

TORQUAY TAKEN DOWN

LUTON WIN BY ODD GOAL AFTER STERN STRUGGLE

Strong Defensive Play

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN 1
TORQUAY UNITED 0

TORQUAY: Maggs; Fowler, Tapp; Llewesley, D. Welsh, Pickersgill; Stabb, Walters, Flavell, Kennedy, Bird.

LUTON: Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Pease, Martin, Bell, Rennie (A.), Reece.

Referee: Mr. L. E. Gibbs, Reading.

ONE goal was sufficient to give LUTON TOWN a well-earned victory at TORQUAY on Saturday. It did not fully reflect the comparative merits of the teams, but it would be inaccurate to suggest that it was an easy game for the winners. Torquay played the type of football that has succeeded all too often against the Town this season, and it required a vigilant defence to keep them at bay. They fought hard and vigorously, but generally fairly, from beginning to end, but it struck me more than once that they were labouring under the recollection of their experience at Luton, and the first duty they had set themselves was to keep their goal safe at all hazards, and leave attack to develop as it might. As a result there were very few concerted efforts, by halves and forwards. Big kicking by halves and backs, with forwards chasing the ball into the Luton area, and tackling the defenders as strenuously as they could, were poor means of success as compared with the cool, and sometimes too close, combination of the Town. It is true that Maggs had not a gruelling day, but he had twice the work that fell to Harford, and that was an indication of the general superiority of the Town, who did not show any indecent haste in shooting for goal. Torquay were ready to have a bang if they got near enough, but as a rule they were baulked before they could seize a chance. One feature of the game was contrary to expectations. It was a clean and well-fought match, with only one or two spasms that brought rebuke from the referee, who handled the game exceedingly well.

WHAT WELSH CAUGHT

Fred Kean won the toss, just to show that he could be contrary to the views of his colleagues in the dressing-room, and when the game opened the Town had the wind and the rain at their backs. Later the wind abated somewhat, but the ground was very treacherous, both from the aspect of foothold and the pace of the ball. The Town left made play, and Fowler and Llewesley in turn quickly had the ball among the crowd. It was clear that Welsh had resolved to baulk Bell at any cost, and he stuck grimly to the town centre-forward when he tried to get clear. A bright bit of work by Walters took him through, but as McGinnigle closed on him he lifted the ball over, and Bird was found to be off-side. The first shot of note came from Rennie, a characteristic hook shot as the ball jumped tip high, but Maggs was not caught napping. Martin made a sinuous dash, and the ball went out to the left, Reece returning it, and Rennie caught it on the move. Welsh probably saved a goal when he got in the way, for the ball was travelling at almost lightning speed direct for the target. The home pivot went down like a log and lay motionless until he had received attention from trainers and ambulance men. Mackey and McGinnigle frustrated raids by the home forwards, and then Pease had a chance to slip away from Pickersgill, and he centred into the goal area, but Maggs forestalled Bell. Welsh did grand work and was the mainstay of the home defence, his duels with Bell being a source of entertainment, apart from the usefulness to the harassed defence. Once Bell eluded him and chased a pass from McGinnigle, but as he was on the point of shooting Fowler bundled him off. In a quick sally on the home right a corner was forced, but Harford got his fists to the ball and it sailed out of danger. Kean and Fraser supported their wings to good purpose and Pease and Reece were often in the picture, though the latter often slowed up attack by passing back to Fraser when he should have centred first time.

ONE FOR TAPP

During one movement in which the halves supported the attack as a line McGinnigle got possession, and his hard shot felled Tapp. Stabb was a worker on the home right, and once he went clean away and there was a hush of expectancy as he took aim, but the ball went into the side net with Harford keeping close watch. The Town's reply to this was a move in which Martin and Rennie were conspicuous, and the ball went into a scrum from which Bell took a chance shot, only to find Maggs in position. Stabb raced away again, and shot very hard, but the ball rebounded from Mackey's foot for a fruitless corner. For a few minutes the Town defence had to work hard, but the head-work of Kingham, Mackey, and the halves was too good for the home attack, and no shot for goal was made. The Town were consistently getting close when they made a move, the passing being accurate, but the defence was sound, and Maggs was always ready for the true-aimed efforts. Kean shot over and Pease, Martin and Rennie all made good efforts. Bell's constant harassment of the defenders was nearly rewarded when he troubled Maggs so much after the goalkeeper had run out to the edge of the penalty area, that he lost the ball, and while he was out Pease took a quick drive, only to see Fowler bob

up under the bar in the nick of time and head away. After another spasm in the vicinity of Harford the Town pressed hotly, and Maggs saved from Reece while a fine shot by Fraser struck a boot and was deflected from goal. Neat footwork by Reece and Fraser looked like bringing a goal, for they got the ball to within a yard or two of goal, only to hang on too long, and so the interval arrived.

