

Result did them scant credit

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN 3, TORQUAY UNITED 2

GIVE or take a few of the crowd, which probably included four coachloads of Torquay supporters who, perhaps, would not agree, this match provided some of the finest entertainment we have seen at Kenilworth Road for a considerable time.

Appropriately, the biggest League gate of the season, 9,271, was there to see it to prove that there is still a large public for football in Luton and that continued success will bring the crowds back to the terraces.

All of which is encouraging, is the present form of the team whose fourth consecutive victory this was. February has always regarded as a vital month for them, but they have won on all the three games it has been possible to play, and they are nicely poised now for promotion challenge.

Really, the score-line on this occasion did the Town scant credit, because they were worthy of a wider margin than this.

What prevented it was a combination of indifferent finishing in the first half, plus a superlative display of goal-keeping by McGuire, who would have become a Luton player a few months ago had they not been adequately catered for in this department.

McGuire made some sensational saves, whereas Tinsley

was mostly unemployed, and carried on during the closing stages despite being injured.

Rightly, he was given a warm ovation at the finish to round off what had been a sporting affair all the way around, considering the vital nature of the occasion.

IMAGINATIVE APPROACH

What was even more impressive than the final victory was the way in which the Town adjusted their tactics to meet the system adopted by Torquay.

Adequately briefed by Manager George Martin, who had seen the opposition 10 days previously, they adopted an imaginative, fluid approach which frequently cast the full-backs, Riddick and Jardine, in the role of attackers. In fact, almost throughout, the former had the freedom of the middle of the field and goals could well have come from either.

From the start, the Town were in control, so that it came as a shock when Torquay broke away to take the lead after 23 minutes. It was a fortunate goal because STUBBS'S shot from the left was caught in the wind and Tinsley was left stranded at the wrong end of the goal.

A minute later, though, the Town were on terms when McKechnie sent through O'ROURKE, who made no bones about driving the ball out of the reach of McGuire and so matters rested until the 59th minute.

GREAT GOAL FROM RIOCH

Then RIOCH accomplished what he has frequently promised in the recent past and scored a spectacular goal from the 20-yard mark with a great drive, following a pass by O'Rourke.

Eight minutes later O'ROURKE fastened on to a through pass by Whittaker cleverly brushed off a challenge by Wyatt and drove the ball low into the net as McGuire advanced.

That seemed to put the Town in easy street, but creditably, Torquay never gave up, and they got back into the game firmly a quarter of an hour from the end when McKechnie, wrongly, it seemed, was penalised for a foul. From the free-kick, BARNES had his shot stopped by Woods but the rebound went to him and he made no mistake the second time.

Naturally, Torquay threw everything into attack after this, but the Town defence closed up and there was no imminent danger.

EXCELLENT TEAM EFFORT

This was an excellent team effort. There is no doubt about that. I have already indicated the success of the full-backs, and tribute must go to those who did most of the defensive stint, Reid, Woods and Moore, who were wholly admirable.

Forward, there was always a threat from O'Rourke, who was supported by hard-working inside men in McKechnie and Rioch. French could have had more of the ball to advantage and Whittaker was lively without being entirely accurate in his final efforts.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley, Riddick, Jardine; Reid, Woods, Moore; French, McKechnie, O'Rourke, Rioch, Whittaker.
TORQUAY UNITED: McGuire; Bond, Smith; Benson, Wyatt, Wolstenholme, Barnes, Kirkman, Stubbs, Spratt, Clarke.