

TORQUAY'S TURN

LUTON LOSE FOR FIRST TIME AT PLAINMOOR

Fighting Spirit Lacking

(By CRUSADER)

TORQUAY UNITED 3
LUTON TOWN 1

TORQUAY.—Maggs; Tennant, Tapp; Anderson, D. Welsh, Robinson; Birkett, Mills, Stabb, Hutchinson, Orr.

LUTON.—Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Brown, McGinnigle, Fraser; Mills, Nelson, Tait, Alderson, Roberts.

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

LUTON TOWN were well beaten at TORQUAY on Saturday, but the best summary of the game might well be given in the views expressed by one of the players of each side at different times, neither having knowledge of what the other had said. The Town player remarked that the Cup-ties were beating them in League games; the Torquay player said that the Town were playing like a team that had either out-played themselves or were saving themselves. I prefer the latter part of the Torquay player's opinion. Some of the players were all out, but there was a definite reluctance on the part of several to let themselves go. Indeed, but for this, I fancy there would have been one or two of the home players "straightened out," notably the local lads, Tapp, Stabb and Mills. The two first named were particularly inclined to roughness, and, with a referee who, in my opinion, was "hanging to the crowd," offences passed without rebuke. When a Luton player offended, however, the referee had something to say, usually with dramatic gesture, and so evoked the plaudits of the crowd. I shall have something to say in my notes in the "News" about one offside decision that would have reduced a Bedfordshire junior official from Class A to Class C.

FRASER AS CAPTAIN

I am not blaming the referee for the defeat. Although not as lackadaisical as in the match at Coventry, the Town did not look like winning, because they never strove with that courage and persistency necessary to win League games, especially away from home. At times they gave glimpses of the ability they showed against the Spurs, and in the first half against Brentford, but, generally, they were content to maintain an even pace that was quite as good as that of Torquay, but minus the punch.

AN EARLY THRILL

We had a thrill in the first few seconds, for the first Luton player to touch the ball was Harford, who made a great save. Stabb kicked off, secured the ball from one of his colleagues and went right through to shoot hard and low, and Harford dived to push the ball round the upright just in time. Torquay's amateur pivot, making his bow in League football, cleared twice when the Town threatened, but a neat passing run by Roberts and Tait shook the confidence of the home crowd, and a splendid effort was made by the centre-forward as he rattled a shot over the bar. Kingham was in the picture with fine defensive play, and Harford also accepted two or three efforts.

MILLS' BOMBS

Mills closed in wisely after a move on the left, and again had hard luck with a shot that travelled at almost lightning speed over the bar. Tait was likewise wrong in his aim after a thrusting movement, and then Mills was only inches out of his reckoning with a terrific shot when Nelson nodded the ball over to him. There had not seemed much danger of a goal at the Town end when it came after a shade over the half-hour's play. A long pass found Birkett in solitary splendour on the touch-line, and he had plenty of time to centre; there was no one of his own side within yards of the ball when KINGHAM went to meet it with his head. To his own and Harford's discomfiture, the greasy ball skidded from his head into the corner of the net farthest from Harford. The Town could not make good use of several free kicks, but maintained the offensive, and Torquay's defenders were often hard pressed to get the ball away. They did not stand on ceremony, however, and though all the forwards had shots at goal, if they did get the right direction Maggs was very much at home, and at the change of ends the home team were ahead.

TORQUAY 1
LUTON 0

The second half opened in like manner to the first, but this time the Town backs were on the look out for Stabb, and he was easily frustrated by Kingham. Maggs watched a couple of shots go past the upright, and then Welsh changed the scene of operations with a good

dribble and a hot shot which was wide of the mark. A nice pass by McGinnigle set his forwards on the move, and the ball was slanted to the right by Alderson; Mills took it on the run, and Maggs saved finely by tipping the ball over the bar. Harford was called into action by Birkett, and Stabb landed in the back of the net, and was allowed to claw at Harford on his way there. When the Town returned, Tait was badly fouled by Tapp, and from Roberts' neat free-kick, the home goal seemed likely to fall, but the whistle went during a hot scuffle almost under the bar. Harford did good work when he twice grabbed shots from Stabb, who was getting a lot of latitude and thriving on it, and Birkett narrowly missed with a header from close range. Then came a dazzling movement by the Town forwards. Fraser initiated it, and each player had a part as the ball was taken through, and finally Mills got possession and shot hard all along the ground, the goalkeeper being beaten, but the ball passed out just past the further post.

TORQUAY THREE UP

Torquay redoubled their efforts after this, and Harford made a couple of brilliant saves, once leaping across the goal to turn the ball round the post, and then snapping the ball off Stabb's boot. Long and hard kicks by the Torquay backs were chased by the home forwards, and Harford was often in action, though generally the shots came from long range. Nelson was prominent in a sharp assault, and Maggs snatched up the ball when a ruck of players tried to get at it in the goal area. The second half had been in progress about half an hour when Torquay went farther ahead. Anderson banged the ball into the goal-mouth, and Harford ran out to punch as Kingham and Mackey went to head it, but HUTCHINSON got there first and headed the ball into the net. About a minute later there was a similar goal. This time the ball came from the left, Orr banging it in front of goal with none to interfere with STABB. Harford ran out, but he had no chance.

NELSON SUCCEEDS

The Town came again, showing very neat footwork, beating the home halves easily, but they wanted to go close before snooting, and the backs were able to intervene. Harford again had to use all his wits to keep his charge intact, and once the goal had a narrow escape when Birkett got the ball over the goalkeeper's head, but Harford turned quickly and got it away, much to the surprise of the crowd. Once Hutchinson drove in a terrific shot from nearly thirty yards, but Harford dived and stopped it. After too much of Harford for our comfort, Mackey came up the field and lifted the ball into the goal-mouth. Maggs made a good save, and Tait tried to rob him and was fouled by Tapp. The Town player resented this, but all the referee did was to talk most to Tait, though how he failed to see Tapp kick the Town player I cannot imagine. Maggs brought off another marvellous save from Mills, and then Tait was given offside, although Tapp kicked the ball to him. It was a ludicrous decision. Still, the Town came again, and once more Mackey came well up with the ball and lifted it into the goal-mouth; NELSON went in too quickly for the backs, and headed past Maggs as the latter dived for the ball.

PLAYERS

Harford again kept goal splendidly, though it was a moot point whether he was not at fault when Torquay scored their second goal. There was a proper mix-up, however, and it was one of those incidents when everybody or nobody should be blamed. He made great saves, however, and did his work coolly and expeditiously. Kingham had the ill-luck of beating his own goal-keeper for the second game in succession, and it is to be hoped that he is not going to make a habit of it. Neither back was at full stretch, however, or Stabb would have had his energies curbed very early on. The halves played an in and out game, sometimes doing very clever work and at other times being beaten for speed and position. Brown played really well in the first half, but was not so prominent in the second. McGinnigle allowed Stabb more rope than the opposing centre-forward usually gets, and Fraser was the most polished half-back on view. Tait did not get very much scope, and was inclined to hang on, and usually found his progress barred by two or three opponents. Alderson and Nelson did good things, though not consistent, and the general fault was to hang on to the ball instead of opening out the game. Roberts was good and moderate by turn, and Mills was the liveliest of the line, and might well have had three or four goals. I liked the way he closed in for a shot, and he will not always miss half a dozen times, as in this game, by inches only.