**Nottingham Forest 1-2 Bristol City: Lamouchi Left on Brink of Exit as Forest Fall to Sixth Consecutive League Defeat**

**Nottingham Forest emerged still yet to register a league point this season following a battling 2-1 defeat to Bristol City, despite showing the green shoots of recovery in a result that leaves Sabri Lamouchi clinging onto his managerial status by a thread.**

For Sabri Lamouchi to remain in post over twenty-four hours succeeding this latest defeat represents a significant change in direction for Nottingham Forest - such a shift in fortunes, however, were not manifest on the pitch. Indeed, any meaningful proactivity and enterprise was displayed by Bristol City, with two early first-half goals leaving Forest requiring a somewhat improbable comeback given recent form.

The start of October marked exactly three months since Forest’s last competitive victory, with Lamouchi’s side able to defeat a 10-man Bristol City through a stunning free-kick from the recently-departed Tiago Silva. However, it is not just the meteorology that has altered dramatically in the intervening time; Forest retained only three starters from the corresponding fixture in July, whilst Bristol City have replaced long-serving Head Coach Lee Johnson with the relatively untested Dean Holden.

Perhaps the early signs of Forest’s decline in performance were present that sweltering summer day, with Forest only able to muster three shots and 44% possession against a Bristol City side depleted by an Ashley Williams red card. The malaise appears to have persisted through Forest’s unsuccessful pursuit of sun-drenched play-off glory, culminating in a miserable early-season start amidst autumn’s more doleful backdrop.

Lamouchi, compelled into judging the delicate balance between an untested defence and a misfiring offense, made two changes from Friday’s 1-0 defeat to Huddersfield Town. New recruit Nicolas Ioannou was drafted into the starting eleven post-haste, alongside bright Academy prospect Alex Mighten. The introductions almost combined to immediate effect, with an athletic Mighten header from Ioannou’s by-line cutback engaging an inspired Daniel Bentley into action.

However it was to be Bristol City that breached the deadlock - a swift counter-attack resulted from a cheap concession of possession by Tyler Blackett, enabling ex-Derby County striker Chris Martin’s deflected cross to be swept into the bottom right-hand corner by another former Ram, Andreas Weimann. Painfully for supporters, this is not the first time Forest’s local rivals have proved a thorn in their side, with the aforementioned Martin’s last-minute equaliser in July’s East Midlands Derby instigating a series of ten consecutive winless games for Lamouchi’s side. The 23rd of October will be met with much trepidation.

And Martin was to prove a thorn in Forest’s side once again in the 22nd minute,

whilst marked (POSSESSION)

however change in conditions and teams,

Proactive

**Chris Martins, Stats, Quotable thing from outside the game**

goal marked

Two managers at seemingly opposing ends of their respective tenures went head-to-head under the Friday night lights at the John Smith’s Stadium, with new Huddersfield Head Coach – and Marcelo Bielsa protégé – Carlos Corberán condemning Sabri Lamouchi’s Nottingham Forest to a fifth consecutive league defeat.

The result is sure to intensify pressure on an increasingly faltering Lamouchi. Following substantial backing over the summer transfer window from owner Evangelos Marinakis, a negative, and more pressingly losing, brand of football, is unlikely to cut the mustard in lieu of last season’s devastating final day collapse.

Perhaps fearful of a disjointed back four comprised entirely of new additions, Lamouchi opted to field seven predominantly defensive players, with Luke Freeman shunted from a more natural central midfield position to a right-wing berth – the so called ‘[graveyard shift’](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/steven-gerrard-digs-hole-after-graveyard-shift-dwfmjglkfr0).

Forest’s line-up featured several additional changes from last week’s 2-0 home defeat to Cardiff City, with débutant Harry Arter relieving under-fire Ryan Yates from his central-midfield role. Arter represents a step-up in both experience and passing ability over a tenacious Yates; approximately 13% more of Arter’s passes found their intended target compared to Yates’ previous two Championship games. It is, however, important to recognise the qualities Yates provides, with significantly more tackles than any other Forest player thus far this season – the stream of negativity in his direction appears somewhat undeserved.

Over the course of the 19/20 Championship season, Joe Lolley and Lewis Grabban contributed 29 league goals, yet both fell to the bench here. The bulk of any Forest attacking aspiration rested with an enigmatic Sammy Ameobi and the ever-volatile Lyle Taylor. With both teams yet to score in any competition this season, such a line-up promised little in the way of an open, free-flowing game, however the game launched with a lively start involving a heavy challenge from Jonathan Hogg on Arter after just forty seconds. Whilst the base of Hogg’s studs may have grazed the top of the ball, the midfielder’s challenge was at shin-height, and warranted a yellow card at minimum, if not further punishment.

Forest’s indignation was exacerbated but ten minutes later; Hogg received a yellow card, this time for a foul on an increasingly influential Ameobi. Having been entrusted to carry the majority of Forest’s direct attacking threat, Ameobi was fulfilling his role expertly, and in the 19th minute was able to jink away from Romoney Crichlow-Noble to unleash a curling left-footed finish, only to be denied by ‘keeper Ben Hamer. For the remainder of the first half, both sides exchanged half-chances – most notably with Juninho Bacuna’s skidding drive forcing an uncomfortable save from Forest’s Brice Samba, before Hamer denied Loïc Mbe Soh’s stooping header prior to half-time.

Both sides fielded relatively unseasoned defences, with Crichlow-Noble making his first start for Huddersfield and Forest’s entire back-four possessing only one appearance for the club between them, prior to Friday’s match-up. However, it was not a defensive mistake but a moment of individual attacking brilliance from Huddersfield’s Fraizer Campbell that breached the deadlock. Following a one-two between Harry Toffolo and the outstanding Josh Koroma in the 54th minute, Toffolo was able to dig out a left-footed cross from the by-line towards the Huddersfield penalty spot, which Campbell swept sweetly into the bottom-right corner.

Lamouchi responded immediately with a substitution, replacing the yellow-carded Samba Sow with the impressive Alex Mighten. Nevertheless, Forest were unable to sustain periods of meaningful pressure, until the arrival of striker Lewis Grabban almost paid immediate dividends when he struck a half-volley inches above Ben Hamer’s crossbar. In the absence of midfield schemers Tiago Silva and Joao Carvalho, chance creation remained a problem for Forest as the game entered the latter stages, with a subdued Luke Freeman and an unambitious Harry Arter unable to force a breakthrough.

Indeed, Huddersfield threatened to seal the game with a second, conspiring to miss a four-on-two situation courtesy of some excellent goalkeeping from Brice Samba. However, the game petered to a conclusion, with Huddersfield able to utilise Championship experience from the likes of Hamer and Richard Stearman to engineer Corberán’s first Huddersfield victory.

Forest were left unable to score for a third successive league game, with Lamouchi bemoaning “various situations against us [Forest] that have not gone our way”, in reference to both the potential Hogg red card and a dubious penalty shout for a trip on substitute Alex Mighten. Lamouchi’s focus, however, must rest with arresting the ruinous goalscoring form that has precipitated Forest’s worst start to a season since 1954, else a football club that has employed thirteen managers since 2014 may well be looking for a fourteenth come October.