

WEIR'S INJURY CASTS SHADOW OVER VICTORY FOR EVERTON

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AN INJURY to Everton captain David Weir knocked the shine off Everton's comfortable victory last night. (ALC)

The 36-year-old Scotland defender was taken to the neurological ward of a nearby hospital for a scan after being knocked cold in a clash of heads with Leon Barnett just before half-time.

Earlier Tim Cahill had dived in to head the opener for Everton and they were gifted a second 11 minutes later with an own goal from Keith Keane.

Then James McFadden made sure of victory with a third goal in the 53rd minute and Victor Anichebe added the fourth seven minutes from time.

The sixth goal of the season from the Australian Cahill, a nominee for European Player of the Year, confirmed just how seriously Everton were taking the competition.

Apart from young Scottish goalkeeper Iain Turner, manager David Moyes fielded a side packed with experience. Turner was given his chance as American Tim Howard was given a rest on the bench after starring in Saturday's 2-0 win over Sheffield United even though he was unwell. For Luton manager Mike Newell it was a return to the ground where he scored two goals in an Everton League Cup win over his present club 19 years ago. By picking 10 of the starters from Saturday's 5-1 beating of Leeds, Moyes also made it clear he wasn't treating the competition lightly despite his side's Championship ambitions.

Andy Johnson was the first to threaten for Everton. The £8.6million England striker with six goals to his name already this season looked sharp from the start and in the fifth minute moved into the penalty area before hitting a low shot that was blocked by Marlon Beresford.

Luton, with the confidence of a six-game unbeaten run, were not content to sit back and after 10 minutes their top scorer Rowan Vine hit a long shot that was saved by Turner.

But the visitors were forced on to the back foot after that. Cahill looked set to score after 14 minutes but Barnett just managed to beat him to a cross from Simon Davies to head behind. Leon Osman met another cross from Davies five minutes later only to see Beresford dive to his left to save.

But there was no denying Everton and it was no surprise when they went ahead. Joleon Lescott rose

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By **COLIN WOOD**

to meet a free kick from Mikel Arteta and head down into the goalmouth for Cahill to dive and nod the ball home.

Then, in the 34th minute, Johnson ran in from the left and although Sol Davis intercepted, the ball bounced off Keane into his own net.

Arteta should have made it 3-0 after 41 minutes when Everton were awarded a penalty for a foul by Keith Keane on Johnson but Beresford dived to his left to parry the spot-kick.

Dean Morgan was within inches of pulling one back in last few seconds of the half, but his powerful free kick rebounded from a post. Seconds later, however,



Out cold: players gather round the injured Weir

Weir's injury cast a shadow over the match.

Three minutes into the second half, Alan Stubbs went forward to power in a header that was kicked off the line by Morgan.

Five minutes later McFadden was left with a simple tap-in to make it 3-0 after being set up by Arteta and Cahill.

Luton could do nothing to stop Everton mounting attack after attack. They were forced to defend desperately to prevent the contest turning into a rout. Johnson looked certain to score when he went on to a pass from Cahill after 56 minutes but Beresford raced off his line and dived at his feet to save.

The fourth goal eventually arrived in the 83rd minute when 18-year-old Anichebe powered his way half the length of the field before hammering a left-foot shot into the net.