

HEAVY DEFEAT AT TORQUAY

CHANCES MISSED BEFORE DEFENCE COLLAPSES

A Lead Lost

(By CRUSADER)

TORQUAY UNITED 6
(Hutchinson, Morgan, Beedall (2),
Stabb (2)).
LUTON TOWN 2
(Bell, T. Stephenson).

IT is unwise to ask a team to undertake a journey that occupies over six hours immediately before a game. The Town left Luton at 8.48 on Saturday morning, and arrived at Plainmoor at 3 o'clock. At 3.25 they were on the field, and without a shadow of doubt they were handicapped from the very start, in spite of the vigorous work that Horace Pakes and the players themselves put in by way of massage during that twenty-five minutes.

In spite of this, and in face of the dimensions of the defeat, this match should have been won. So well did the team play for an hour that I thought they had overcome the disadvantage of the long journey, and they were leading for the greater part of the first half solely on merit.

Even when the United had drawn level, and again when they led by a goal, the Town had enough chances to have won the match, but in the last twenty minutes the defence collapsed, and the result was the heaviest defeat Luton Town have sustained since they went to Everton a year ago last March.

WANTED TEN GOALS

Conditions were not bad, for apart from a greasy turf owing to the rain that had fallen before we arrived, there was nothing to quibble about. There were not 3,500 spectators present, but they made enough noise for 10,000, and became very excited. At times, I think, the noise influenced the referee, who did very well in the early stages, and the linesmen in more or less degree. The Town players became rather sore about some of the second-half decisions, and particularly about the goal that apparently decided the issue. When the sixth goal was scored against Coen the crowd began to yell for ten goals, for they had not forgotten the severe defeat sustained by their team at Luton last season, when the Town totted double figures.

EARLY EXCHANGES

Tom Mackey again acted as skipper of the Town, but failed to guess correctly the spin of the coin, and the home side had the advantage of a slight breeze. A quick threat by the United right soon gave an inkling of their methods; they simply gave the ball plenty of boot, and cashed at the Town defenders in the act of clearing. A swinging pass from Steele right across the ground went to Morgan, who drove the ball into the middle, but Thayne cleared well, nudging off Stabb's short to dispossess him. The centre-half shot the ball right up the middle, and Tom Bell took it and veered to the right

wing, but as he shot Dickenson charged him, and the ball went behind. Brown came into the picture with clever footwork, and swung the ball out to the left, but the pace was too much for Russell. However, by neat passing the Town forwards came again, and Russell compelled Gregg to kick behind in a hurry, but the outside-left did not place the flag-kick to advantage. Hutchison next hoodwinked Dickenson, and then drove in a fast ground shot which Maggs gathered as he went to his knees.

HUTCHINSON'S GOAL

Two more efforts by Tom Bell and Stephenson were saved by Maggs, and then Welsh shouldered off Tom Bell and sent the ball up the middle. Hutchison secured and drove out to the extreme right, where Steele rounded Reece and centred. There was a mix-up on the penalty line, but Stabb managed to divert the ball to HUTCHINSON, who shot on the move, a grand effort which carried the ball into the net wide of Coen's right

Apologies to readers for the 'failure of the telephone service from Torquay to the "Saturday Telegraph." It is many years since there was such a break-down in the arrangements, which involve considerable expens. Investigations into the failure are proceeding.

hand, and thus opened Torquay's account. This was an early blow, but, so far from disheartening the Town, it made them play harder. They had need for Torquay went into the fray with greater determination than ever. Mackey played finely, and was well backed by Thayne, but Reece and Beck were finding the home right wing a menace. However, the danger was frustrated, and the Town forwards, among whom Sam Bell was especially prominent for quick and decisive work, came into action. Gregg and Dickenson booted the ball anywhere for safety, and Welsh worked like two men. The United pivot's fine tackling held up the Town forwards again and again, and the play was very lively and interesting.

