

DRAW WITH SOUTHEND.

SIX GOALS SHARED.

Spectators and the Referee.

THE BLUES LOSE BOB HAWKES.

By "Vigilant,"

It is no disparagement to the players engaged in the Southern League match at Luton on Saturday to say that the most discussed man on the field was the referee. "What did you think of the referee?"—was a question one constantly heard

asked as one moved among followers of the Luton Town Club in the evening, and the answers given were the reverse of complimentary to the official in question. This of itself is perhaps no novel experience, and I should not give prominence to it were it not for the fact that the dissatisfaction so generally voiced was in this case abundantly justified. I have absolutely no sympathy with the tendency of football crowds to indulge in "referee baiting," but, after all, there is a limit to human endurance, and that limit was undoubtedly reached at Luton on Saturday.

The bulk of the spectators, of course, saw only the decisions which were unjust to Luton, but those of us who endeavour to view matches from a neutral standpoint detected errors at both ends, and the shouts which went up now and then from the small band of Southend followers present made it evident that they shared the dissatisfaction of the home supporters. It was in regard to the offside rule that the referee came to grief. Personally, I thought both the first two goals should have been disallowed for breaches of this rule, and there were many other decisions on this point which were opposed to the general body of opinion, but there was one incident which stood out altogether from the rest and occasioned a tremendous outburst of feeling.

It occurred some twenty minutes before the finish of the game. Following on a Luton attack King, the Southend centre, received near the middle line with only the two backs opposed to him. To beat Chapman he sent the ball out rather farther than he anticipated towards the outside left, where he was standing in an offside position. He motioned to the outside man to leave the ball, but Crews paid no heed. A cry of "offside" was immediately set up, and the linesman promptly signalled for the breach, but the whistle did not go. The outside-left's centre came at a slightly backward angle to Frost, who, with only the goal-keeper to beat and ample time in which to stop the ball and take direct aim, had no difficulty in netting. Jarvis had not taken his eye off the ball, and made a splendid effort to keep it out, but as soon as he was beaten and the referee pointed to the centre he rushed out of goal and, clutching hold of the official, drew his attention to the offside position from which the centre had been made. Others of the Luton team followed suit, and in a moment the referee was surrounded by excited players.

The linesman stood waving his tiny white flag at the spot where the outside left had taken the ball, and the crowd boomed for all they were worth. But the referee paid no heed and moved on towards the centre. He had evidently not observed the signal of the linesman, and a great cheer went up when the linesman ran to the referee and endeavoured to get the injustice set right. The Southend players then surged round, but the linesman waved them off, and a consultation between the two officials ensued. Still the referee proved adamant, and the hostile demonstration broke out afresh when it was seen that he had decided to allow the point to stand.

The crowd were evidently in a very angry mood, and for some minutes there seemed a likelihood of unpleasantness arising. Matters were not improved when a minute later the referee again disregarded a signal from the same linesman for offside against the outside left, but the award of a penalty to Luton directly after solaced the crowd to some extent, though opinions were sharply divided as to the accuracy of the decision. I heard many of the home supporters after the match aver that no penalty offence was committed, and that the award was merely a "peace offering," but I am distinctly of the opinion that Molyneux wilfully knocked the ball down with his arm, and this view was endorsed by practically everyone in the Press box, including a Southend Pressman, who was my neighbour.

However this may be, everyone will be agreed that the refereeing was the one black spot on a bright and sparkling game, favoured with exceedingly pleasant weather conditions. In spite of the unwelcome defeat sustained at Norwich two days before, there was a crowd of nearly 5,000 present. Luton were still lacking the services of Abe Jones at centre-half, Slennett again filling the gap, and Moody, who had his thigh badly bruised at Norwich, was also an absentee, Moore coming in. In spite of the directors' negotiations for the permanent engagement of Brown having terminated unsatisfactorily, Ernie re-appeared in the eleven, and Stansfield returned to outside left vice Johnson.

Southend, who were defeated at Luton by 3-0 last season, had seven of last year's players in their side. The only newcomer in the defence was Bigden, the left-half, who was formerly with Woolwich Arsenal and Bury, and in the forward line there were Norman Brown, who was very popular at Luton last season, King, who has returned to his old club from Woolwich, and Crewes, who also donned the Arsenal colours last winter. They won the opening match of the season at Millwall, but lost at home to Queen's Park Rangers.

Before the game commenced and again during the half-time interval the Red Cross Band delighted the spectators with selections from their extensive repertoire. The players lined up thus:

Luton.—Jarvis; Chapman and Hedley; F. Hawkes, Slennett and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Quinn, Smith, Moore and Stansfield.

Southend.—Cotton; Thomson and Molyneux; Emery, Owen and Bigden; Brown, Frost, King, Wright and Crewes.

Referee: Mr. E. W. Childs, West Ham.

Winning the toss, the Southend captain decided to face the brilliant sun in order to secure the advantage of the wind, but Luton had decidedly the better of the opening exchanges. They were quick to settle down, and the play from the outset was of a sparkling character. Brown and Quinn were the first to get prominent, but Ernie failed to stop the ball going over the goal-line. Then, thanks to pioneer work by Slennett and Fred Hawkes, Smith worked through with marked cleverness only to have his shot impeded. It was a splendid effort, but an even better one followed. Brown set off in characteristic style and turned the ball over to Quinn, and every one of the forwards was given a hand in the movement.

