

FOOTBALL NOTES.

(By CRUSADER).

There is a French proverb which says that he who accuses himself accuses himself, and so when I say that the Town were again unfortunate on Saturday I am quite sure that many will think I am too one-sided. I say they were very unlucky, but I know also that Millwall deserved the points. In a tough struggle, the "Lions" were just that much better which the ground advantage is supposed to give to any side. They were not more finished exponents, but they were more victorious and energetic, and their game can best be described by the word "hard." It was quite an even first half, the Town having fully as much of the ball, but not being quite so showy with it as the "Lions." Millwall's shooting was a trifle better, but in approach their methods were lacking, and certainly not so pretty as the occasional short passing bursts of the Luton forwards. But however pretty this drawing-room football of the Town's inside forwards, it is never so profitable as the open game. For a few seconds one is held spell-bound by the cunning foot-jugglery, then when some hefty defender dashes in and spoils it, we want to say "We didn't you fair?" It was so on Saturday, and the most danger came from the occasions when Riddle or Hear was pried with a long run and able to run in and centre. In my opinion this is the only way by which goals will come, for the dribbling is overdone. Although I admire judicious dribbling as much as anyone I am paid to write what I think, and I say quite frankly that there is too much individuality in the forward line, too much close dribbling, and not enough shooting.

* * * *

Having got that off I want to say now that I was good deal more science in the forward line than we have seen for a long time, and that the display I have not the and on Saturday regarding the palm to slightest hesitation in my mind. David was David Williams. After the game he was very disconsolate. Footballers are very curious chaps and there is one good point about the "Blues" which I like to see. No matter what they are up against they think they are going to win, so one can quite understand that they are downhearted when they lose. On Saturday it was the same, and at the end they were very disappointed. Of course, their spirits revived after tea, but soon after the game Williams said to me: "I think I must be the Jonah; I am put in the line again for an away match, a hard match, and sure enough we lose." Well, it was not Williams' fault on Saturday. He gave his best display since he donned the blue jersey. He might have fed Riddle more, perhaps, but he must early have realised that Fort was on the top of the winger every time, if Grant was not, and when there was an opportunity of giving Riddle a clear chance it was given. Williams not only showed much cleverer footwork than in any previous match, and outwitted Joe Wilson, one of the cleverest halves in the south, but he helped the halves, and was always eager for a pot-shot at goal, and he never dallied or shirked when he got anywhere near. On Saturday's form he ought to remain at inside left, for he was the pick of the Town forward line. He has had heart-breaking luck so far, but his day will come before long, and I hope he will get the encouragement he deserves.

* * * *

Unfortunately, Sid Hear's ankle failed in the first minute, yet he put in good work; Ree was tricky, and with Simms gave occasional dribbling expositions, but was usually crowded off when near goal. Riddle did not have many chances, but only on two or three occasions he managed to avoid the attentions of Grant and Fort, and get the ball over. The line as a whole, however, lacks method, especially in conjunction with the half-back line. Design, speed, and execution are not yet first-class, but, and here again the supporters would do well to note: exactly the same complaint was made by Mr. J. B. Skeggs and other heads of the Millwall Club concerning their team. Now if Millwall, whose competitive football has not been interrupted like that of Luton, are suffering in this respect, surely we should not be too hard on the Town players, especially remembering that the same forward line has not yet figured in two consecutive matches. I do hope the supporters will show some regard for reason in this matter. We shall not go all through the season like this, and I am confident enough to believe that with any sort of decent fortune the Town will end in the top half of the League.

* * * *

The halves have never yet played a poor game. On Saturday they found the Millwall forwards' game troublesome, and they were never as fully on top as they were against Swindon, but they never flagged, and went at it from start to finish. Rutherford was the pick, and he quite overshadowed Broad, the crack centre-forward, who is the "Lions'" top goal-scorer. The methods of this player are simple. He lies well up the field, right on the backs, and scores of passes which were intended for him on Saturday never reached him because of Rutherford's long legs and head. The danger came from the wings. Elvey and Dunn played manfully, the latter in spite of a damaged knee, and the Millwall Club quite agree that Elvey is a candidate for International honours. They think a great deal of him at the Den, and Mr. Skeggs, the Chairman of the League, spoke in the warmest terms, both of Dick's play and character. Summers was very lucky in the first half, for he had a more powerful force to contend with than the Millwall forwards—the sun. I thought he would have had a better chance against Noble when the first goal was scored, had he run out, but then, I have never been a goalkeeper. I know this, that had he run out and failed, some would have said he ought to have stayed at home. He made thrilling saves, and time and again he saved when downfall appeared certain. He got a nasty blow from Broad as he was saving from a corner, but he showed no effects of it until after the match, and he won the praise of the critics of the grand stand.

* * * *

* * * *

The Millwall team showed no pronounced superiority until the second half was well started, and then they were reminded of their duty by the thousands on the terraces. At forward they were better served on the wings than in previous games, and Thomson was their best man. It was rather hard on the Town that Millwall owe this player to Mr. C. Green. Thomson was playing with the Canadians, and as Millwall were asking Mr. Green for recommendations for their war-time football, he mentioned Thomson. They got him and booked him up. He cost them nothing, not even the expenses of development, and he was certainly their best forward on Saturday. His dribbling and passing were excellent, while he had a good notion of goal direction. Noble was the next choice, and the wingers, while showing no superlative cleverness, were useful. Wilson was the master mind in the intermediate line, and his cool head and cunning feet gave the forwards many chances. Grant, the old Arsenal player, is well-known in Luton, for he was engaged at the Commer Cars. He played a solid game, without embroidery, and Voisey was not misused. McAlpine would have had a hard task had Sid Hear been fit, for he had his work cut out under more fortunate conditions for himself. Fort and Woodley played a sterling game at back, and the former was in fine fettle. Bailey was very safe in goal, and his work stamped him as in the highest class.

