TOWN OUT, BUT WHAT A GREAT CUP-TIE

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Twice Luton hit back to equalise

Above, Macdonald obscured in the picture, forces home Luton's third goal.
Below his shot enters the net to make the score 1-1.

WHAT THEY SAID

■ ALEC STOCK: "If we had had extra time we would have paralysed them."

■ MATT GILLIES: "Luton are a good side. The last one offside? I think it was good timing."

Luton Town 3 Nottingham Forest 4

LUTON TOWN fired the imagination as they fought a cut and thrust duel of excitement with First Division Forest, at Kenilworth Road last night. In the end they gave it away, but anyone who saw this FA Cup third round replay will remember it for a long, long time.

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

A Macdonald hat-trick put Luton on the brink of a Cup run which they would have hoped to extend against Orient. But, strangely, it was defensive mistakes which put them out.

"We gave goals away tonight," said manager Alec Stock. "I have no time for excuses or hard luck stories."

Fans roared

How true. But this was a magnificent match with Luton just as good as the First Division side. They could have been three up at half-time.

They would have been, but for the brilliance of Forest goalkeeper Barron.

Matching Forest's initial burst chase for chase, Luton set the crowd roaring early on. And they never stopped. Never have I heard a set of fans so behind a team.

Twice Hoy was foiled by Barron who took one full-blooded drive on the chin without seeing it.

Strangely Luton were never ahead. They fell into the trap of pushing forward too eagerly and leaving their rear-guard exposed. You can't do that against the First Division.

Bemused

Even so, Luton lost no friends by playing it this way. It was a match of high speed thrust and parry, with Luton doing most of the thrusting. It was a night to remember.

Said coach Jimmy Andrews: "We over-attacked. It was a great game for spectators, but not a great professional game. At times we were murdering them.

"We played well enough to win and badly enough to lose. Attacking football is great if you are not too worried about the result," he said.

Luton's defensive mistakes came from over-enthusiasm. And Forest took their chances well.

After Luton had bemused the Nottingham side for a good ten minutes in a breathtaking burst of power, it was the visitors who went ahead — with a carbon copy of the goal Forest scored against the Town in the original match.

Full-back Winfield floated over a free-kick after a John Ryan foul, and Read missed his chance of collecting it before Cormack stuck it in the net.

Three minutes later, after his broad-shouldered persistence had won a corner, Macdonald equalised from the left.

From then on every Luton man did the work of two, and the call for more aggression from Mr Stock before the match began to pay off.

Two efforts from Givens rounded off a fine first half for Luton — but in the second they began to lose a bit of their steam.

In the 64th minute Forest sent on Collier for McIntosh and he scored with almost his first touch. After sending Cormack away he touched in the return centre after Bannister, who had a good night all round, had been beaten.

A minute later the roars of Luton were stunned into silence when Richardson cashed in on a Hoy mistake and went it alone before rounding Read, who couldn't quite make up his mind, and netted number three.

It looked like curtains for Luton, but a Chapman foul on Jimmy Ryan gave Macdonald a penalty and he placed it perfectly to keep Luton in the game.

Mac went close again from a Keen-Court move, but in the 84th minute he became the talk of the Town when he scored his third after good work between both Ryans and Court.

Alec Stock had gone down to the bench to supervise extra time pep talk when Rees, who looked yards offside to me, raced clear after a through ball, left the defence behind him and thumped the winner past the exposed, and by then thoroughly miserable, Read.

Slough again did well for Luton — as did Hoy and Macdonald.

Keen and Court worked tremendously hard and Jimmy Ryan only slowed when he had both thighs badly bruised. Bannister gave a terrier-like performance and got McIntosh the push.

Givens put in a lot of skilful effort but faded towards the end.