It led to a free kick for Luton on the left. Bob Hawkes sent in with admirable judgment, and Smith deftly turned the ball into goal. Cotton was on the alert, and cleared, and similarly dealt with a shot from the Amateur International. A second free kick saw Southend enjoy a narrow escape. Bigden missed Bob's shot, and the ball passed across the goal. Brown met it, and another lightning shot passed in the opposite direction. Moore got his head to it, but the pace at which the ball was travelling militated against his using much judgment, and only a goal kick resulted.

Still keeping up the pressure the Blues gained two corners in quick succession, and from the second of these Slennett headed in, and Smith, adding just a touch, nearly got the ball by Cotton, who cleared with difficulty.

Play had been in progress ten minutes when the first attack by Southend was initiated. Norman Brown, who received a cordial welcome from his old admirers, figured prominently in it. He slipped by Bob Hawkes and sent to his partner, but Chapman dashed in and got the ball into touch. From the throw in Brown again took possession and essayed a shot, Jarvis fisting out with King close on him. The ball came out to Bigden, and matters looked none too rosy, but the left half shot over. Following a corner Luton tried to break away, but were driven back. Bob Hawkes left his wing to break up a threatening run by the Southend left wing, and on the other side Hedley made two fine clearances, once employing that favourite back heel trick of his.

A fine piece of combined play by Moore, Stansfield and Smith carried the ball half the length of the field. The centre-forward lost possession, but Fred Hawkes came to his rescue and sent him on again. Smith then sent to Quinn, who steadied and took aim, but failed to get a hot shot out of the reach of Cotton. Smith was playing a very resourceful game, and in one "dust up" sustained a nasty pinch of the ankle, but resumed.

Norman Brown transferred the play with a splendid run in which he tricked both Bob Hawkes and Hedley, but from his centre King was given offside with the goal at his mercy. King was again obviously offside a moment later, when he went for the ball and, realising it, he pulled up. His action put the Luton defenders off the guard, as they apparently expected the whistle to go, and Brown went on for the ball and sent in a stinging shot. Jarvis shot out his fist and saved, but the danger was not averted. Hedley made a dash for the ball, but Frost got there first and gave a clear opening to King, who had no difficulty in scoring the first goal.

Luton were on level terms again within three minutes, but there was the same doubt about their goal. From the kick-off Smith worked through in fine style, and Moore got to close quarters, but Molyneux relieved. The Blues' centre again showed up conspicuously, and, drawing the centre-half,

field recovered the ball from the goalie, but Cotton was one too many for him and sent into touch. Quinn tested the goalkeeper and Hedley volleyed a beauty, but it was wide. The last incident of note was a pretty run by Stansfield. Moore got to close quarters, but Cotton was equal to the occasion, and the final result was therefore:

LUTON	3
SOUTHEND	3

COMMENTS ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

The talk that was going on a week ago about Luton's lucky goal at Reading induced me to hint that the Blues would not be long before they experienced their full share of misfortune, and I think everyone will agree that it has been quick to overtake them. In three successive matches they have had to play some part of the time short, and on Saturday their luck was as atrocious as it could possibly be. To have to play without two such stalwarts as Jones and Moody and then to lose their captain halfway through the game were sufficient misfortunes for any side to contend against, yet to these has to be added a wrongly awarded goal. I have already expressed my views about that goal, and I only allude to it now to point out that it robbed Luton of the victory which, I think, they were justly entitled to on the play. There was not much to choose between the teams. The homesters undoubtedly had the better of the play, and though, on the other hand, it will doubtless be agreed that the visitors were more dangerous when near goal, I think the balance was in our favour. In any case, a draw was not a result Southend could quarrel with. But for the accident to Bob Hawkes Luton would undoubtedly have repeated last season's victory.

The draw with Southend means a loss of a point compared with last season, but under the circumstances it cannot be regarded as other than satisfactory. In spite of the disadvantage under which they have suffered of never appearing twice with the same team, the Blues are undoubtedly improving. The forwards go much better together, and there is reason to hope that they will develop into a very workmanlike line. Those who saw Smith as a centre-forward for the first time on Saturday endorsed all I have previously said concerning him. He may not be perfect, but he believes in finding the shortest way for goal, and he takes a lot of knocking off the ball when he fastens on to it. A little more sting in his shooting will render him a very effective pivot. Quinn is not the pushful type of forward one likes to see, but he is making progress as an inside right. Ernie Brown was not so brilliant as usual on Saturday. Still, he is one of the best forwards we have, and Luton would sadly miss him. Harold Stansfield was the clever outside-left of old, and Moore is deserving of great praise for his very creditable debut in Southern League football. He fell off a good deal in the second half, but was nevertheless a very useful member of the side.

At half, Fred Hawkes is playing better than ever, and on this season's form is as good a man as Luton possesses. Like Bob, he loves to roam, but he is soon back in his place, and as a tackler he has few superiors. As usual, Bob showed us some delightful footwork, and everyone was sorry to see his enforced departure from the area. Slen-nett is not a Jones, but when one remembers that he was playing his fourth match in eight days it cannot be gainsaid that he did remarkably well. Hedley was well up to his accustomed form, and Chapman did many smart things, though some may still be unconvinced as to his fitness for the position. Dick Jarvis cannot be blamed for any of the goals registered against him: on the contrary, his work was practically flawless.

In the Southend team I liked King, the centre-forward, and Crewes, the outside left, best. King is an opportunist of the first water, and should do well for the Essex team. Norman Brown only occasionally showed glimpses of his old brilliance. Bigden was a fine half-back, and Molyneux at back was a source of great strength.