

Humbled Hatters offer no excuses for York loss

by Mark Wood

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Blue Square Bet Premier
York City 3 (3) Luton Town 0 (0)

PUZZLED Hatters substitute Aaron O'Connor made no excuses as Luton Town were well beaten 3-0 by York at Bootham Crescent on Saturday.

The painful fact was that the Minstermen simply wanted the game more than Town with maligned former Hatter Jason Walker their tormentor in chief as Luton's 10-game unbeaten run came to a crashing end.

O'Connor admitted: "He (Gary Brabin) has got a group of players that have been outfought and outbattled and it's hard to take."

"Getting overrun and them wanting it a bit more is the hardest thing for the manager to take."

On what happened, he continued: "They definitely started better than us. They are at home and not a bad side and we expected them to come flying out of the traps and it's always an intense game against York."

"It's just that will to win and tracking your runner. They wanted it more from back to front."

"There's no excuses for working hard and wanting to win your tackles and doing the right things."

"If you've got six or seven of them dominating your opponents you are likely to win the game."

"Especially the first half performance (killed us)."

"You can have all the ability in the world and we back ourselves as players and know as a group what we are capable of."

"But if you are not prepared to get close to people and work hard..."

"It was a case of coming out and not losing second half and showing a bit of pride and not getting humiliated for the full 90 minutes like we did in the first half."

O'Connor replaced John Paul Kissock moments before the break and the former Rushden man said: "To be fair to John Paul he was struggling and wasn't feeling the best and caught something overnight."

"He (Brabin) told me we were going to change the formation and match them up at half time."

"He said to me and Robbie (Willmott) being the wide men to match them up."

"We can either lose four or five or keep it tight."

"I think you could see it, Robbie got a lot more of the ball second half and we had a lot more shots."

"I thought the shape we took second half we were better for it."

Top scorer Amari Morgan-Smith was suspended, while Danny Crow dropped to the bench, with the fit-again Keith Keane coming in at right back and Will-



HAPHAZARD: Luton Town's defence are at sixes and sevens, above, as Jason Walker nets against his former club. It was a dire first half for the Hatters who were thoroughly outplayed by the Minstermen for the full 90 minutes, as demonstrated by Jake Howells, right, who struggles to keep hold of the ball



A fiesty atmosphere saw the home side on top from the start as York grabbed the lead on nine minutes when Ashley Chambers cut in from the right and unleashed an unstoppable effort past the despairing dive of Mark Tyler in the Luton goal.

Buoyed by that strike York carried the game to the Hatters and should have doubled their lead on 13 minutes when Jamie Reed harried Will Antwi into a mistake in the box but with only Tyler to beat his lob ran wide.

Rattled Antwi then missed a straightforward interception seconds later as Reed was allowed a clear run on goal but Tyler stood his ground well to save with his legs.

Lacking zeal, energy, creativity and tenacity, City's slick passing game was simply too much for the visitors who seemed strangely out of sorts.

Lacklustre Luton were being forced into too many long balls as City looked confident and comfortable on their own patch.

A Luton breakaway saw former City man Alex Lawless chip to the far post on 27 minutes but there was no-one there.

Stuart Fleetwood flashed over before York doubled their lead on 31 minutes, predictably through

After good work on the right the ball broke to Walker on the edge of the area and he swept expertly home.

Finally Luton showed some life with seven minutes of the half to go, Willmott and Jakes Howells linking well on the left, before Fleetwood curled just wide.

Three minutes of injury time were added and a dreadful first half got even worse as City made it 3-0 in the second minute of stoppage time.

Chambers and Walker combined well with the latter pulling the ball back from the byline for Chambers to scuff his volley home.

The ineffective Kissock was strangely withdrawn just before the break for O'Connor as Luton faced a mountain to climb in the second half.

Lawless made way for Adam Watkins at the break and, although Luton were better second half, they still offered little.

Chambers thudded inches wide in the opening seconds, while slick play between Fleetwood and Jamie Hand resulted in the midfielder firing miles over when he should have at least hit the target.

Keane, moved forward into the midfield, produced another powerful run before slotting Fleet-

wood in, but there was no finish before that man Walker came within inches of a wonder goal on 54 minutes when the diminutive striker let fly from 30 yards but his swerving effort thumped the bar with Tyler beaten.

Walker certainly had the bit between his teeth and terrorised the Hatters at every turn - looking a completely different player from just a few months before.

Chambers somehow escaped without even a caution after feigning an elbow from Janos Kovacs, before jumping to his feet and shoving the Hungarian in the chest, as some tackles started to fly in.

A sprightly Howells run ended in Michael Ingham tipping his off-target strike round the post and Kovacs headed the subsequent corner straight at the keeper.

That was as close as Luton came though as Willmott and Jon Challinor exchanged off-target efforts, while Willmott lashed wide and Hand had an ambitious long-range strike easily fielded by Ingham.

There was a flurry of late yellow cards, while Andre Boucard struck straight at Tyler and Keane at Ingham before Town's travelling army of 606 were put out of their misery by the referee's final whistle.