

TOWN TAKE LEAD SPURS ON EXETER

Whittaker goal gives Luton good start

By CHILTERN

EXETER 1, LUTON TOWN 1

A 58th MINUTE equaliser by Exeter dampened the Town's hopes of progress in the FA Cup this afternoon. Luton had taken the lead through a first half Whittaker goal, and the home side had seldom looked like mastering the Town's defensive tactics.

But the equaliser spurred Exeter to greater efforts and their attacks took on a more dangerous look. It began to seem as though the Town's best hope lay in a replay after all.

Certainly the biggest mystery of today's Cup ties before they started must have occurred at St. James's Park, Exeter, this afternoon when it was not until ten minutes before the kick-off that manager Jock Basford could finally be persuaded to announce the names of his team.

In the event, there was only one change from the side that drew at Southport last Saturday, and that involved the recall to centre-half of the first team trainer, Keith Harvey, who retired from active participation at the end of last season.

Since then though he has kept his hand in by being in full training, and in fact has been playing regularly for Exeter Reserves during the last six weeks.

JOHNSON'S CHANCE

As for the Town, Allan Brown decided to give 17-year-old Brian Johnson his first chance in an FA Cup-tie, and in fact only his second senior appearance since he joined the club during the summer from Sunderland. He went in at outside-right.

Gordon Riddick was to play as the orthodox centre-half, giving John Moore the "sweeping" role.

The formation envisaged by the manager, which has been worked at pretty thoroughly in practice this week, amounted to a loose sort of 5-2-3, with Conboy and possibly Riddick being given licence to join the attack when circumstances warranted it.

For the first time in my memory, the Town sold not a single ticket for an away Cup-tie. That did not mean that they were without support, however — the loyal band from the Bobbers' Club who follow them wherever they go were here in force.

PITCH IN GOOD CONDITION

The pitch looked soft, but had been well rolled, and looked in excellent condition.

Straight from the kick-off, Riddick dropped back in a defensive role to mark McLean.

First attack to have any show of danger came from Exeter, with McLean pro-

TEAMS

EXETER CITY: Smout; Smyth, Ley; Wilkinson, Harvey, Blain; Godfrey, Keeley, McLean, Thompson, Buckingham. Substitute: Kennedy.

LUTON TOWN: Read; Thomson, Jardine; Conboy, Moore, Slough; Johnson, Pleat, Riddick, Rioch, Whittaker. Substitute: King.

Referee: D. W. Smith, Stonehouse.

minent, but he was closely marked by Riddick, who managed to push the ball back to Read.

The plan the Town were using called for only three forwards—Johnson, Pleat and Whittaker, with reinforcement from behind as the opportunity offered.

A fierce cross knee-high by Godfrey caused the first fluttering in the Town defence. Then Slough was penalised for fouling Blain near the centre line.

Exeter were having more of the play and disputed an off-side decision, with some cause, I think, as Keeley worked his way into shooting position.

OUTSIDE CHANCE FOR TOWN

So far, there had been little in the nature of typical Cup-tie excitement for the crowd, which seemed to number under 5,000.

An outside chance for the Town came when Rioch found Pleat with a splendid pass, but the inside-right was a little slow in getting the ball under control and was fouled a couple of yards outside the penalty area.

The kick, pushed back to Rioch, landed smack against the defensive wall and, with the ball remaining at the Exeter end, Jardine sent it about a yard wide of the far post.

In midfield, the Town were finding each other quite accurately, retaining possession of the ball shrewdly, and this enabled them to make ground again by means of a series of throws-in. But Exeter were taking no chances in defence either, and the

Town did not reach close quarters.

Danger threatened the Town in a quick breakaway by Keeley, who was finally very well tackled by Riddick.

A crowd appeal for a penalty for hands by Riddick was ignored because the ball spun up sharply off his boot to hit him accidentally on an arm.

These tactics of the Town were at least fluid, and one after another of the defenders came out to drive on the attack.

One of these excursions in fact brought the best shot so far, a fierce drive by Slough which was not all that far wide.

TOWN TAKE THE LEAD

In making a determined attempt to find a way through the middle of the Exeter defence, Pleat was upended by Smyth, and from the free-kick the Town took the lead after 22 minutes through WHITTAKER.

The free-kick was taken by Rioch, who pushed it to the winger, and Whittaker's hard left-footed drive fairly flew into the net wide of Smout's left hand.

Exeter's reaction was to try a mass assault which Moore stopped with some difficulty. They were not sparing themselves in the tackle, and Blain was penalised for fouling Rioch.

Next it was the turn of Moore to be penalised for a foul on Thompson, five or six yards outside the penalty area on the Exeter right wing.

Godfrey placed the kick well, McLean got his head to it, and Thomson headed away, although Read had the ball covered.

Offside was a source of trouble to Exeter because the Town defenders were moving up smartly, but they came again and Read comfortably cut out a centre by Ley, who used to be an outside-left with Hitchin Town.

