

INEPT DISPLAY BY THE FORWARDS

Good Defence Saved Side From A Heavier Defeat

By Chiltern

THE Town are still without their first victory and will continue to look for it in vain unless the forwards show better form than they produced at Nottingham last night.

It was a narrow defeat the Town suffered, but that was mainly due to the exertions of the defence, who had the spectacle time and time again of the ball coming back to them after the forwards had lost it.

Commentary on the forwards' display is provided by the fact that in the first half they produced scarcely a shot likely to trouble Walker. Although switches brought some improvement afterwards accurate shooting was still at a premium.

In the first half they kept the ball much too close, seemed to have little cohesive plan, and their tactics were directly opposed to those of the Forest, who kept the ball moving all the time and did not hesitate to shoot.

In the second half the switches brought a little improvement, and Turner obtained a good goal, but not one of the five forwards really added to his reputation.

The defence, in which Owen was an outstanding figure, coped as well as could be expected in the circumstances, and had not Streten been in tip-top form and brought off several magnificent saves, the Town's chance of saving a point would not have lasted as long as it did.

Jones, perhaps unsettled by his mistake that cost the first goal, had a curiously uncomfortable time before the interval, but there was not much wrong with the defence as a whole.

ATTACK MUST BE RECONSTRUCTED

On this showing, the attack needs urgent reconstruction. It never approached the football it played in the first half at Plymouth.

In its favour it could be said that after it received the encouragement of a goal, it had to be sorted out again to accommodate the injured Jones on the wing, and that took some of the sting away when it could have been expected to make a bid for a draw.

The Town fielded the same side as at Plymouth.

Gager beat Owen in the toss in a fairly stiff breeze.

Forest were first dangerous and Owen sliced the ball over his own goal from Alan Moore's centre.

Bernard Moore was the instigator of the Town's first attack, and Turner missed a possible chance through not controlling the ball after it had flicked Gager's head.

Then, in exactly five minutes, the Town were a goal down in tragic fashion through a piece of misjudgment by Jones.

He collected a pass from Leverton, and with no danger threatening did the right thing in attempting to pass back to Streten. Where he went wrong was in not hitting the ball hard enough so that it never looked like reaching Streten.

Instead, Alan MOORE nipped in, dribbled around the advancing Streten, and drove the ball into the net from something of an angle.

FOREST MORE DANGEROUS

Although the Town were having a fair share of the play, Forest looked much more dangerous, and Streten pushed over a great shot by Leverton.

Apart from having the wind against them the Town were also facing the sun at this stage.

Moving the ball quickly, the Forest were finding each other well, and twice Owen intervened when danger threatened.

Downie injured a leg in a tackle but was able to resume.

There had not been much thrust about the Town forward line so far, and pretty work in midfield was not getting them anywhere near goal.

First work of a direct nature for Walker did not come until 20 minutes had gone, and then he had no difficulty in catching a centre from Cullen.

STRETEN'S FINE SAVES

For a time the Town had more of the play without looking potential scorers, and there was a good deal more life about the Forest forwards when they were in the penalty area.

Streten made a fine save from a Leverton pile-driver and again from a close drive by Collindridge.

All the Town could offer in reply was a weak shot from Downie that rolled to Walker.

There was quite a lot of pressure from the Forest now and their work was far more direct than the Town's.

The Town were taking far too long to make progress.

Streten was kept busy for a spell. Whenever there was a chance Forest were shooting, and Streten again saved from Leverton.

Then came a remarkable interlude with Leverton just on the centre-line running through dead straight with the Town appealing for off-side.

Streten came out and gained possession of the ball, but in doing so inadvertently got the ball outside the penalty area, and the result was an indirect free kick.

FOREST SCORE AGAIN

Then, after 41 minutes, Forest increased their lead through LEVERTON, who from about 12 yards hit the ball into the back of the net following a snap movement that began in the Forest half.

Turner was lying injured halfway within the Forest half, but quickly recovered.

In the last minutes of the half there was further pressure from the Forest, who were well on top at this stage, and Streten was kept busy. Half-time:

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 2
LUTON TOWN 0

Just how innocuous the Town forwards had been in the first half was shown by the re-shuffle ordered for the second.

Bernard Moore went to outside-right, Cullen to inside-right, and Turner took over the leadership.

A white ball was brought into use immediately, and Forest were soon on the attack again, but the Town, with the wind behind them, came more into the game.

However, the absence of shots persisted, and a long one by Taylor did not trouble Walker.

The Town were still not making much impression, but a determined raid brought a centre from Bernard Moore, which Walker dropped, but out of reach of Cullen, who was close up.

OFFSIDE TACTICS

In defence the Town were coping well with the Forest forwards, and offside tactics now began to bother the Town attack, who had other worries about their inability to find cohesion.

A more constructive movement, however, gave Downie an opportunity, but he shot straight at Walker.

With 67 minutes gone the Town reduced arrears through TURNER.

In the first place he went racing through the middle, but Walker gained possession of the ball and dribbled it out of the penalty area before sending into touch.

From the throw-in, Turner gained possession, beat Gager, and rammed the ball into the far corner of the net, leaving Walker hopelessly placed.

Turner made another good effort, but the Forest came back, and Streten made a fine point blank range save from a cracking drive by Collindridge.

Cullen and Moore switched positions.

The Town were certainly making a fight of it now but they could not get to grips with the Forest defence.

JONES IS INJURED

What hope there was was dimmed considerably when Jones was injured and had to be assisted off the field for attention behind the goal-line.

This brought a drastic alteration in the Town line-up, with Morton at right back, Dunne on the other flank, and Turner at right-half.

However, the damage to Jones was not so serious as it had looked, and after a few minutes he returned limping and went to outside-left, with Taylor inside. Moore was again at centre-forward.

A dangerous movement on the Town left brought a corner from Downie, and Owen went up for it and tried to use his head. He managed to reach it and gained another corner on the left that Walker saved in excellent style.

FOREST HOLDING ON SECURELY

Forest had a chance when Collindridge put over a long centre, but no one was able to make contact, and then Capel made a

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deceptive sort of shot that Streten pulled down quite comfortably.

The Forest lead, narrow though it was, did not seem to be in eminent danger, despite all the Town switches, which were now becoming difficult to keep track of.

Streten caught a long free-kick, and his clearance got the Town forwards moving, only for Gager to prove the stumbling-block.

TOWN'S LATE CHANCE

Turner had moved to outside-right, with Cullen at right-half, and with only a couple of minutes to go had a chance when put through, but, closing into goal from an angle, shot wide of the near post.

Play was something of a scramble now, with many stoppages for infringements and some robust tackling by both teams.

Streten had to go full-length to save from Leverton. Result:

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 2
LUTON TOWN 1

NOTTINGHAM FOREST:
Walker; Whare, Hutchinson;
French Gager, Burkitt; Moore
(A), Scott, Leverton, Capel,
Collindridge.

LUTON TOWN: Streten;
Dunne, Jones; Morton, Owen,
Watkins; Cullen, Turner, Moore
(B), Downie, Taylor.
Referee: R. J. Burgess, Reading.
Attendance: 17,022.