

LUTON TOWN SCRAPE THROUGH

RICH BAGS A BRACE AND STEPHENSON ON THE MARK

EXETER'S PLUCKY EFFORT

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	3
Rich (2), Stephenson	
EXETER CITY	1
Scott (J.)	

LUTON.—Coen; Booton, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Rich, Martin, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

EXETER.—Beby; Gray, Miller; Clarke, Robinson, Angus; Hurst, Scott (T.), McCambridge, Dunn, Scott (J.).

Referee.—L. Boulstridge, Tamworth.

HUNDREDS of Luton supporters went away from the ground as distressed as though the game had been lost. They had cause for their disappointment, perhaps, because the Town team were so far below the real standard we expect, but there was not very grave danger that they would lose, except, possibly, a period soon after the interval in which the City threatened to equalise.

There were faults in every department of the team, and I think we can say that the City brought them down to their own level, which was good enough to be any one of the teams in the bottom half of the League table, for all are so close.

THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE

How many followers however, appreciated the fact that there was a vast difference in the going as compared with previous games? That was at the root of the trouble, I think. The light ball played many tricks, and with the City halves and backs going in first time and never allowing the Town forwards to get the ball under control as they wished the game became a dreary spectacle at times. Relief was afforded by the more consistent spirit of Stephenson and Rich, and that was well, for the inside forwards each had a bad day.

Well, bad days all players have, and it is as well to have them when the opposition is on the weak side rather than otherwise. During this week, if the weather holds as it is now, the players will have more opportunity for acquiring the knack of controlling the light ball and perhaps by the week-end they will be back to their best.

EARLY PROMISE

There was promise of an early goal when Stephenson met a header from Ball and appeared likely to break right through, but he trod on the object at the critical moment, and the chance was gone, thanks to the alert Gray.

Pressure by the Town was continued for some time, with a brief raid now and then by the City, and they certainly gave cause for some anxiety when they did get going, for they kept hinging the ball out to the wings. Beby made one or two very good saves but it appeared as though there should have been better use of two or three very good centres that came from Rich, who was quite fast enough for the liking of Miller and Angus.

A STRONG PIVOT

Ball distributed well, but his attempts to lorge a way through were resisted cleverly and strenuously by Robinson, who played finely at centre-half. The ball was up in the air, either because of the heavy kicking of players on both sides, or because of the bounce. There was a moment of real danger when Coen had to go down to take a fast shot from Hurst, and he could not retain the ball, but Booton coolly cleared from the goal-line.

RICH SUCCEEDS

This was followed by a goal to the Town, and very well worked for it was. A free kick was given against Robinson for fouling Ball. This was well placed by Fellowes and Ball headed the ball toward for RICH to nip in and head it very cleverly into the net. The right winger evidently has the wisdom to head the ball downwards, and that was how Beby was beaten.

Immediately the City were dangerous, and Jack Scott took a pass, cut in and shot hard, but Coen was there to cover the ball, and though he could not hold it, he turned it round the upright, and there was not much danger from the corner kick. Jack Scott should have scored soon afterwards, however or at least, most of the spectators appeared to think so, for as he raced in to meet a nice pass from the right, the ball rose just as he was on the point of shooting, and he clean missed.

WINGERS DANGEROUS

Nelson had received a blow in the face early on, and was doing his job well when he was not wiping the blood off his face. Ball could not get clear of Robinson, and most of the danger came from Rich and Stephenson, though they were pretty well served with passes in this half. They responded well but the inside men could not get on the target at all, and if they did, Beby was safe.

STEPHENSON SCORES

The City goalkeeper made a grand save from Finlayson, and when Robinson fouled Ball on the penalty line, Stephenson drove the free kick over the bar. Stephenson pounced on a loose ball, dribbled inside and beat three men; temporarily he lost possession, but the ball went from an opponent's foot to Ball, who nodded it forward, and STEPHENSON rushed in to take it in his stride and carefully place it in the net wide of Beby. It was a very neat goal.

