

FOUR FORWARDS SCORE

Defence Again Reveals Compactness

(By CRUSADER)

NOTTINGHAM FOREST .. 2
Fryer, Hindley

LUTON TOWN 4
Billington, Connelly,
Redfern, Clark

FOREST.—Ashton; McCall, Munro;
Clark, Davies, Pritty; Betts, Fryer,
Hindley, Surtees, Beaumont.

LUTON.—Coen; King, Dunsmore;
Finlayson, Dreyer, Roberts; Clark,
Redfern, Billington, Connelly, Stephen-
son.

Referee: G. Dutton, Warwick.

Forest supporters were inclined to blame their goalkeeper for this defeat. I do not agree with that view. They were beaten by better football, or perhaps I should say team work, although those terms should be synonymous.

The Forest tactics were all wrong. They had many good players, some very clever, but somehow they could not weld into a team, and from the very first they seemed to be intent on giving the ball more boot than was necessary or advisable.

COMPACT DEFENCE

I do not know how many times the Forest backs and halves belted the ball for all they were worth so that their forwards could try and outpace the Town defenders, but there was again a compactness and understanding in the Town defensive lines that gave every confidence to the attack.

Forest had quite as much of the play from the territorial aspect, but were not able to hold the ball or use it so wisely as the Town forwards when on the move. Possibly an exception should be made of Surtees, a big, strong forward, clever and forceful, but all too often over-kicking by the men in the rear reduced the chances of the attack, particularly as the Town defenders were distributed to good purpose, and rarely did a man get through unmarked.

The pitch was very difficult, especially down the middle, and in front of goal the turf was frozen very hard, while on the wings and in midfield it was slushy. Whereas the Forest were booting the ball down the middle, the Town players wisely kept swinging it out to the wings, and there would have been much more trouble for Ashton had Billington and Redfern been able to keep their feet.

Play was generally a midfield struggle, and neither goalkeeper had an undue amount of work. Coen kept his charge very well, and King and Dunsmore were again in splendid fettle, and their tackling was very fine indeed.

DREYER'S JOB

Dreyer stuck to his job against a strong and very speedy centre-forward with his customary grit, and his dogged work thwarted many an effort. Finlayson played brilliantly, and Roberts was close up with him. The pair of them covered up the middle very well, and with Redfern and Connelly also giving welcome aid when things were going hard, the defence looked much sounder than that of the Forest, if not so spectacular.

Stretched across the field in the penalty area there appeared to be a steady line of defence, hence the scarcity of shooting chances that fell to the Forest inside forwards.

ATTACK NOT SO BRIGHT

The Town attack did not function so brightly as against West Bromwich, because the conditions were so difficult, and we missed much of the clever inside forward play we had seen on Saturday, but they kept the wings going well, and Stephenson especially was a constant menace to the Forest rear. Clark did not have so much to do, and he was meeting the strongest man on the Forest side, but he held his own remarkably well.

Ashton might have prevented the first goal if he had anticipated the direction of Billington's header aright, but I did not think he had a chance with any other shot. Munro was a grand back, for not only was his kicking strong and sure, but he endeavoured all the time to inspire his team. McCall was useful, but the halves were often assisted by the slowing up of the ball when the Town forwards tried to keep it on the ground as they passed.

Surtees was the outstanding forward, and Hindley was a dashing leader who wanted a lot of watching, but the others did not touch the same level by long chalks.

THE PLAY

Forest won the toss and were first away, the left wing moving briskly, but Surtees was whistled offside. Finlayson then brought the ball well up and slung it out to Stephenson, who raced past the opposition and drove it across front of goal, but it skidded away as Billington and Connelly tried to connect at short range.

The Town attacked again following "hands" against Betts on the half-way line, but Munro cleared finely, and there was a quick rush to the other end, and Hindley tested Coen with a hot ball.

Redfern was fouled in midfield, and from the free-kick Billington made a desperate effort to collar the ball, but it eluded him and was booted clear. Forest defenders were kicking very hard, and several times the Town defenders made sure by putting the ball back to Coen before an opponent could control. The goalkeeper had to save a header from Clark following a free-kick, and the subsequent corner was fruitless.

A NEAR THING

A raid by the Town right looked promising, but as the ball swished across it was missed by everybody, attackers and defenders alike, and then the Forest were neatly jockeyed offside by the Town backs. The Town left wing then got away, and Stephenson raced in to meet a pass from Billington and banged the ball hard for goal; a defender's foot shot out and deflected it into goal, but Ashton flung himself full length and managed to grab it as it was crossing the line.

FOREST LEAD

A desperate assault by the Forest followed, and the Town defenders had their work cut out to repel the fierce rushes of the home forwards, and Dunsmore had to race hard to kick the ball off Hindley's toe, and concede a corner kick. From Beaumont's flag kick SURTEES headed into the net to give the Forest the lead after twelve minutes.

The Town were persevering, and Ashton had to pick up a long shot from Stephenson that skidded across the goalmouth, and then a nice move by Roberts and Connelly enabled Stephen-

son to centre squarely across goal, but Clark's hasty shot dribbled by the upright.

