

FOOTBALL CHAT

HOW LUTON FELL AMONG THE "LIONS."

(By CRUSADER).

We all know the old maternal warning that we never appreciate home until we really miss it. Until I went to the "Lions' " Den at New Cross on Saturday I never knew how much I lo—— I owed to the young ladies at the Luton Exchange—and to the gentlemen too. If ever I am inclined to be angry with the graces at Luton I shall remember New Cross, and be patient. On the Millwall football ground there is quite a lot of telephone accommodation. I saw about half-a-dozen boxes—all securely locked. So I visited the secretarial office, where Mr. J. Beveridge, the secretary, informed me that the bar was up to Pressmen, and he could not think of it. Pleading old associations and friendships with the old Millwall company of the Isle of Dogs, I was at last conceded one call before the match, and another when his 'phone was not wanted, "but," he said, "when that will be I cannot say." So I made arrangements to go to a box outside, but my experience on Mr. Beveridge's 'phone was sufficient to show the uselessness of attempting to get through from anywhere else, for there are mighty men at the Den, and "call-box" work was quite hopeless. The first word I got from the Exchange was, "Oh, Luton is a trunk call. I am afraid you can't get that." So I was switched on to the supervisor, and, speaking on behalf of Lloyd George and the Geddes Bros., she informed me that only on the most urgent business could a call be allowed. I impressed on her that this call was the most important that Luton expected, but the nature of the call was a secret. Anyway, I got it, and, as most of you read on Saturday night, I got through. At that time I gave the selected sides, but at the last moment the "Lions'" half-back line was changed, Grant being asked to take the place of Voisey. Then I was told that any future call could be booked, but the time at which one could get through might be somewhere near Sunday morning. All attempts to obtain the use of one of the boxes failed, and it was after half-time before I discovered our 'phone. It was in the Directors' room, and what would have happened to me had I been discovered I daren't speculate. Anyway I had to go through the same rigmarole, and had just completed this round with the supervisor when Mr. Tom Thorne, Chairman of the Club, rang up to know the state of the game. I told him, but when he asked who was speaking I was in a quandary. How I got out I will not say, nor how many false alarms came before I touched Luton, just as the final whistle went. That was why you did not get a fuller report in the "Saturday Telegraph."

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The journey to New Cross was made by motor char-a-banc. Starting about 10.45 we reached King's Cross without mishap or omen except passing a long string of funeral carriages at Finchley. After lunch we went on to New Cross, reaching there about 2.30. Already groups of spectators were making their way to the ground, and by three o'clock the gate was as big as the average at Luton. The attendance, however, was the lowest at a Southern League match at the Den this season. It was about 15,000 to 16,000, the gate money realising £784. After half-time men were walking about with bags of money in much the same way as we would carry a bunch of carrots. One would imagine that with a return like this the Millwall side would be the equal of any in the country. The question was put to one of the officials as to why they had not a better side, and he said it was solely because they could not get players. Let me ask the Luton Supporters' Club and the spectators generally, to bear this in mind when criticising Luton's side. How is it a club with an average gate of over £1,000 per

match (it was £300 under the average on Saturday) is unable to find players. Our gates are, or would be, good if £400 before the Excise Department has laid hands on it. There were many inquiries by old friends of Luton, and, I am sorry to say, the players were again reminded of our ignoble Peace Celebration.

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The turf looked well, from a distance. Actually it was in very poor condition. The band was conspicuous by its absence, but a burly young man in a semi-admiral uniform, twanging a guitar, entertained the occupants of the grand stand by asking "Who paid Mrs. Rip Van Winkle's rent while Rip Van Winkle was away?" and the terraces were rejoiced by the efforts of two other buskers with cornets. The appointed referee was the smallest but probably the fairest man who ever blew whistle, Mr. J. H. Talks, of Lincoln, but he could not make the journey, so his duty was taken by a linesman, Mr. F. J. Brind, and the Luton players were very glum when this notification was made. The following players turned out:—

MILLWALL.

Bailey.

Fort.

Grant.

Adams. Noble.

Wilson.

Broad.

Woodley.

McAlpine.

Thomson. Mayson.

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Riddle. Williams. Simma.

Parker

Rutherford.