* * * *

The first goal came nearly half way through the first half, and although Noble deserved to score, I am quite sure that Broad was offside, and he it was gave Noble the opportunity of scoring. Noble did the donkey work, but when hemmed in he gave to Broad, who was well in advance, and had he shot it was not improbable that he would have been given offside. He passed back to Noble, however, and the latter shot through. It was not, as some of the London papers said, "that Noble refused to be knocked off the ball;" he did part with it once, and it was to Broad. The second goal a few minutes from time was a curious sort of affair, but the "Lions" deserved it. Thomson took a sort of aimless kick into goal. Broad was, as usual, lying handy, and in the scramble close to the post he managed to net it. It was a poor goal, but so much of the "Lions'" play deserved reward that no one could grumble about it.

* * * *

"We had luck with the referee last week," said one of the Town players after the game, "but Millwall had it to-day." For a moment after Simms got the ball through in the first half no one knew what was wrong with the goal although one of the Luton directors thought the ball was not in the net before the whistle went; I am quite sure it was well on the way, and as Simms had beaten an opponent before he shot, well, if he was offside at all, it was when he received the ball. There was some bitterness about the referee missing the action of Fort, who handled just before the end of the game, but these are cases which may well be overlooked, for the referee has only one pair of eyes. In general, however, the referee did not do at all badly, although he appeared to want us to know that he was in charge of the game. Over the little difference of opinion between the linesman and Tom Urwin, I asked the official what was wrong. He said reproachfully to me, "Surely you do not think I would wilfully do what is not right, do you?" I told him that it was rather extraordinary that Urwin should invite the referee to notice his position on the line whilst he threw in. The linesman replied that the player had one foot not touching the line when he threw in, but Tommy denied this, and quoted the law like a book, stating that some part of each foot was on the line as he threw in the ball, and that was sufficient.

It was a pleasant game so far as the players were concerned, the free kicks being chiefly for handling, and there was not one bad foul throughout the game.

* * * *

The journey was made by motor charabanc, and was very enjoyable. The return journey, after a halt at King's Cross, was made in good time, and Luton was reached at a quarter to ten.

* * * *

Billy Lawson enjoys much popularity away. There were many inquiries for him at New Cross last Saturday, and a perfect stranger received an introduction in a novel way. He was bemoaning a severe headache, when Billy invited him to "take a good sniff of this." Whatever it was that Billy had inside that bottle it almost laid out the sniffer, and he was quite prepared to believe Billy's claim that it would kill or cure. Fortunately it cured in this case.

* * * *

Bert Moody journeyed with the Town team as far as King's Cross on Saturday, and rejoined us for the return journey. He told us that their centre-half in the game with the Spurs' Reserves was knocked out no fewer than eight times.

* * * *

My colleague who saw the Town Reserves and Clarence game says that the Amateurs were quite equal to the Reserves except in the all important place of goal-scoring. That they were beaten by 3-1 appears to be largely due to their own demerits in front of goal or to the excellence of Whitehead. I urge the necessity of a watchful eye and plenty of encouragement of the Clarence by the Town directors. From other sources I have heard a lot of praise of certain of the Clarence players and their record so far proves that rumour is not altogether unreliable.

* * * *

SUPPORTERS' CLUB.

It is a real pleasure to bear witness to the excellent spirit which characterized the revival of the Luton Town Football Supporters' Club at the Corn Exchange last Friday night. Mr. Bob Fuller again undertook the role of Chairman, and was a very lenient and genial official. Of course, it was inevitable that there should be criticism, and Mr. Gibbard enlivened what threatened to be a very dull meeting. Many old and willing workers were missing, but the mantle has fallen on equally enthusiastic workers. There was a curious misunderstanding about the financial position of the club. A rumour had gone round that there was a sum of £45 in hand, but this was due to a lingual error. The words "four to five pounds" had been misconstrued to "forty-five pounds." Actually there was less than £4 in hand.

The following old members were re-elected to the committee—E. Dillingham, P. Edwards, A. Flitten, E. Mouse, A. Robertson, C. Stokes, A. Tearle, S. Vanschagen, J. Wilding, P. Crick, P. Brightman. The new members added were P. Hinton, S. Toyer, H. Stallon, H. Lane, H. Grundy, A. Lawrence.

Keen discussion followed on the principal officers. The old officials were: President, Alderman A. Wilkinson; Vice-Presidents, Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, M.P., Messrs. J. O. Hickman, J. W. Green, and the Rev. E. B. Mahon. (The other Vice-President was the late Councillor Albert Oakley). In addition to the five mentioned, the following were invited to accept office:—Major Harold Wernher, Major S. Green, Messrs. Chas. Dillingham, Ben Hartop, G. H. Latchmore, C. Colling, H. Newson Davis, W. G. Kent, W. F. Mullett, W. J. Coom.

Mr. Percy Brightman undertook the secretarial duties pro tem, and arrangements were made for assisting to make Bob Hawkes' benefit a success, tickets and subscription books being issued. The Town Club has guaranteed Bob £100, and it is hoped that the returns from the Watford game on October 15th will bring in more than that sum. A collection realised just over £2, and Mr. Sam Toyer generously defrayed the expenses of the hall for that meeting, so the proceeds of the "whip-round" will all go to Bob's benefit.

If the Supporters' Club gets going properly it will be just as useful to the Town directors this year as in the old days, and I think every supporter who wants to see the "Blues" do well should take the opportunity of joining