

Luton Unlucky

CLOSE GAME WITH PROMOTION CANDIDATES

(By Crusader)

UNTIL Fred Kean was crippled, LUTON TOWN'S re-organised attack put up a splendid game at NORWICH on Saturday. The mishap occurred after rather less than fifteen minutes' play, and it will therefore be understood by the Town followers that the rest of the side, playing against a big, strong team full of confidence and determination to prosecute their vigorous challenge for promotion, made a very gallant fight. It was not a matter for wonder, even when the captain returned to the field for a brief spell, and hobbled about on the extreme right, that Norwich, playing down the pronounced slope of their small ground, had much the better of the exchanges.

They swooped down on the Town goal persistently, and only now and then did the Town forwards cause anxiety to the Norwich rearguard. It was a quite noteworthy feat that the score was kept down to one goal before half-time, and the defence played with great courage and skill against odds. The goal fell to a brilliant header by SCOTT from a corner kick after twenty-five minutes' play, but there were several thrilling escapes. Harford brought off a number of very fine saves, but Kingham and Mackey, assisted by McGinnigle and Fraser, did clever work, and none more deserved a rest from their ordeal at the change of ends.

There was a very different story to be told in the second half, and, although the Town forces were reduced by the absence of Kean, the re-arranged forward line proved fully as much as the home defenders could manage. The equalising goal came after some twenty minutes, and, although it was spiced with luck, it was deserved on the run of the game. Mills, who had returned to the extreme right wing, banged in a high centre, and Robinson, the goalkeeper, was apparently disturbed as Weaver rushed in, with the result that he dropped the ball, and WEAVER calmly back-heeled the ball into goal.

The City goal was often in serious danger after this, and all the four forwards played fine football, while Fraser often made his way into the forward line and assisted Nelson to carry play right into the danger zone. Robinson made good saves, and several shots went close. The crowd became very excited as they saw a point slipping away, a very valuable point from the aspect of promotion, and the City were urged on by an excited and anxious crowd. The escapes of the City goal were cheered as though every kick out of danger meant safety, and yet, when the winning goal came, there was a lot of sympathy for the Town.

There came a sweeping pass from the City right wing, and the referee overlooked obvious fouls by Brown on McGinnigle, but penalised the latter when he put his arms round the obstructionist. BLAKEMORE gave Harford no chance to save the penalty kick, and the match was won. Harford made some other fine saves in this half, but the greater pressure was exerted at the other end, and the City crowd were disagreeably surprised at the ease with which their team was held in the second period, though the Town were not so consistently aggressive as had been the City in the first half.

It was very hard luck indeed to lose the match on such a decision after making a grand fight. There were a few Town supporters there, and perhaps that was all to the good, since they, as many City followers, were of opinion that the referee was in error. The City players were very pleased to hear the final whistle, for they had been kept on tenterhooks all through the second half, and the Town's experimental forward line merited all praise for their brave show. Mills did better at outside-right than on the left, of course, but Pacey, who went inside after Kean got hurt, also showed up well. Weaver gave a very promising exhibition at centre, for he was knocked about a good deal, and yet contrived to get in some nice touches, and often misled the opposition. Nelson played a great game throughout.

Hutchison, who undertook the half-back role after Kean's hurt, was magnificent. He sensed the wisdom of copying the City's methods when playing downhill, and time after time he set his forwards going, while he also did a lot of useful forward work. McGinnigle once more held up a dashing centre-forward who tops the list of goal-scorers for his club. Brown could do nothing against the dour Scot, who showed remarkable speed and ubiquity, while Fraser was the most polished half-back on the field. Some of his supporting work was brilliant to a degree. Kingham and Mackey were very powerful backs, and both played intelligently and courageously all through, while Harford gave something near his best of the season.

NORWICH CITY 2

LUTON TOWN 1

NORWICH.—Robinson (R.); Hannah, Smith; Robinson (B); Williamson, Ramsay; Bell, Scot, Brown, Blakemore, Murphy.

LUTON.—Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Pacey, Hutchison, Weaver, Nelson, Mills.

Referee: Mr. A. J. Spittle, Gravesend.