

THIRD CONSECUTIVE WIN

LUTON SUCCEED AGAIN AT EXETER

GOALS FOR BALL AND CROMPTON

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	2
(Ball, Crompton)	
EXETER CITY	1
(Ebdon)	

EXETER. — Chesters; Gray, Lowton; Robinson, Angus; Hurst, Scott (T.), Ebdon, McLean, V. Hoyle.
LUTON — Coen; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Crompton, Martin, Roberts, Stephenson.
Referee.—C. E. Lines, Birmingham.

EXETER CITY'S desperate straits made them dangerous foemen at St. James's Park, and they went down gallantly against LUTON TOWN'S superior side. Ground advantage stands for a lot at this ground, but somehow the Town team always seem to settle down well here, and while they never had a lot in hand, were always the more skilful side. The fierce opposition given by the City defence, and to some extent the poor finishing of the Town forwards, kept the margin down to the narrowest, but always the Town appeared to be the winning side.

The Town's football was better generally than in any previous game, for they showed far better understanding; positioning was immensely superior to anything they had previously given, and, if they did not shape like a certain promotion side, they thoroughly deserved their victory.

TEAM WORK AGAIN

The defence was sound and confident, and the halves and forwards frequently combined with almost irresistible skill, and there was a team work that has not been equalled in any game hitherto this season.

The City began with great determination and maintained it throughout, being fairly quick on the ball, but playing in much the same fashion as did the Town in the early games—quick enough afoot, but slow of thought. Had it not been for Chesters, they would have been in great arrears before half-time.

RAIN AT EXETER

There had been rain for several days at Exeter, and the ground, which had been dried on Friday, was very soft in consequence of heavy rain during the night. Players slipped about a good deal, but the City kept their feet better, and appeared to understand the run of the ground, too, for the ball fell soggily and did not respond easily to light work, so many passes went astray, and there were often dangerous periods owing to the defenders along this especially being the case with the Town.

Fellowes won the toss, and there was an open opening, in which either left-wing or made advances that were nullified by sickness in defence. Exeter did not hesitate to hit the ball hard, and nearly ten times their backs took possession the ball was landed in the Town penalty area. On the other hand, the Town defenders were making opportunities for their forwards, and pretty passing was seen. Crompton was early in the picture, and Stephenson was mastered by Gray within a few dozen yards of goal on receiving a long pass from the right winger. Then Crompton himself took a turn, beating Lowton easily, but ramming the ball hard to the side net.

THE FIRST GOAL

The first goal came quickly, for a passing movement by Finlayson and his right wing brought another centre from Crompton; Chesters came out and punched the ball away, but BALL, who was standing back from the ruck, met it before it reached the ground, and shot hard into the net.

There were promises of further goals, for the Town almost monopolised the attack, and the City only made spasmodic raids. When they did get away they caused anxiety among the Town defenders, and Mackey and Smith played strongly, so that Coen had little work. Stephenson cut across several nice centres, for he was being well plied by Roberts, and the latter also tried two or three shots that went hard enough, but were not well aimed.

MACKEY'S TACKLE

A great effort was made by Scott at the other end, and he looked like boring a hole through the Town defence, but the ball was got away. Exeter opened out the game well, long, swinging passes being made from the left-half position to the inside-right, and Hurst responded well. But he got clean through on his flank, and Mackey tore across and stopped him with a magnificent tackle.

Play was soon at the other end again, and Martin and Roberts each had shots that went just wide, and Crompton dropped the ball into the goalmouth with nice judgment, but the home defenders, Gray and Robinson especially, frustrated the efforts of Ball and Roberts to get through. Hurdle was well fed and gave trouble when he could get past Mackey, and from one of his centres the Town goal had a close call, only a fine bit of work by Coen preventing a score. Scott was right through just afterwards, but with all the time to shoot at, except the part covered by Coen, he sent wide.

A NARROW ESCAPE

The Town were kept on the defensive for a few minutes, but came again, and in a few minutes had gone wide there was a thrill as Ball raced through following a quick kick; Chesters came out to meet him, and the centre-forward touched the ball past him, and then the crowd gasped as he turned away from the empty goal and went behind.

Another movement on the Town right brought a good centre, and Ball raced past the backs and headed into the net, but the linesman flagged him offside. After the escape the City attacked again, and the more it was Coen's resource that saved the situation, for as the ball came across he flung himself full length and kicked the ball away from the feet of his opponents.

EXETER BOTHERED

In the closing stages before the interval the Town took command, and there was beautiful passing, in which Nelson, Finlayson, Martin, Roberts and Crompton took part, but Chesters was safe. Then Stephenson gave a lot of trouble, and from a tight bit of passing with Fellowes and Roberts there was a strong attack, Roberts being very hard first time, but Chesters managed to grapple the ball on the line and a goal seemed certain. Two corners were forced, but these were got away, and the interval came:

LUTON	1
EXETER	0

Stephenson, well-backed by Fellowes and Roberts, gave a good deal of worry to the defence on the restart, and once was unlucky as the ball ran away from him as he tore in to shoot at close quarters

after beating Clarke and Gray.

