

INSIDE FORWARDS LACKED A SHOT

Stephenson The Star

(By CRUSADER)

NOTTS FOREST 1
Surtees

LUTON TOWN 0

NOTTS FOREST: Ashton; Trim, Munro; McCall, Graham, Baxter; Dyson, Roberts, Martin, Surtees, Brown.

LUTON TOWN: Coen; Strathie, Lutterloch; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Ferguson, Connolly, Vinall, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee: G. Hamilton Jones, London.

Nearly three years have elapsed since I travelled away with the Town, and I was hoping that for once I might be their mascot when they visited Nottingham yesterday.

Unfortunately mascots and totems and lucky emblems were mere side lines as far as Luton were concerned, and will be while there is persistence in keeping an attack that cannot take as well as make chances.

The defence naturally gave rise to misgivings, for it was found necessary to bring in Strathie at right back vice Carte, and his lack of experience was expected to be a big handicap.

So it was in the early stages, but this much can be said for the Scot—he was never lacking in enthusiasm and fighting spirit, and even when the crowd waxed sarcastic about his efforts, he just gritted his teeth and fought gamely on and improved so much that little fault could be found with him in the second half.

The defence played well to a man, and the defeat was due entirely to the inefficiency of the attack, where one man alone deserved medals for his football skill and his great spirit.

Stephenson has been criticised for lack of enterprise many times, but not a solitary individual who saw this game would attempt to quibble with the statement that he was head and shoulders above every other forward in the game.

If we also give Roberts credit for drawing to the uttermost on his resources of energy, and to Ferguson for pulling out his best, as usual, though it was not what is expected from a first class winger, we can leave the others with a few words.

Connolly I have classed as extremely skilful, but have come to the conclusion that he is too clever for a team struggling to get away from the danger zone.

Of Vinall I can only say that his whole-heartedness is beyond doubt, but he has struck one of those bad patches when a player can do nothing right.

Vinall and Connolly should have won this match. Let there be no qualification of that statement, and if I were the sole authority they would be reduced in grade straightway, the one with some degree of sympathy, and the other because I have little use for dandy tricks and gallery play when straight-forward go-ahead method and opportunism is wanted.

Connolly had the gift of the match less than half a dozen yards from goal, but tried to dance round an opponent with the usual result. Others missed chances, for every Luton supporter who saw the match will verify the statement that the midfield play was far better than that of the Forest; the making of chances was good enough, and the defence better than usual, but this inside forward weakness was simply appalling.

DEFENCE DID WELL

Of the halves, Nelson played another fine game, and that in spite of rather frequent calls upon him to rescue his colleagues from trouble. Finlayson was below par, and Fellowes played a splendid game, but here again there was a tendency to delay the through pass, and to dribble too much, with the inevitable result that the Forest defenders recovered.

To Strathie reference has been made. He might well improve, though he is not yet ready for first team back division. Lutterloch made one blunder and the goal came indirectly from that. Under the impression that a goal kick would be awarded he allowed the ball to go behind. A corner was due right enough, and from the flag kick the goal eventually fell, although the first attempt was cleared. However, Lutterloch's kicking was unsurpassed by any defender, and Forest had a good pair! He tackled well, too, though now and then giving the opposing right winger too much scope.

THE GOAL

Forest started at a rare bat, but they were gradually worn down, and there was not a Nottingham soul that was not immensely relieved to hear the final whistle. You should have heard the crowd yell with joy when it was all over, for up to the last kick the Town were masters in all save the one vital gift—marksmanship.

Forest were better into their stride, and bright midfield play was seen. First time clearances and passes by the Forest backs and halves were dangerous, and there was a streak of panic among the Town defenders, but Coen was safe. Lutterloch then made his mistake, and following the corner the ball was swung across goal twice, and on the second

occasion SURTEES got his head to the ball and beat Coen

Gradually the Town improved, and Stephenson was a tremendous source of trouble, his speedy runs and tricky manoeuvring giving the Forest defenders much anxiety, and Ferguson also banged the ball into the middle well, but the lack of thrust was obvious, and the shooting was wretched. Stephenson headed just wide from a free kick, and then the Forest got away, and Martin had a clear run in, but Coen raced out and twice saved finely, the game having to be held up while he received attention for injury.

Again and again the Town forwards worked the ball to the other end, and by contrast the Forest made raids which were infinitely more dangerous because their forwards could find open spaces from which to shoot, but they also were remiss in marksmanship. Roberts and Fellowes plied Stephenson admirably, and he responded splendidly, and twice he got the ball across but the inside men would not take a first-time shot, or if they did they could not find the mark.

WINGER SHINES

Ferguson was just out with a fine first-time shot, and Vinall had a hard drive cannon off a defender's leg and go behind, and then Roberts blazed high over. Coen had to run out twice, and Dyson missed an easy chance, and then at the other end Ferguson shot hard in for Ashton to save well, and a moment later Ferguson shot just wide with the goalkeeper helpless.

Stephenson then made a dazzling effort, and when the ball went across Vinall left it to Connelly; if the latter had shot first time he could not have missed, but he patted the ball here and patted it there, so Graham just took it from him, and half-time came with the Town supporters "cussing hard" and the Nottingham fans excited because the score was:

FOREST	1
TOWN	0

Immediately the game was resumed Vinall missed an easy opening after good work by Ferguson, and Stephenson followed by putting across a pass square in front of goal, but there was nobody on hand able to do the needful.

For a time it was nearly all Stephenson. He made hacks of the Forest defenders, and again and again either dribbled past a row of them and then passed the ball for someone to lose it or he centred and they were too slow to take the chances.

Trim, Munro and Graham all gave away corners to stop Stephenson, and with Ferguson—virtually starved for a time—also responding well when given the chance, the Forest goal must have fallen had there been thrustful inside forwards.

Forest were a long time before they got near the Town goal, and then they were unable to give Coen anything serious to handle, the best shot from a Forester this half being a powerful drive by Surtees from thirty yards, and that went straight into Coen's open arms.

TOWN ON TOP

Time after time the Town swept through again, and the Forest defence was sorely pressed. Connelly banged the ball wide—only inches in it, and then Stephenson went slap through the

defence and passed to Vinall, who crashed the ball among the spectators.

Forest pressed hard for a few minutes, but they were driven back again, and to the end the Town were attacking. Ferguson missed with another first-time shot and then shot wide from a good position. Ashton saved cleverly from the same player, and the hardest blow of all was when Vinall suddenly despatched a terrific shot which looked a goal all the way, but the ball crashed against the bar and came out, the goalkeeper standing helpless until the danger was past.

Roberts strove hard to break through, but his shooting was as bad as the rest. Two or three corners were forced, but the ball was headed away, and then Nelson came right up into goal, and from a Ferguson flag kick he headed right away from the goalkeeper, but Munro headed out from under the bar.

Luck was right out, but that did not relieve the Town inside forwards from blame for their dalliance and their inept finishing.

Attendance was 17,578, and included a considerable number of followers from Luton.