

FOOTBALL NOTES.

(By CRUSADER).

On Saturday:—

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE..... 2 goals
LUTON TOWN 1 ..

On Monday:—

LUTON TOWN 1 goal.
BRISTOL ROVERS 1 ..

Still unsatisfactory is the verdict on the results of the Town. One point out of a possible four in home matches is very disappointing, and we had expected a turn of the tide. Said one spectator after leaving the Town ground on Monday night: "What a rotten side Merthyr must be." It was an excusable remark, for both on Saturday and Monday the football served up by the Town representatives was exceedingly poor, and a long long way from first-class football as we knew it in pre-war days. I am not going to criticise here the individual players, for I have already given my views in the "Telegraphs," but there can be no question that we shall have to have many changes if we are going to do any good in the Southern League next season.

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One wonders if the paucity of first class footballers is due to the long rest so many clubs had during the war. It may be so, yet a glance at the League tables shows that some of the clubs who were barred by circumstances from playing except in very minor football, have done exceptionally well. Portsmouth and Watford are cases in point. It is strange that the 30 clubs who were divorced from the game for a matter of four years should now be the two leading clubs in the Southern League. I am quite aware that two clubs in a similar plight in war-time are at the bottom, while Luton, which had a programme of sorts, is very close to the wooden spoon. I am quite in agreement with the policy of the directors in giving trials to new and young players. It is the only method of paving a way for a winning team in two or three seasons, but we have to get some new men of real good class from somewhere, and that competition is very keen is shown by the fact that a dozen Southern League clubs are advertising for first-class men.

I have this week been reading an article by Stephen Bloomer, and he laments the deterioration in forward play, and tells how vastly different was inside play in his day, and goes on to explain why it is different, and the remedy. The greatest inside forward England ever had knows the game, and again I repeat that it would be worth all the money it cost if such a man could be got to coach Luton. I am quite sure something of the sort will have to be done before we get a really first class forward line.

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So far as the halves are concerned, here again there needs revision. Bob Hawkes and Fred Hawkes are getting on in years, but who can deny that they were not as good as any we have had? Important as is a sound defence, goal scoring is equally so, and the only way to ensure consistency in this respect is to obtain halves and forwards who can understand each others' play. It is not for me to say whom the directors shall retain or shall part company with, and I am not one of those who advocate a general sweep. The difficulties besetting Luton visit other clubs in like manner, and the country is being scoured for talent, but only here and there does a club meet with success. The nucleus of the present team must be retained, anyway, for we cannot trust to luck, even if they are kept as understudies for better men who may turn up.

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The possibilities of Newman turning up at Luton next year are, so far, the only comfort we have at present, unless, as I hope, something good has been found among the men who played at Watford last night. I have great hopes of Bayliss turning out a capture, but at present I do not think that any other of the strangers we have tried justifies the directorate in persevering with them. Of the locals, Hull, to my mind, has the making of a good player, but how far he is capable of improvement I do not know. Time is everything in such matters. What the directors want, and what they know they want, are young players who will jump to the front at a bound, but as about a hundred other clubs are after the same thing, the difficulty of obtaining is obvious.

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We were certainly very unlucky in the match with Plymouth on Saturday, both by reason of the poor goal the Argyle got and the mishaps to Parker and Roe, but on Monday Bristol Rovers deserved their share of the spoils, even admitting that they got a point by as poor a goal as one could see. We had most of the play in the former game, but in the latter the visitors were the better balanced side.

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Bratby did not inspire confidence as a ready-made successor to Simms, and Urwin is hardly likely to make a better forward than half-back, although I certainly think that Arthur Roe will make a better half than he is a forward.

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Neither of Dixon's goals for the Argyle was satisfactory, but Urwin's was a real beauty. Higginbotham's score against the Rovers was also a smart effort, and the Rovers' goal was a gift, but even so, our forwards require considerable stiffening.

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It may savour of repetition to say that the directors are doing their best to get good men, but there it is, and one cannot say more than that it is quite true.