

TIGERS BOW TO WING KING ASTON

City much better in second half—but it's all too late

LUTON TOWN . . . 2 HULL CITY . . . 0

3195 ATTENDANCE: 10,389 16-8-1975

AFTER LOOKING slightly the better side in the first few minutes, Hull City found themselves well and truly up against it in their opening League match of 1975-76 against Luton Town at Kenilworth-road this afternoon.

They were two goals down in the first half, both moves stemming from left-wing crosses from former Manchester United winger John Aston, who was a constant menace to the Tigers' defence.

In the second half City came back into the game with a far more determined display and could count themselves unlucky not to have reduced the arrears in the opening period after the interval.

City restricted Luton to occasional breakaways and at last showed signs of creating a little uncertainty in the Luton defence as the game wore on.

By DAVID BOND

City left out Peter Fletcher to allow Alf Wood to return at centre-forward and expected Dave Roberts and Vince Grimes came back in place of Steve Deere and injured skipper Jimmy McGill.

Luton gave a League debut to an 18-year-old local lad, Andy King, who took suspended Jimmy Ryan's place in midfield.

Also out through suspension was their sweeper, Paul Fletcher, and his place went to former Blackpool apprentice Steve Litt.

The Kenilworth - road pitch looked immaculate as City, who started 1974-75 at Southampton, visited a relegated side on the opening day of the League campaign for the second successive season.

Though the sun was shining, there was a cool breeze so that the temperature was nothing like as high as it had been for previous matches.

LUTON TOWN: Barber: John Ryan, Buckley: Anderson, Faulkner, Litt; King, Alston, R. Fletcher, West, Aston. Sub: Spiring.

HULL CITY: Wealdens: Banks, de Vries; Galvin, Croft, Roberts; Grimes, Lord, Wood, Wagstaff, Greenwood, Sub: Fletcher.

Referee: R. C. Challis (Tonbridge).

Luton conceded an early free-kick when Alston was pulled up for a charge on Wealdens as he tried to intercept a back-pass by Croft.

The Tigers replied with a move down the left from which Greenwood shot well wide. An attack started by Aston, King and Buckley looked useful, but Fletcher was caught well offside.

City were in a little bit of trouble when Grimes hacked the ball across his own penalty area and then Croft had to concede a corner as Aston bore in. Wealdens punched the flag-kick cleanly and Galvin was able to complete the clearance.

After Faulkner had fouled Wood, Lord tried a shot from the free-kick and Buer had to dive to his right to get to it.

Croft was pulled up for hand-ball when he tackled Alston, but Roberts was there to head away the free-kick. Lord got in a fine shot after a good build up by City down the left, but Wood was in an offside position.

Croft and Grimes twice made good tackles as Luton threatened and when the Tigers got going, Litt headed a Galvin free-kick over his own bar, but the corner came to nothing.

Luton began to have most of the play, but City's covering was excellent and vastly improved on the last two games.

In the 22nd min. however, the Tigers paid for their first defensive lapse as Luton took the lead.

Roberts missed a left-wing centre from Aston and when the ball landed at FUTCHER'S feet, he crashed it in off the post from 10 yards.

Alston and Ryan combined well on the right, but the inside-right's area went straight at Wealdens.

TRAPPED OFFSIDE

City occasionally built-up some useful-looking attacks, but too often they ended with someone being trapped offside.

City fell further behind in the 32nd minute, and again the goal stemmed from a left-wing cross by Aston.

Aston knocked his centre back to Fletcher, whose header looped on to the bar and rebounded to give KING an easy task of scoring.

Galvin, de Vries and Greenwood then began a better raid down the left for City, but when the ball came across, the Hatters' defence dealt competently with the danger.

Roberts passed straight to Fletcher in midfield and the centre-forward sent King away, but the teenager shot over the bar.

City were in even more trouble just afterwards, following a corner on the right, and ball was not properly cleared, with Roberts finally getting in a good tackle to give away a flag-kick.

Luton gained a succession of corners and for one of them Litt moved up, but he ballooned his shot out of the ground.

City made a brief reply just before the interval, but Grimes was well off-target after he had moved on to a pass from Wagstaff.

HT: Luton Town 2, Hull City 0.

City at once looked more lively at the start of the second half and a move started by de Vries on the left ended with Wagstaff hitting a cross shot just wide.

The Tigers had nearly all the

play in the opening five minutes of the half, but they lacked precision with the final pass to spell too much danger.

Croft neatly made space for himself on the right, but when he pushed his pass down the middle Lord was yards offside. Roberts then made a splendid tackle at the expense of corner when Alston tried to get in a shot, and two more Luton

SCOREBOARD

FUTCHER (Luton) .. 22mins
KING (Luton) 32mins

attacks broke down because of infringements.

City, who were moving the ball about well at times, tried to make headway through Galvin and de Vries down the left, but Town's defence was again in complete command.

WEALDENS HURT

On the hour Wealdens was injured after going down bravely at Alston's feet following a low cross by King, but he was able to continue after treatment.

Wagstaff made a quick break down the left and Galvin was just off target. The City right half went even closer a minute later when he saw a drive whistle inches over the top after Barber had punched out a cross by Banks to him when pressured by Wagstaff.

The Tigers were playing much better football and in their next raid Wood shot over the bar after Greenwood had pushed the ball back to him.

Luton almost went further ahead following a right-wing raid by Ryan, but Fletcher screwed his shot wide of the post from close range when well positioned.

At the other end a slack back pass almost let in the Hatters, but Litt just beat him to the ball and was able to turn it back to Barber. Luton again went close when Fletcher just failed to reach a right-wing cross, but generally City were in much greater control.

With four minutes left Wealdens brought off a masterly save when he tipped a shot from Fletcher over the bar. From the corner, Alston headed tamely wide.

Verdict

HULL CITY had an unhappy start to the season against Luton this afternoon and were in trouble in the first half as the home side built-up some useful moves, with Aston and Fletcher causing the most anxious moments.

The Tigers' defence, though, played more solidly than in the Anglo-Scottish Cup and the covering in general was a lot better.

Croft had a fine game throughout and looked to be recapturing his form of last season and Roberts, after an unsteady first half, settled down well in the second.

It took City a long time to get going in attack, but occasionally they mounted promising moves, with some neat short passing, and Galvin and Greenwood looked the most dangerous players.

It was a pity that City could not find the mark after the interval, as they fought back with plenty of spirit and in the end might have deserved a point.—DAVID BOND.

Goole

GOOLE'S opening Northern Premier League match with Runcorn was a poor curtain-raiser—a few more games like this will make it a long season.

It was a schappy match and there was little good football on view. Runcorn, without two key players, never showed the form which gave them the runners-up spot last season, but they always had the edge over a disappointing Goole side.

Town were lacking in many positions, most of all in attack and midfield.

There were occasional flashes from Kelly and Whiteley, but Goole were never in the hunt. To add to their woes, Harold Wilcockson missed a second-half penalty which might have spared some of Goole's blushes.—BOB KERNOHAN.