Boe. Hoar.

Dunn.

Urwin.

Elvey.

Summers.

LUTON TOWN.

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Memories of Dick Elvey's service to the "Lions" during war-time football were not forgotten by the frequenters of the Den, and the "Blues" received a cordial welcome, as they

turned out in new jerseys. A great roar greeted the "Lions," and when Wilson won the toss there was a tremendous din, for it meant that the Town had to face a brilliant sun.

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Clever play by Roe sent Hoar away on the right. Fort stemmed the first rush, but the winger sent in a fine centre which Bailey fisted out from among a crowd of players. Back the "Blues" came again, and Roe got in a fine shot which Bailey handed out with difficulty, and for a few moments the "Lions" were given much anxiety. They eventually got the ball away, but a big kick by Elvey sent it back, and Williams and Riddle got through cleverly, the former winding up the attack with a quick first-timer which sent the ball a yard over the bar.

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The "Lions" woke up to some purpose, and Adams got across a centre from which Noble shot hard in, but Summers saved by a flying leap across goal, and then he caught and cleared a centre from Mayson, and relieved Thomson, receiving a pass from Wilson, made a dazzling run, but Dunn met his centre and headed away. The "Lions" pressed fiercely, and a centre from Mayson was cleverly caught by Summers, who was much bothered by the sun. The home forwards rushed him and Noble charged the ball out of his hands and it was rolling on the line as Jack Dunn, with a frantic lunge, got at it and sent it out of play. Summers was kept very busy, and he caught shots from Noble and Thomson and punted the ball up the field, but it was returned and Adams ran through, but was compelled by Urwin to shoot out near the corner flag. Rutherford was conspicuous for cleverly robbing Broad, who was seldom in the picture, the chief danger coming from Thomson and Noble, and the latter forced a corner, which Elvey headed away. Williams fell back and brought relief, and passing well out on the right, Hoar got away, but Woodley managed to get the ball away from him near the corner flag. Adams brought danger with a speedy run, but Dunn robbed him as he was about to centre, and the "Blues" again got going on the right. Hoar, in spite of lameness, tricked Woodley and centred, Simms getting possession and shooting well and truly, but Bailey saved finely, and when the centre-forward again essayed a shot he was a yard wide.

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At this stage Williams was brilliant, his trickery nonplussing Wilson, Grant, and Fort, and he set Riddle on the run. The latter returned the pass, and Williams sent a terrific shot a few inches over the bar. Riddle again got through, but Fort blocked his centre and cleared. Mayson got away and Dick Elvey, dazzled by the sun, failed to head clear, but Summers saved marvellously at full length, and then Williams made ground very rapidly and trickily, but Riddle failed to overcome Fort, who set his right wing going. Noble got possession and worked through. Parker and Rutherford failed to stop him, but to beat Dunn he passed to Broad, who appeared to be well offside. The appeal was ignored, and the centre forward passed back to Dunn, who had an open goal, and only Summers to beat. The keeper stayed at home and the inside right beat him at close quarters, amidst a hurricane of cheers, after less than twenty minutes' play. The referee ignored the appeals of the Luton players and allowed the goal.

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A run by Roe and Simms saw Bailey save from the former and Williams, and then Fort cleared with a huge kick, and Noble endeavoured to repeat his previous feat. A fine drive looked a certain scorer, but Summers was cheered to the echo as he flew across goal and turned the ball round the post. The corner kick was got away, and then Simms was twice whistled offside when going through, and Williams was similarly served after following up Riddle, who had received and returned his pass. Broad hereabouts got in his first shot, but Summers saved at point-blank range. McAlpine was hurt as he stopped Hoar.

and had to retire. He had barely resumed when Williams again made a sparkling run, his close footwork hoodwinking the halves. He unselfishly passed to Simms, and the latter tricked Woodley and beat Bailey with a fast ground shot into the far corner of the net amidst cheers.

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A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.

There was no appeal from the players, but to the consternation of the "Blues," as the ball crossed the line the whistle went, and the goal was disallowed. It was an extraordinary decision and quite upset the Luton players, for it was a fine goal, but the terraces rocked with joy.

