

Tinnion class tames Luton

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By Mike Berry

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PETER TAYLOR might not have any immediate need for England's thirtysomethings, but one of Bristol City's old guard offered incontestable evidence of the powers of experience over youth.

Brian Tinnion, City's player-coach, was the driving force behind Danny Wilson's galvanised side reeling off a 12th game without defeat, a run that has taken them from the relegation zone to eighth place. Tinnion, 32, delivered a master-class in the art of maximising possession in a contest strewn with misplaced passes and wrong options.

His influence peaked as City turned the second-half screw on Luton's innocents with three goals in 13 minutes, a flattering burst aided and abetted by some haphazard defending.

Luton, having shaded the first period, capitulated to their sixth home league defeat of a season that is fast turning sour. Wilson, who scored in the 3-2 win over Arsenal in the 1988 League Cup final, found some consoling words for Ricky Hill, his Luton counterpart and former team-mate. "If Luton play like they did in the first half, I am sure they will be OK," he said.

Hill has tried to shore up his fragile ranks by recruiting midfielder Petri Helin, 30, a Finland international who played in the recent 0-0 draw with England, and Kent Karlsen, a former Norway Under-21 defender. Helin and Stuart Douglas were denied by Steve Phillips in the opening half, but the departure of Douglas with a hamstring strain negated Luton's menace.

Tinnion's cross prompted the confusion for Scott Murray to bobble City ahead, and Luton were punished for recklessly chasing the game as Lee Peacock and Mickey Bell both swooped.

Luton old boy Tony Thorpe admitted 3-0 was not a fair reflection but the pressure is mounting for Luton ahead of an FA Cup banana-skin against Rushden & Diamonds at Kenilworth Road on Friday night. Hill, whose side surrendered a 3-0 lead to lose 4-3 to Wrexham a fortnight ago, said: "It's frightening how we keep collapsing at home."

Luton Town: Abbey; McLaren, Karlsen, Boyce; McGowan, Helin, Spring, Taylor; George; Douglas (Fotiadis 44), Stein (Baptiste 74). **Subs:** Ovendale (g), Watts, Locke. **Booked:** McGowan.

Bristol City: Phillips; Carey, Millen, Hill; Murray, Clist, Tinnion (Tistimetanu 88), A Brown (Burnell 52), Bell; Thorpe (Beadle 61), Peacock. **Subs:** Malessa (g), Amankwaah. **Goals:** Murray (54), Peacock (63), Bell (66). **Booked:** Bell.

Referee: M Cooper (Walsall).