TOM BELL SCORES

From the scientific aspect the Town were providing a better entertainment, and were far more dangerous, and it was the

result of a cute little move by Sam Bell and Stephenson that brought the equaliser. Stephenson took the inst. right pass, drew Jones, and then shot the ball up the wing for Russell to race through. He tricked Gregg beautifully, and centred to a nicely, and TOM BELL headed into the net well out of Maggs' reach. It was a very fine goal, and so encouraged the Town that they had the home halves and backs on the run. Welsh was the mainstay of the defence in this period, but another goal must have come but for "hands" against Stephenson. Hutchison had beaten the defence from Sam Bell's pass, and he lifted the ball in front of goal, where Stephenson collected and had only Maggs in front of him. The ball rose sharply and struck his arm and the whistle sounded for an infringement.

STEPHENSON FOLLOWS SUIT

Still pressing hard, the Town returned through neat passing all along the front line, and two or three corners were forced, Welsh gaining applause for his splendid clearances. Mackey was very sound when the home forwards tried to force a passage, and STEPHENSON was always ready to foul out Tom Bell rather badly. Beck took the free kick and Sam Bell received, turning the ball inside as he was rushed, and up for such chances, darted through and beat Maggs easily with a hard shot. The crowd encouraged the United with fierce shouts and play became more vigorous. Coen had to save long shots, and others went behind. Mackey and Reece cleared well. Sam Brown was sound. Welsh was good work, while it was noticeable that Sam Bell was always ready to give the defence a helping hand. Had Brown passed once more on occasions when he had drawn opponents, the Town would have received more benefit from his skilful footwork, for, in contrast to the home halves, he was able to keep the ball down. Welsh did magnificent work, and held up the Town inside forwards again and again.

THE LAST KICK

Torquay were having the better of the exchanges in the quarter of an hour before the end. The Town were not playing finely and staved off many hot attacks, while the quick shooting of the home forwards kept Coen alert, though many shots were well away from target. In a spurt by the Town forwards Maggs ran out and made a capital save, grabbing the ball off Tom Bell's head as the centre-forward tried to turn past him. Russell was wrongly given offside as he sprinted through with a clear course after Sam Bell, who had tricked Welsh. Jones. A spirited reply by Torquay brought the best out of Coen, and he made two splendid saves within half a minute from Morgan and Beedall. Brown made a liant dribble and then joined with Hutchison and Sam Bell in a movement which completely beat the home defence, and the ball was lifted over to the left wing for Russell to close in and shoot, but he was off the mark. Welsh tried to improve the outlook for his side by going right, but Mackey met him with a full-blooded charge just outside the penalty area, and the centre-half went down. The referee gave a free kick, though there was no foul, the shoulder employed in the charge, but the free kick brought nothing worse than a fruitless corner. However, Torquay persisted, and equalised with the very kick before half-time. From a rush on the right wing Jones drove the ball right across goal. MORGAN was unattended close in, and had no difficulty in beating Coen. Before the ball could be kicked off, the whistle sounded the interval.

TORQUAY 2
LUTON 2

There was no sign of weakness in the Town defence when the game was resumed. Torquay took up the pressure and the right wing had plenty of scope, for Beck was very slow, a kick on the calf of the leg in the first half having crippled him considerably. The Town were not dilatory in taking up the challenge, and for a long time there were tame exchanges, the defenders on either side beating masters of the situation, and neither goalkeeper was tested. Torquay brought more vim into the business, and Coen was required to deal with good shots by Welsh and Steele. He saved finely from the latter, and Hutchison tried another speculative shot, which was a yard wide. The Town had another turn. Sam Bell and Stephenson working hard, but Tom Bell was frequently whistled offside, at least once when he had beaten a man for possession, and the Town players were finding the linesmen more keen than efficient.

TORQUAY'S LEAD

In a move on the Town left Russell received from Beck and bored through, but Welsh took the centre, and then both Gregg and Dickenson booted the ball into the crowd to stop the Town left. Coen was again applauded for fine work, but Steele's pace and centres gave much trouble, while Stabb worked desperately in the middle, and challenged Thayne and the backs every time the ball came across. There was further success for Torquay as the result of a grand bit of passing on the home right, thanks to Hutchison's skilful work in his own penalty area. He sent them away, and the defence was drawn; the ball sent over, and BEEDALL scored with a clinking shot.