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A smart run by Riddle, following clever play by Williams, was cheered, and he passed inside for his partner to skim the bar with a magnificent shot. Hoar and Roe broke through, and the inside man baffled Wilson and Woodley and delivered a fast ball which crashed into the side net as Bailey ran off. The referee gave a corner kick, adjudging that Bailey had deflected the flight of the ball. He was close enough to see, but a persistent wagging of the flag by the linesman brought him across, and after a confab he reversed the decision and gave a goal-kick. The same linesman had twice penalised Urwin on the throw-in, and the little man now politely requested the reason. The referee ran across post-haste, apparently under the impression that Urwin was insulting the linesman, and another talk followed, after which the referee instructed the half-back to throw-in, and was in turn requested to see that it was done properly. It was, and Williams made a grand solo effort, concluding with a shot which brought Bailey to his knees. He threw

the ball away, and the "Blues" were again rushing through when the interval was signalled with the score:—

Millwall	1 goal
Luton	nil

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The Town were again the first on the move in the second half, and Riddle early ran through, but there was no one up to receive his centre, and Bailey caught and cleared. Williams set Summers going, but the centre-forward held on too long, and three attempts to shoot were frustrated by Wilson and Fort. Then Millwall set up a prolonged attack, and Summers gave a brilliant display. By dint of long passing and big kicking the "Lions" kept the ball in the Luton half. Thomson was the chief figure in the attack, and when he was not dribbling through on his own he was sending Mayson away with long passes forward. Urwin and Elvey had a tough struggle to keep this pair out, but Summers was the outstanding personality in a time of great stress. Twice he tipped the ball over the bar, and once he flung himself at the feet of Broad and picked the ball up and held it in spite of attempts to dispossess him.

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Occasionally the pressure was lifted, and Roe or Williams would bring the ball down, but the home backs did not stand on ceremony, and nothing very exacting reached Bailey. Riddle once ran through from the middle line, and centred, but Simma could not get proper control of the ball, and Wilson cleared. The "Lions," who were cleverly piloted by Wilson, stormed the Luton defence, and in one fierce assault Dunn was hurt after a fearless tackle as Noble and Broad were going through. Parker also saved the situation when Adams ran in close to the post, and compelled him to shoot out.

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Williams brought off a tricky relief, and a passing movement in which all three inside men joined, won a couple of corners, but Bailey eventually cleared, and the "Lions" again pressed. Rutherford quite overshadowed Broad, and although the centre received any number of passes he could seldom get past the long legs of Rutherford. Hoar got away on the right and won a corner, but it was easily cleared, and then Grant started the movement which brought about the second goal. Robbing Riddle he sent the ball across the ground to Thomson. There appeared to be no immediate danger, but a half-shot half-centre came right into goal, and although Summers made a gallant attempt, Broad managed to scramble it through from close range.

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The "Blues" tried hard to reduce the lead, and in one attack Fort tapped the ball down in the penalty area, but the appeal for a penalty was ignored, and the end came with the score:—

Millwall	2 goals
Luton Town	nil

CRITIQUE.

That the "Lions" were the better side cannot be denied. The first half was very even, and at times the Luton forwards promised warm things for the home defence, but they lacked finishing power, and their shooting was neither true enough nor frequent enough. In the second half the "Lions" were much superior, and only the sterling quality of the Luton defence kept them out. Summers made wonderful saves, and with Elvey, Dunn, and Rutherford, saved the goal account from a severe mauling. Urwin was not quite so happy as usual, and Parker had his work cut out against Noble and Adams, but Rutherford was in great form. None played badly, however. The forward line in the first half played better than in any previous game, but fell away sadly after change of ends. The most comforting feature was the form of Williams, and on this display he has earned his place. His shooting

was hard and often, and with any luck he must have scored. The tactics generally, however, were not of the profitable type, the ball being hugged too much. Riddle found Fort in great form, and Sid Hoar was crippled in the first minute and really not fit to turn out. Nevertheless, we think a little patience and perseverance, especially if the forwards will develop the open game more, will make for success. Millwall are a serviceable side, triers all the time, fast and hefty, and eager for goals. They slung the ball about, but there was no more method in their play than in that of Luton. Bailey and his backs were sound; Wilson played a masterly game at half, and Noble and Thomson were the pick of the forwards.