BILLINGTON EQUALISES

Forest returned to the assault, but Coen was not troubled, and then Connelly contributed a dazzling dribble that had the Forest defenders guessing, but Munro dropped back and cleared in the nick of time. The ball was brought back by Finlayson and Redfern, and the latter sent Clark through to centre squarely, and BILLINGTON promptly headed into the net, the ball swerving away from Ashton's outstretched hand.

CONNELLY'S SWOOP

Dunsmore brought off a glorious tackle when Betts was through, and a repeat attack by the Forest left wing brought a terrific shot from Beaumont, but Coen was all there. Dunsmore and Dreyer were again prominent with strong defensive work, and then King sent his attack away again with a sharp return. McCall got the ball away, but Finlayson again worked it up and sent out to Clark, who lifted the ball across, and CONNELLY swooped in and banged home a lightning drive to put the Town ahead after an hour's play.

This goal was the culmination of a forward movement similar to those that distressed the West Bromwich defence, and we were now seeing something of that play from the Town forwards, but the Forest defended gamely. A quick throw-in and a rush by Betts looked very dangerous, but Connelly had fallen back, and he beat the Forest forward with a nifty back-heel and then started his own attack moving in line again, but the movement again finished with Clark booting the ball behind.

Another run by the Town forwards was similarly abortive, and then Betts got clear and was forced to shoot too quickly by Dunsmore, and the ball travelled well wide of the mark. Stephenson forced two corners in quick succession, and placed the ball well, but it was got away, and a grand drive by Finlayson was finely saved by Ashton. The Town defenders were once more successful in working the offside dodge, but Coen had to save a header from Surtees just before the interval whistle, which came with the score:

LUTON 2

NOTTS FOREST 1

Forest first advanced on the restart, but Beaumont was yards too high with a shot from the wing. Then Luton's Clark got the better of a tussle with Munro and swept the ball across, but Davies headed away.

Forest began forcing tactics and used their weight, and several free kicks were given against them. Hindley made a determined effort, but Dunsmore slipped ahead of him and gave Coen the ball.

Midfield play followed for a long spell, the defenders kicking strongly and surely, and the backs of either side were doing well under difficult conditions. Surtees eventually tried a dribble, and forced a corner, and from King's clearance it looked as though Billington would get through, but Munro managed to get across, and Ashton cleared his pass.

Coen had to save at full length from Betts, and this was followed by a sparkling movement by the Town right, when Connelly sent the ball to Redfern. Clark carried on, side-stepping a rush by Munro and sweeping the ball across to the left; Stephenson returned it, but Davies headed away.

REDFERN'S TURN

Redfern was held up two or three times when he held on too long, but Finlayson sent forward to Billington, who forced a corner. Stephenson placed the ball splendidly, and Ashton could only push it out; Munro tried to kick away, but the ball went to REDFERN, who promptly smashed it home from close range, and the Town were two in front sixteen minutes after the interval.

That might have taken the heart out of most teams, but not so the Forest. They buckled to harder than ever, and the Town defenders had to be spry to hold them at bay, especially as they were prone to use their weight. Often their liberality in this respect spoiled their chances, and more than once Coen was fouled.

The Town kept play more open, and Stephenson and Billington went through from a pass by Connelly, and the latter struck the side net with a terrific shot. Then Clark won a corner after a duel with Munro, and there was a fierce scramble in the Forest goal-mouth, but the ball could not be driven home, and Munro kicked clear when his goalkeeper was beaten.

FOREST REPLY

Ashton saved finely from Billington, who shot a few inches too high just afterwards. The Town defenders again

got the upper hand of the Forest attack, but just when it was unexpected there was a rush for the Town goal: Dreyer stopped the ball, but could not free it from between his legs, and HINDLEY hustled him, and taking the ball through quickly, he shot hard past Coen.

Forest fought with the utmost fierceness now, and Coen saved at full length, being fouled by Hindley and Surtees, and there were three more free kicks against the Forest in quick succession. However, just as suddenly and unexpectedly as the Forest had scored so the Town regained their two goals lead.

CLARK CHECKS IN

Connelly tricked a couple of opponents in midfield, and then lifted the ball perfectly across to the extreme right so that CLARK could beat Munro in a fast sprint for goal. The winger

kept control splendidly, and refused to be harassed by Munro before he shot at a great pace, and the ball struck the foot of the post and glanced into the net, leaving the Forest defenders crestfallen and the crowd silent.

Still, the Forest never gave up hope. They just went into the fray as bravely as ever, and there was desperate tackling. Dunsmore and Betts met in a crash, and both went down and had to receive attention from the trainers.

When the game was resumed the Town were at it again. King cleared with a strong kick, and Redfern sailed past three opponents and then gave to Connelly, whose hard drive struck a defender with Ashton hopelessly placed.

Then Billington struck the bar with a fine shot, and when the Forest made a last despairing fling Hindley headed over.

It was a splendid victory, well merited in every way.