Coen had two or three shots to save, for the City were always a fighting force of the guerilla type rather than a combination. Their rear men kicked the ball hard forward, and the attackers showed pace and swung it from wing to wing, so the Town backs had plenty to do. Ball appeared certain to increase the lead with a grand header but Beby made a magnificent save, and the interval came with the Town ahead.

LUTON	2
EXETER	0

The second half was a very dull business. The City were very much in earnest, and they had the better of the struggle for some time. Their wingers had too much rope altogether, and although there was no real test for Coen for some time, he had a handful now and then. That he was beaten was due more to slackness by the Town defenders than to skill by the opposition.

EXETER'S EFFORT

There was a lot of scrambling play in mid-field, and then the ball was sent to the right wing; from here Dunn, who had moved over, shot it out to the left, and JACK SCOTT, who was unmarked, headed it right across goal out of the reach of Coen,

who had no chance to save from that distance.

This goal put new heart into the City, and although the Town worked hard, they held the ball too close in the middle, and there was too much dribbling where the crowd was thickest. When the ball was sent to the wings, Rich and Stephenson did good things with it, both showing good pace and control, and getting the ball into the middle very accurately.

There was one sudden thrust by the City when a goal seemed a certainty, for no one could kick it away hard enough, and when it was sent out it came back. Four or five shots at close quarters were stopped by a barrier of players before the ball was scrambled out of danger.

RICH WAS THERE

Fellowes was fouled as he was helping the ball along, and it was from the free kick that the movement came which enabled the Town to place the issue fairly safe. Stephenson dribbled right through the City lines and then squared the ball across goal; City defenders and Ball clean missed it, but RICH was there to do the needful.

Stephenson was very much in the picture with rousing runs, and Roberts and Martin gave him the ball often, otherwise they could do little with it themselves. When Martin did get in a shot that looked like scoring Beby was smart enough to get the ball over the bar, and it was a grand save, but the referee would not concede that the goalkeeper had touched it.

Beby made other good saves, and Coen had one severe test, for the City remained plucky to the end, but the scoring was finished.

CLEAN GAME

Although the game was fairly robust it was clean, and there were few fouls. The City worked very hard. Beby is a fine

Football Notes on

Play and Persons

in the "Evening Telegraph"

To-morrow.

goalkeeper, as was proved when he played for Gillingham, and Gray and Miller played very well the former keeping well up the field, and Miller remaining well back in the goal area. Robinson however was the big man of the City defence, and was a rare stumbling block to the Town inside forwards. Very big and strong, he could hold his own in a tussle and his heading and positioning were good.

Dunn, the old Scottish international, was very clever in his scheming, and deserved to see better use made of his moves. The others were real grafters, and worked hard without much success.

IS THE BACK PLAY SOUND

Coen had a few awkward moments, and made two very good saves. I may be wrong, but I still think the Town backs are playing too far back. Again and again they were a dozen or fifteen yards from the opposing winger when he received the ball, and though both kicked and tackled well, they gave themselves more work than they need have done.

Nelson stopped up the middle of the field as well as ever, and McCambridge, active though he was, could not find a space for a comfortable shot with one exception, and that was in the first half, and he was so far out that Coen had plenty of time to watch the ball go over the bar.

Finlayson did some clever things, and Fellowes had a rather patchy afternoon, but I think this is largely due to the backs playing so far to the rear. Both wing-halves have played much better in defence and attack when the backs have come well up to the wing opponents.

INSIDE FORWARDS

The inside forwards had a very poor time for the reasons stated at the outset. They were slow in meeting a tackle. The ball did not run well for them, but they did not bargain for such resolute tackling as they met. Roberts has seldom done so badly, and, try as he would, nothing would go right for him except now and then when he joined Stephenson in one of their passing movements.

Rich played a splendid game, and Stephenson was at his best. The two wingers could have had more support, but when they were served well, they did not fail to deliver the goods.

Attendance 12,549; receipts £679 7s.