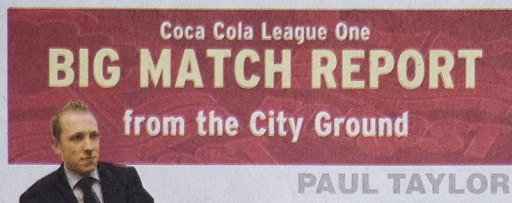


Tyson peaks to top the Hatters



HIGH JUMP: Forest's Ian Breckin beats Sam Parkin to the ball at the City Ground this afternoon POSTPHOTO C190408DM3-2



PAUL TAYLOR

A GOAL from Nathan Tyson was enough to break Luton's resolve and keep Nottingham Forest's hopes of automatic promotion alive here this afternoon.

Resilient Luton had the home side frustrated for long periods before striker Tyson netted his 12th goal of the campaign to earn Forest three points.

With Doncaster and Carlisle both having dropped points Forest still have a chance of winning automatic promotion.

But the play-offs remain their most likely route into the Championship and, having amassed a run of five games unbeaten, Colin Calderwood's side seem to be hitting form at the right time.

With Luton's squad decimated by their financial problems and the need to sell some of their best assets, veteran Scotland international Hutchinson was drafted in to the heart of defence.

Tyson had one early opportunity to run at the opposition rearguard but Hutchinson was again alert to the danger and snatched the ball off the striker's toes before he could build momentum.

And with Luton fielding a hard-work-

ing 4-5-1 formation Forest were struggling to make the breakthrough or even to create an opportunity.

It took until the ninth minute before they mustered any kind of threat on goal as Tyson forced a corner.

But an attempt to pick out Clingan on the edge of the box ended in confusion and with an easy clearance for the Luton defence.

With Luton having already been relegated into League Two and having named an inexperienced side there was an air of expectation around the City Ground.

But there was also an undercurrent of frustration as the home side failed to gain the upper hand.

Luton's threat was minimal with an effort from Parkin their only real opportunity.

And when the striker unleashed an optimistic effort from the edge of the box it took a helpful deflection that took the pace off the ball and left Smith with a straight forward save.

Forest carved out their first real opening as Tyson saw an instinctive shot charged down at the near post with defender Keane demonstrating impressive determination to throw his body in the way as Commons attempted to strike the rebound goalwards.

At this stage news filtered through that Southend had taken the lead at Carlisle to hand Forest a potential automatic promotion lifeline.

And it was fitting that in this moment they themselves began to perform with a fresh sense of urgency.

Morgan instigated a swift attack as he carried the ball purposefully into the opposition half before rolling it into the path of Chambers. The full-back had time to look up before squaring a simple pass to the edge of the box where Commons stood in acres of space and took full advantage by bending a vicious shot towards the far corner of the net.

Brill was not to be beaten, the keeper showing impressive reactions, plunging acrobatically to palm around the post.

Forest continued to pressure from the resulting corner with Clingan's inswinging delivery picking out Breckin at the near post where the skipper connected crisply with a clever flick that left the keeper flat-footed but was cleared off the line by full-back Davis.

Brill was then left with a difficult moment thanks to an awkward back pass from Keane. But with Tyson bearing down on him the keeper showed impressive composure to elude the striker with a dummy before making the clearance.

Forest continued to push forward with Commons at the centre of most of their dangerous play. The winger did well to create room for a shot from 28 yards but while he mustered power in his strike it



COMMANDING: Julian Bennett is in first before Luton's Matthew Spring this afternoon POSTPHOTO C190408DM3-1

was fired straight at keeper Brill.

Commons won a corner and delivered the ball into the box himself, where it was only half cleared under pressure from Morgan and fell enticingly to Cohen on the edge of the box, where the midfielder struck a vicious first-time volley that dipped just wide of the post.

With the home crowd beginning to show their frustration, a little slackness began to emerge in Forest's passing with firstly Morgan and then Smith giving away possession.

But some direct play had them back on the attack as a quick throw from Bennett sent Tyson surging into space down the left where he forced a corner.

Luton initially struggled to clear another testing corner from Commons with Tyson's control letting him down and denying him a shooting chance.

The half came to an end as Tyson won yet another corner but this time Brill was quick off his line to pluck Commons' cross out of the air. And when the half-time whistle subsequently blew it was greeted with a short burst of boos from sections of the crowd. Forest made an attacking change at the interval with McCleary introduced in place of Ormerod and the winger had an immediate influence on the

game. A back pass from Currie proved to be a little too clever and gave an early touch to the Forest substitute, who was quick to launch an immediate counter-attack which culminated in a cross from the rampaging Chambers being well cleared by the Luton defence.

McCleary was soon on the ball again, this time down the right side from where he picked out Perch on the edge of the box only for the midfielder to shoot wildly over the bar.

For the third time in the space of five minutes McCleary was a threat as he whipped a ball across the face of goal towards the far post where Bennett was inches away from making contact as he flung himself bravely in.

Forest were enjoying a good spell and it took a strong clearance from Keane to thwart them after Tyson had crossed dangerously to the near post.

But Luton almost caught Forest napping when following a swift break Currie fired in a dangerous cross to pick out the powerful figure of Parkin, who connected with a bullet header that bounced up and away off the top of the bar.

But still Luton threatened as Breckin produced a brave block to deny O'Leary. McCleary was still looking lively and

saw a low shot fly wide.

Asafu-Adjaye became the first player booked as he slid in with a clumsy late challenge on Tyson although Forest failed to make the most of the resulting free-kick when Commons produced a poor ball into the box.

Forest finally made the breakthrough following a moment of magic from Commons. Some quick feet from the Forest man saw him leave two defenders in his wake down the left and engineered the room for him to cross towards the far post and pick out McCleary.

The substitute showed good composure to head the ball back across goal for TYSON and although the striker's initial shot was blocked on the line he lashed home the rebound to put Forest ahead.

They could soon have extended their advantage as Commons forced a corner which Cohen delivered. The ball was half cleared to Clingan on the edge of the box where the Northern Ireland international unleashed a spectacular volley that dropped just a foot wide of the far post.

Luton too were still a threat and Smith produced a good save to deny Spring after the midfielder tried his luck with a powerful drive.

Nottm Forest 1 Luton 0



Team News

FOREST:

1 Smith
4 Chambers
5 Morgan
6 Breckin
7 Perch
8 Commons
9 Tyson
15 Cohen
16 Clingan
18 Ormerod
29 Bennett
Subs: Wilson, McCleary, McGugan, Thornhill, Reid

LUTON TOWN:

1 Brill
38 Asafu-Adjaye
17 Emanuel
26 Davis
25 Spring
15 O'Leary
4 Hutchinson
28 McVeigh
10 Currie
9 Parkin
21 Keane
Subs: Andrew, Robinson, Langley, Jackson, Beresford

FOREST made one key change to the starting line-up from the 2-0 triumph at Tranmere last weekend with Kris Commons restored as part of an attacking trio and Garath McCleary dropped to the bench.

There were two other interesting names among the substitutes as Kelvin Wilson made his return from a thigh strain and academy product James Reid, an England Under-18 international, was given his first taste of action in the senior squad.

THE Hatters' team was very different to the one that twice beat Forest at Kenilworth Road with five of the players who started in their FA Cup triumph having left the club.

Their main threat came in the form of a fit-again Sam Parkin, who had netted four goals in his last six games as he recovers from a serious knee injury.



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REFEREE: Danny McDermid

ASSISTANTS: S. J. Cook, M. Heywood