READ JUMPS TO THE RESCUE

Read came to the rescue, jumping high at the edge of his goal area to snatch up an awkwardly bouncing ball as McLean and Keeley came boring through.

From this, the Town gained a corner on the left, for which Riddick went up, and only just failed in a great attempt to reach Whittaker's cross with his head.

Another centre by Ley was



Ray Whittaker, who shot the Town into the lead after 22 minutes.

plucked out of the air confidently by Read and for a time, Exeter had more of the play, without really being able to master the Town's defence in depth.

A bad mistake by Ley let in Johnson, who started menacingly for goal until he was brought down from behind, but no free kick was awarded.

TWO GOOD TRIES BY TOWN

The Town broke away, and twice went reasonably close to increasing their lead. First was when Conboy made a first-time drive that Smout reached only at full stretch, then Riddick, going up for a corner, headed in only to find the ball stopped by Smyth standing on the goal-line.

Half-hearted appeals for hands received no support from the referee.

As half-time approached, there was strong Exeter pressure, sparked off by Godfrey whose centre was fisted away with some trouble by Read.

Riddick was penalised for pushing McLean in the back but Moore hooked the free-kick clear.

Exeter were fighting desperately for a late equaliser, without really promising to score. Half-time:

EXETER CITY 0
LUTON TOWN 1

Exeter went on to the attack from the re-start with a long punt into the Town goal-mouth which Moore headed clear, but again they fell into the offside trap.

Determination in midfield by Rioch, who beat off two tackles, enabled him to get within range, but the power was taken off his drive through it striking Harvey.

A raid by the Town was sparked off by Slough. His through-pass went to Pleat, who was really operating as a centre-forward. He made a well-meaning chip that might well have baffled Smout had it been on target, but it went wide.

Next Johnson popped up or

How the goals came

WHITTAKER for Luton Town after 22 minutes.

KEELEY for Exeter City after 58 minutes.

the left wing to make a courageous run, at the end of which he got the ball across. Harvey stepped in to clear, and when the ball returned to the other end Riddick was penalised as he went up with McLean.

A corner to Exeter was well placed by Godfrey and brilliantly pulled down in the face of opposition by Read. Then McLean came away in a sudden burst, but was finally caught by Thomson.

PUSHING AND SHOVING

Plenty of pushing and shoving was going on, and twice in quick succession free kicks were awarded against the Town.

The second of these paved the way to the equaliser after 58 minutes through KEELEY. The free kick went across to the Exeter right, and in the general rush for the ball Keeley got in a shot.

It looked as if Read, who went down, got his hands to the ball, but could not hold it.

It was an unfortunate break for the Town, and the goal really came as a mild surprise because Exeter had seldom threatened anything quite so ambitious. At the same time it threw this game wide open.

After this Exeter looked a different proposition altogether, because their attacks began to carry more danger. There was an uncomfortable moment when Read had the ball jerked out of his hands, and then had to throw himself to block with his body a point-blank drive by Thompson.

TOWN GOING ON TO ATTACK

However, the Town, going more on to the attack with more men than before, caused the home defence some trouble when Conboy made a dangerous centre that Smout did well to cut out. In this raid Wilkinson was injured, but recovered after attention.

Exeter surged back on the attack, with Ley again coming through. From his drive, from fully 25 yards, Read had to throw himself across his goal and push the ball around a post.

From the corner Godfrey, very much off balance, screwed the ball well wide.

Another free kick against the Town, this time against Conboy, kept Exeter on the attack.

The Town made ground by means of short passing which finally fell down against the stalwart Harvey.

Immediately after this, Exeter broke through on their right, where Godfrey beat the combined attentions of Slough

and Jardine to cut in and send the ball careering across the face of the goal with no-one near enough to meet it.

Exeter broke away with some purpose again but McLean, from a difficult angle, could only hook the ball into the air and Read caught it easily.

By way of a change, the Town had a turn when Rioch intercepted a pass, but his long shot was well wide. Rioch had developed a limp, which, however, was not serious enough for him to need attention.

PLEAT HEADER HITS CROSSBAR

The Town had a slice of bad luck when Whittaker put over a centre which Pleat did well to get his head to. The ball beat Smout, bounced on top of the bar and surprisingly came back into play—though harmlessly so far as the Exeter defence was concerned.

Two free kicks took Exeter on to the attack again. Pleat, who was making sure that the Town had time to line up, was spoken to by the referee, who went to the extent of producing his book and then putting it away without using it.

FIERCE DRIVE INTO SIDE NETTING

A quick break by Exeter brought a fierce drive from Godfrey that crashed against the side netting with Read standing guard at the near post.

Hands by Ley gave the Town a free-kick by way of a change, and from it Riddick set up an attack. The ball finally went out to Conboy, whose centre was headed away firmly by Harvey.

A close call for the Town came when McLean headed inches over the bar.

With two minutes left, Conboy unnecessarily fouled Ley, whose free kicks were carrying a good deal of menace but this one, happily for the Town, was headed wide by McLean.

Result:

EXETER CITY 1
LUTON TOWN 1