

Dublin's double puts out Luton

By Trevor Haylett

ASTON VILLA

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LUTON TOWN

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GRAHAM TAYLOR spent too many years in the Football League to treat their knock-out competition with the disdain demonstrated elsewhere and after naming a full-strength side, his reward came with this assured victory.

Dion Dublin, who refused to seek pastures new at the end of last season and has since become first-choice in Villa's attack once more, scored twice – the second a peach of a volley.

Yet Luton were beaten after Ulises de la Cruz broke through inside the first 10 minutes. The Second Division side had ousted rivals Watford in the previous round but were shoved on to the back foot so early on this game that they were never likely to repeat the trick against Watford's most celebrated managerial figure.

Any hope Luton had of producing another surprise depended on them remaining solid at the back. That ambition died early on as Gareth Barry helped on Illoyd Samuel's cross and De la Cruz turned it in.

With Darius Vassell buzzing with intent and Lee Hendrie's influence growing, Villa Park prepared to salute a goal feast. The second arrived from Dublin's head, following Hendrie's free-kick.

Taylor took the opportunity at the break to introduce his promising striking talent, Stefan Moore. The 19-year-old can learn from Dublin's example but whether he can quickly replicate the touch, turn and sublime volley that brought Dublin his second goal remains to be seen.

Dublin deserved a hat-trick and thought it had arrived just before the hour, only for the offside flag to be raised.

Aston Villa (3-5-2): Enckelman; Mellberg, Johnsen; Staunton (Leonhardsen 68); De La Cruz, Hendrie, Kinsella, Barry, Samuel; Dublin (Allback 82), Vassell (Moore 46). **Subs:** Postma (g), Crouch.

Luton (4-4-2): Emberson; Boyce, Perrett (Hillier 46), Coyne, Davis; Robinson, Spring, Holmes (Neilson 45), Hughes; Fotiadis (Crowe 73), Howard. **Subs:** Berthelin (g), Brkovic.

Booked: Perrett, Howard.

Referee: C Webster (Gateshead).