

Town Went Out With Colours Flying

By Chiltern

LEICESTER CITY 5

LUTON TOWN 3

To have produced football of such a top-class calibre, and yet to be knocked out of the Cup was as bitter a disappointment to the Town players as it was to the thousands of supporters who followed them to Leicester.

However, the team went out with colours flying and after a tremendous fight which went very close to taking them through to the last eight.

There could have been few among those Luton fans who were not proud of their team on their showing in this match, which provided another all-out battle full of thrills and excitement.

The only pity was that one of these two grand teams had to lose interest in the competition, and it might just as easily have been the City, for everything was in the balance during that terrific second half Luton rally when it was touch and go whether the Town would regain the advantage they held in the early stages of the game.

Most of the luck in the game went to Leicester, but it has always been an adage that a team cannot win a Cup-tie without a bit of good fortune.

Things went right for them even before play began for they won the toss and set the Town to face a blinding sun.

Certainly that advantage was neutralised to some extent by the snap goal which BRENNAN scored in the first minute after a quick Arnison—Small move which caught the City defence napping.

However, I have wondered since, whether the City forwards would have had that riotous quarter of an hour when their forwards simply ripped the Town defence to shreds, and seemingly won the game by scoring three goals, had they been kicking the other way.

THREE QUICK BLOWS

How much of the bad covering in defence which occurred during that spell could be put down to the sun is difficult to say, but the fact remained that between the 27th and 42nd minutes, LEE, GRIFFITHS and CHISHOLM had all planted the ball past Stretten to give the City a 3—1 interval lead which was incongruous on the run of the play.

The Town forwards had played classic football without quite being able to add to their lead, while the City had pinned their faith on the down-the-middle pass and occasional wide-flung passes to Griffiths, that speedy right winger.

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Bearing in mind the happenings of the previous week, there was always the prospect of a Town revival, but this began to look a dim hope when Hall was penalised for pulling down Griffiths and LEE scored from the penalty spot with the second half five minutes old.

Even with the dice so heavily loaded against them, the Town refused to abandon their methodical football and with Kiernan and Brennan playing magnificently, there was always the possibility that they would get back into the game.

The possibility became hard fact 18 minutes from the end when ARNISON headed Waugh's centre into the net, and when, two minutes later, BRENNAN crashed the ball into the net from a corner, the atmosphere suddenly became electric.

No doubt about it, the City were on the run, and had the referee's verdict gone in the Town's favour when they claimed that a header from Brennan had crossed the line, then the City might have been snuffed right out of the game.

That was sheer misfortune for the Town since they claimed that the ball was over by at least a foot, but they still had hope until a sudden break by Lee led to GRIFFITHS scoring and brought the biggest sigh of relief of the afternoon from the City fans.

Even then the Town were not through for they gave the City something to think about in the closing minutes and certainly should have been awarded a penalty for hands.

FORWARDS WERE BRILLIANT

Once again, the forwards were the men of the match, and Kiernan and Brennan produced some bewilderingly clever football which deserved to produce more goals. Arnison, too, dove-tailed into the scheme of things, but the ball seemed to persist in running awkwardly for them in front of goal.

Waugh usually had the measure of Jelly, and did much that was useful, but Small, who beat Scott for speed, did not always make the most of the fine material which Kiernan provided for him.

What can we say of the defence? Answer is probably contained in the fact that they were up against one of the fastest, most direct forward lines in the country, and, hard as they fought, they simply could not cover up the gaps which occurred persistently.

Biggest one was down the middle, and a through pass seemed to throw the whole defence into confusion.

The full-backs rarely pivoted on Hall, but probably they were mindful of the havoc which the wingers might wreak.

Cooke had a trying time through which he came with his usual gallantry, though with not quite the same success which has attended his efforts recently, and Mulvaney had quite a fair game once he got into the way of things.

Gardiner did all that was humanly possible in defence and attack, and Watkins tackled a man-sized task with plenty of zest, but the fact remained that, collectively, the defence was not sound, and that the gaps were never completely closed.

Streten did not have an enviable task, but even allowing for the lack of cover, he was not at his best, and his usually infallible judgment was at fault more than once.

LEICESTER CITY: McGraw; Jelly, Scott; Harrison (W.), Plummer, King; Griffiths, Revie, Lee, Chisholm, Adam.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Mulvaney, Cooke; Watkins, Hall, Gardiner; Small, Kiernan, Arnison, Brennan, Waugh.

Referee: H. Jackson, Leeds.
Attendance: 38,822.

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