CHANCES MISSED

Almost immediately Brown brought more life into the Town's attack by his bright dribbling, and he drew the opposition and sent out to the left. Russell took the ball and went close in; he would have scored and he shot straight, but he hit the side net, and meanwhile the three inside forwards

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were waiting for the pass back, and had the goal clear. Tom Bell was again wrongly given offside as he captured a long pass up the middle by Mackey, who had come right up with the ball at his toe, and then a grand movement, in which all the Town forwards and Brown took part, seemed certain to succeed; the defence was in a tangle; Maggs saved brilliantly, but Stephenson met the rebound and shot with all the force he could put into it, only to see the ball strike the goalkeeper and rebound, and Maggs had no idea whence the shot came.

A DISPUTE

Torquay's fourth goal followed a few minutes later. Hutchinson was again the prime mover, and from his neat pass Morgan got clean away; he centred, and STABB met the ball but could not get it under control with his body, and used his hands to put the ball past Coen. A linesman flagged, and the Town players appealed strenuously; the referee went over to consult the linesman, and then the latter patted his breast, the assumption being that Stabb had breasted the ball through, and when the Town players pointed out that the linesman had flagged immediately Stabb handled, the referee threatened the dressing-room.

COEN'S ERROR

The Town did not lose heart, though the odds were now heavily against them, and when Welsh miskicked, Tom Bell shot past him, oriented on with the goal at his mercy; Maggs rushed out, and the Town centre-forward slipped the ball past him, intending to run round him and put it into the net. Maggs had other views; he simply crashed into the Town centre-forward and brought him heavily to earth, and the ball meanwhile trickled past the upright. Appeals for a penalty kick were wasted, and the Town had little chance of drawing level again. However, they plugged away, and in a fierce tussle Dickenson kicked his thigh and had to be carried off. Sam Bell dribbled right through, and from the inside-left position shot splendidly, the ball beating Maggs as it flew across goal to skim the bar. Stephenson was given offside when he collected another pass from the right wing, and then Coen made his first mistake. A big kick sent the ball high towards goal; Coen ran out and misjudged the distance; he took a flying kick at the ball as it fell, kicked the ground, and left STABB with an easy goal.

A few minutes later a free kick was given the United, and BEEDALL took this and shot into the net, the Town defenders failing to cover up adequately. There were a few flutters at either end afterwards, but there was no further score.

THE DEFENCE

Coen did very well indeed, but he certainly made a big mistake over the fifth goal. There were two main causes of defeat, however. In the first place the Town forwards did not take the chances as they should have done; in the second the defence, especially on the left flank, failed. Mackey played splendidly all through; he was cool and calculating all the time until upset by the decision that gave Torquay the fourth goal. He undertook the duties of captain very thoroughly, and appears to play all the better for the responsibility. Reece had a bad match, but was left with too much to do. Beck is a young player who is sure to make good, but he is not yet ready for League football, and the injury he sustained in the first half made matters worse. He tried to cover too much ground, with the result that the opposing wing has too much scope. Thayne played very well, and there could be few regrets concerning him, though he could do with a little more pace. His stamina is all right, and he plays the game. Brown played well up to a point, but at times dribbled too much; had he made his passes sooner the attack would have been more effective.

FORWARDS

Sam Bell was again the live spark in attack; working hard all the time, and though often seen giving assistance to the halves, he was always in his place when there was anything to be done near the opponents' goal. He did not get the best out of Hutchinson simply because the latter was slow, and a leg injury took all the steam out of the latter. In the second half he could hardly raise his left foot, and the attack was slowed up. Stephenson worked as hard as Sam Bell, fearing nothing; he was quick on the ball, and passed well, and he also was able to recover his place in the forward line after assisting the defence. Russell did not play up to his best by a long way, though doing a few good things, and Tom Bell, though a trier all the time, and never shirking anything, found the physique of the opposition too strong.

TORQUAY

Maggs did well in the home goal, and his backs kicked powerfully, but the outstanding man in defence was Welsh, who is surely about the strongest pivot in the Southern Section. He has broad shoulders and uses them, generally fairly. The flank halves could be beaten, but the centre-half was able to cover a lot of ground, and he did not slavishly rely upon defence. When necessary he came into the open. Hutchinson played well against his first professional club, was astute in finding either wing with long passes, and always eager for a shot. Stabb was very energetic, and Beedall played a nice game, while Steele made good use of his opportunities.