to do, and then in the next game he plays as though he had never known any other position. He was in capital form in this game, and he had to meet the stronger wing.

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THE halves showed up much better than the Aldershot middle line, especially in support of their forwards. The home halves usually booted the ball hard for their forwards to chase it, but the Town trio passed well, and followed up strongly. McGinnigle seems to have struck his very best form, and Kean was great. Fraser was not so consistently prominent as usual, but he did brilliant things, and no man could excel him in the art of feeding. The forwards seem to be getting back to something of the quality they showed last season, and though they still showed inclination to dribble too much at times, Nelson being the chief sinner, they gradually realised the wisdom of open play, and by swinging the ball from wing to wing, and taking up position for the return pass they accomplished so much more work, and were infinitely more dangerous. Tait played his best game since his injury, and it is to be hoped that he will continue to take his shooting chances. He led the line well, and Rennie also played with more of his old craft than usual. He had hard luck with his shooting. Nelson is a grafter and his control was fine, but he should not overdo the dribbling. I like him for his courage as well as his skill, and Roberts could not complain about the passes he received, but a sharp shot to the left instead of a headlong dribble would enrich Nelson's virtues. Rowe did very much better than in recent games, while Roberts quite justified his inclusion. Now and then he required a reminder that it would be better to centre quickly, and there was no forward who got the ball into the goal area to better advantage.

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ROBBS kept goal finely for the home team, and he had two useful backs in Wade and McDougall. I liked the latter the better because even in the most hectic moments he did not lose his head, but played a clean and reliable game. Armory was the best of the halves, and is a very skilful young player, while of the forwards, Lane showed that he has lost none of his cunning. Gamble was an assertive leader, and Proud was speedy and centred well.

There were 4,500 spectators