The City played up well, and gave Hurst a good deal of the ball, and several centres came from him without Coen being troubled. At close quarters there was a struggle between the Town backs, Ebdon and Scott, the last-named using his weight to good purpose, but the Town defenders prevailed. Relief came with another clever move, in which Martin and Crompton took the ball right through, and the winger banged it across to Ball, but Chesters stepped out and got it away. Another centre from Crompton was taken on the run by Ball, but his shot lofted the bar.

LUCKY EQUALISER

The City were playing gamely, but equalised very luckily. There had been a persistent Town attack, in which forwards and halves joined, when there was a big kick up the field. Ebdon secured and raced on; Mackey rushed across, and by a fine tackle took possession, but slipped down on the treacherous ground and came down with Ebdon; Coen ran out, but EBDON was first on his feet, and with the goalkeeper almost on top of him, the home centre-forward shot; the ball went straight for goal, struck the underside of the bar, and went just over the line.

Straight from the kick-off the Town attacked, and Martin dribbled through very cleverly. He was just inside the penalty area when he was brought down from behind, but the referee made no sign, and the City took the ball to the other end. The crowd began to yell and roar encouragement, and for a few minutes the home team fought like tigers to get a goal. They kicked hard and challenged opposition quickly, and the Town defenders had their work cut out.

LEAD RESTORED

Baffled again, the City were forced to defend, Stephenson shooting over when he had a good chance, and then Ball broke right through and put in a very fine shot, which Chesters saved finely, though he could not hold the ball at the first attempt. Ball and Crompton again got through, but the centre-forward sent inches wide.

The City, again urged on by the crowd, put in all they knew, and Mackey, Nelson and Smith stemmed the tide many times, and once Coen rushed out and snatched the ball from Scott's foot.

Twenty-five minutes after the interval the Town took the lead as the result of a clever movement on the left. Roberts sent through to Stephenson, who tricked Gray and drove the ball into the goalmouth; CROMPTON closed in quickly, and before the custodian and Lowton knew what had happened, the right winger shot into the net for a capital goal.

WANTED A PENALTY

The Town were keeping the ball very close after this, and again and again Robinson stepped in and foiled attacks. Hurst received good passes and went through well to shoot hard, but just wide, and from one of his passes Hoyle was only just out of his reckoning. In another essay on the home left Hoyle drove the ball in, and there was a loud yell for a penalty as Smith rushed across and took the ball on his chest close to the upright, but the referee ignored the appeal. Many people thought the ball was in the net, so close was it.

The Town replied again, and a fine shot from Ball taken on the half-turn, went over. Chesters saved magnificently twice in quick succession, and then saved in great style a hot drive from Ball. This was the last moment of danger, and the Town retired good winners.

THE PLAYERS

Coen was very safe in the Town goal; he had not the amount of work that Chesters had, but there were three occasions when his quickness and resource saved the Town for a certainty. Mackey is absolutely at his best again, and both he and Smith went for the ball with good judgment, being very quick on the tackle, and never waiting for the ball to run for them. The kicking also was very good, considering the tricky state of the ground, and but for that there would have been another clean sheet.

Finlayson again gave a superb exhibition of half-back play, his control of the ball being admirable, while Fellowes has evidently settled down to the right game at flank half. Perhaps they were inclined to play too close to the middle, but gave their forwards so much of the ball that one could hardly find fault. Nelson had the amateur centre-forward in his pocket, and with the exception of his goal, Ebdon did not get a shot. The Town centre-half still needs to give the ball more boot when he has beaten opponents, though he is always striving to give his forwards a chance.

FORWARDS AT THEIR BEST

The forwards came very near their best of last season. There were passing movements that would have beaten any defence, and every man played remarkably well. Martin's ability to draw a man made Crompton the most troublesome unit of the line, and the latter has never played better, though he could square his centres a little better. Roberts and Stephenson were always playing effective football, and the combination of the pair gave much trouble, while it was a pleasure to see Ball shooting again. He has never shot so hard or so often in any game this season, and with the slightest luck he would have scored several goals.

THE CITY

Chesters must be very nearly the best goalkeeper in the Division. His judgment and his agility were splendid. Gray was the better back, being quicker to the tackle than Lowton, and both kicked well. Robinson played a hard game as pivot, and the flank halves were just useful. Of the forwards, Hurst and Scott were the most dangerous, but McLean was a craftsman, and gave Hoyle many opportunities. There were 4,500 spectators.