

FOOTBALL NOTES

(By CRUSADER).

LUTON TOWN 1

BRISTOL ROVERS 2

To say that the Town greatly disappointed their supporters last Saturday is to put it very mildly. On the actual play the Town were streets ahead of the Rovers in cleverness, but they could not satisfy the scruples of the referee, who undoubtedly made some bad blunders, and admitted after the game that he regretted one decision. Of all the people who have written or spoken to me about Saturday's game not one but has admitted that the Town fully deserved to win. Usually, whenever the Town lose, a few supporters want to eject half the team, but on this occasion there has been scarcely anything of this extremist criticism.

True, one or two have criticised certain players, but not severely, and everybody appears to take the view that the loss of the points which would have placed the Town within three of the League leaders was due entirely to the faults of the referee. Many those faults certainly were, and while I think that as a rule the errors are evenly balanced by the end of the season, it certainly does not tend to improve the sportsmanship of a crowd when an official fails as did Mr. Todman on Saturday. That he tried to be impartial I have no doubt, but there were too many doubts in his mind, and he always gave them to the defending side. The latter principle is a correct one, but I am quite of the opinion of the spectators nearest the goal when they say that the Town actually scored three or four legitimate goals.

The worst error, of course, was when he gave the penalty after Simms had scored a good goal. After the game he said that he regretted having blown his whistle so quickly, but as a matter of fact, even if the whistle were sounded before the ball was in the net, and in my opinion it was not, there was absolutely no interference with the play by the visitors or by the Luton players, and so it made no difference whatever. From the Press box it appeared as though the ball was over the line before Whatley stopped it, when Simms took the penalty kick, and that view is well confirmed by spectators, level headed and otherwise, standing near, while there does not seem the slightest room for doubt that Panes was well inside the goal when he headed out Mathieson's free kick.

Four goals to two would not have exaggerated the Town's superiority, for I

do not think they have ever done so much pressing with such little return for it. Whatley's charge had a charmed existence until the last half minute, when MATHIESON cleverly scored from a free kick direct. He is getting quite an expert at this sort of thing, and had the previous effort counted he would have been among the season's double figure scorers.

LEIGH'S two goals for the Rovers were very unlike. The first was a pot shot which skidded off Semple's foot en route, and although Bailey made a big effort to reach it, and seemed to cover it, the ball rolled into the net. The second was a brilliant effort worthy of a Corinthian at his best—a dazzling dribble that took the scorer straight through and a shot that gave Bailey no chance whatever.

The Town played the close game in the first half, and it did not pay. In the second they still failed to open out as much as they should have done, yet deserved to win. Simms had the most abominable misfortune with his shots both in the first and in the second half, and while Whatley and his backs deserved the ovation they received, Simms and his colleagues were entitled to sympathy. The Rovers were very lucky indeed to get two of the three goals allowed, and to take the points back to Bristol.

LUTON TOWN.—Bailey; Semple, Tirrell; Molyneux, Parker, Cockerill; Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.

BRISTOL ROVERS.—Whatley; Hall, Pacey, Howes, Sims, Crompton; Walter, Morgan, Boxley, Leigh, Norton.

Referee: Mr. F. Todman, Croydon.