

FOOTBALL NOTES.

After the match at Southend last Saturday, I got in conversation with another scribe, and he said he thought a good match had been spoiled. We agreed that the reason so many Southern League games were unattractive was the referees' incompetence, and he summed up the case in a way I cannot tell here. The story of Williams' indiscreet retort to a sarcastic remark the referee made to him, and the marching orders he received as a consequence, has already been told. As Williams has ten years' excellent service to his credit in first-class football, and has never previously been reprimanded, and the referee agreed after the game that it was not a serious offence, he ought to get off with a reprimand.

Southend deserved to win—although three clear goals flattered them—because they were able to consummate their work. They are not a great side, but they have a few excellent players who pull the team through. Their victory on Saturday was chiefly due to the quality of Reid, the ex-Burnley back, Evans, a new half-back from Wales, and Lot Jones, the ex-Manchester City inside left. These three were the cleverest of the side, and while Evans and Jones were disposed to take liberties with the laws of the game, Reid was only once at fault, and that was when he tripped Williams when the latter was close in. I thought this should have been a penalty.

The match card at Southend said: "Luton always give us a hard game, but in the black and white jerseys to-day we are hoping to beat the 'light blues.' They once beat us in the cup at home, and we have never completely forgiven them for it." I can quite believe that the Southend players had taken this passage too literally, especially Frost and Evans, and it was only after the latitude of the referee to the home players, that the Luton players began to respond. Agreed that they should not do so under any circumstances, but human nature is the same the world over, and we are none of us perfect. I can only say this: that on the principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," Frost deserved more than he got from Dunn, who is about the worst customer a man can take liberties with. Then the innocent suffered, for Parker, fearing a fracas, rushed up and thrust Frost away from Dunn, and himself received the caution. But that fairly reflects the incapacity of the referee. A sergeant-major in the Army, Mr. Rowles may be a most excellent man in his working day sphere, but refereeing is not his strong point.

Our forwards were weakened by the absence of Williams, but even before then I do not think they reached the level which is necessary to win honours in football. We do not see enough of that thorough understanding we saw among the Crystal Palace forwards; there is no quick, snappy combination, no accurate long passing, and no sharp-shooting, and I am of opinion that this is largely due to lack of ball practice. Shooting at goal once a week is not enough, and if I may make a suggestion, it is that Mr. John Dow be asked to compile a time-table similar to that he took part in at Middlesbrough and Manchester City. It is foolish to think that the players are not always trying, for they get just as downhearted over defeats as the supporters. Under any circumstances, a change will do them no harm, and I recommend my old friend, Billy Lawson, whom we were all sorry to miss on Saturday, to try the change for a week or two. I do not mean to say that the players should have a ball out every day in April. They are getting stale by then, but certainly until well after Christmas.

Urwin's absence from the half line was severely felt, but Lot Jones and Young are a good wing, and Jim Brandham tried very hard. Rutherford was in great form, and Parker worked cleverly, and usually held his wings in check. At back, Dick Elvey was in fine form, and made no mistake, and in the second half he pitted his judgment and resource against the crafty Jones, and on many occasions he singlehanded beat the left wing. In this instance we had a rare laugh in the train over the pass to which things had come in the second half. Elvey mastered Young near the touch line, and was in the act of kicking away when Young kicked at him. Elvey half-turned on the forward, and Jones entered in and got the ball. Elvey promptly recovered and tackled the inside man, who, beaten, dropped on all fours just as he did in the first half when Simms was first penalised. Elvey did not go over Jones' back, but fell on top. The referee whistled, but never indicated to which side he had awarded the foul. It was obviously an offence on Jones' part, and Elvey picked up the ball and kicked it. The Southend players did not move away, but one returned the ball, placed it and kicked it. Elvey again picked it up and kicked it, and then play proceeded, the referee having stood

Elvey again picked it up and kicked it, and then play proceeded, the referee having stood by and given no sign. It would have been amusing if it had not been pathetic. Jack Dunn made two serious mistakes, but when the side was depleted he played like a giant, especially against the wind. Percy Summers was severely handicapped by the strained leg, and there was a big lump between the knee and the thigh when he returned to the dressing room after the match.

Of the home players, Emblem, who is quite a little chap, showed coolness and resource in goal, but Reid was the star in defence, and the master was inscribed on all his work. He got flurried on two or three occasions when tackling Williams, but his powers of recovery were excellent. Evans was the cleverest half, and should prove a real treasure, for he tackled and passed well. His fault was an inclination to rough charges, but he did very well. Arthur Wileman's brother played well at outside right, and Burrill was good in the centre, but the craftman of the line was Jones, and at times he played brilliant football. His goal was well deserved because of his play, although Summers would have saved had he not been crippled. Young shone by reason of Jones' cleverness, and should develop into a class man. Frost's two goals were very questionable, and were at such close range that he could not fail to score. His play was spoilt by temper and a resentment when beaten. On the whole, it was the worst of the thirteen Southern League games I have seen this season.

Teams:—Luton: Summers; Elvey. Dunn; Brandham, Rutherford, Parker; Hoar, Roe, Simms, Williams, Bookman.

Southend: Emblem; Reid, Marshall; Evans, Bollington, Woodward; Wileman, Frost, Burrill, Jones, Young.

Referee: Mr. F. W. Rowles, Twickenham.

Southend United were grumbling about their experiences with the referee at Southampton the previous week, and Mr. E. Liddell, the manager, had some cutting things to say. He is the old Clapton Orient half-back, and met an old friend in David Williams, whom he was sorry to see sent off the field. He afterwards interceded with the referee on behalf of the Town's inside left.

Some comments on the referee question remind me of a story which is being told with great gusto by some of the Town Reserves. At Portsmouth, Bob Hawkes was penalised for a foul throw-in, and so he pointed out to the linesman on the next occasion that he desired to be quite correct. He did so something like this: "Observe that I place the ball at the back of my neck thus, and bring it over my head so." It was all correct then, and each time Bob drew attention to the way he was doing it. Subsequently he failed to repeat the lesson, and was promptly pulled up. Then he remarked: "Oh well, I've done with it now." A few moments later when the Town goal was in danger, Bob made a desperate lunge and cleared. The ball struck the referee on the side of the head, and flattened him out. Play kept on, but the referee was all unconscious of what was happening for some seconds. Then he revived sufficiently to blow his whistle. Relapsing again, the services of the trainers were necessary to restore him. A few minutes later when Bob was in the act of taking a flying kick, the crowd went into convulsions, for the official dropped to the ground like a stone and waited until danger had passed. After the match, Bob had a little chat with the referee, and remarked: "Ah, well, you had the better of it!" With a rueful look, the referee replied: "Did I? I am not so sure of that!"