TORQUAY 0
LUTON 0

For some time after the re-start there was not much danger to either goal, but in response to the shouts of the crowd, Torquay at last made a determined effort. McGinnigle did magnificent spoiling work, but the ball was no sooner kicked clear than it was returned into the Town penalty area. A corner was forced, and it looked certain that Walters would score, as he dashed in to meet the flag kick, but he failed to get the ball, and it went out of danger. Then the Town, by clever dribbling and passing, made a series of assaults, but Welsh defended grandly and took a big load off his backs. From centres by Reece, Pease shot wide, and then headed just past the upright when a goal seemed certain. Bell was still a heap of trouble, in spite of the close attention of Welsh, and he gave Maggs anxiety with his persistence. Kingham was also too good for Flavell when the centre-forward tried to bore through, and Walters was in a bad way when he hurled himself at Mackey, and the result was a job for the ambulance men. However, he soon came back to the fray, exchanging places with Stabb.

SHARP STABB

There were long periods that were simply like marking time, but Stabb tried desperately hard to break through, and his rushes, if not very pretty, were troublesome. From the left wing came a couple of centres that were very dangerous, and had there been a forward wise enough to close in, Harford could have had little chance. It was some time before the Town again took a lively interest in Maggs's situation, and when they did a fine shot by Martin sailed just too high. Bird raised a song among the crowd as he struggled through on the left and cut in for goal, but Mackey robbed him in the nick of time. End-to-end play followed, Rennie and Martin in turn opening out the game well, but the home defenders covered up well and never relaxed their vigilance. Maggs was often in action, and Pease put in a mighty shot which just topped the bar.

RENNIE'S GOAL

There was a shout when Mackey knocked Stabb off his feet, and the referee gave a free kick, apparently for a heavy charge, and Harford saved splendidly when Llewesley drove in a hard low shot. The Town got away again, and a good movement brought success. McGinnigle and Kean started it, and the ball went to the Town right. There was a check, and the ball was sent to the left; Fraser raced and took possession, side-footing the ball to Reece, who banged it well across goal; Pease met it and headed in, Maggs beating the ball out as he was challenged by Bell; it went to RENNIE, who shot hard and low into the net before the goalkeeper could recover. The home players made a half-hearted appeal, and the referee went over to consult the linesman, who confirmed the decision. In the last few minutes the Town had to play to keep their lead, but Rennie was just too high with a capital effort, and Reece and Pease each went close. At the other end, Walters made a praiseworthy effort, but had not the right direction.

THE PLAYERS

Harford did his little coolly and safely, and his backs were in fine form. Kingham gave one of his best displays, his kicking and tackling being sure and effective. Once more Mackey had no equal as a defender, especially when strength and skill were in demand concurrently. All the halves were on form, and considering that he was far from well, McGinnigle put up a wonderful game. At one period in the second half he was well-nigh invincible. Kean and Fraser both played right up to their best, both in defence and attack, and the understanding with the wings was notable.

FORWARDS

Pease and Martin were clever on the right, though the latter was not so prominent as in the previous game. They often had the opposition guessing, as also did Rennie, whose passing was excellent. He gave Reece many good openings for a sprint, but the latter did not respond well in the first half, too often putting the ball back to Fraser, who usually muddled well. Reece was a worker, and in the second half did much better, centring well, but I prefer him as a defender. Bell could not shake off the attentions of Welsh, who closely shadowed him, but he was always troubling the defence, and his challenge had something to do with the goal that won the match.

Maggs kept goal well, and Fowler was a very good back. Welsh was magnificent, and undoubtedly has a big future. Pickersgill and Llewesley also worked hard. Stabb was the most dangerous forward, but got little change out of Mackey.

3,000 spectators.

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