

STILL WINNING.

At Reading.

Luton Town 1 goal
Reading nil

LUTON TOWN.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Parker, Lamb; Hoar, Higginbotham, Roe, Butcher, Bookman.

READING.—Crawford; Smith, Wilde; Getgood, Mavin, Christie; Broskom, Bailey, Andrews, Cameron, Carr.

Referee.—Mr. R. R. Crump, London.

It is many a long day since I saw a game so one-sided, from the trying standpoint, as this at Elm Park last Saturday. The ball was continually on the move, the players took and gave hard knocks with varied equanimity, and there were spectators quite satisfied with everything—except the result. Luton players were quite satisfied with that also. They seemed to be quite content to keep the home players on the run, and although the only goal scored was of the character that delights the scorer and the crowd—home variety—it was quite a surprise when it came.

Seventy-three minutes had elapsed before it came, and BUTCHER, the executant, deserved the honour because throughout the game he had been the most lively forward on the field.

The game was rather boresome to the home spectators because they saw the Town do the bulk of the pressing—if their attacks could be so designated. The home team gave of their utmost in jerks—a few minutes' activity now and then. In the main the Town kept up a sort of stern resistance, and whenever the Reading players showed signs of getting up real fighting spirit there would be a little extra spurt by the Town, and matters once more became normal.

The home team

HUSTLED AND BUSTLED

a great deal, but showed little organisation in attack. Undoubtedly, their strength was in defence, and the halves and backs contested every inch of ground with great determination. Too often they jettisoned all scruples, and so there were many free kicks, particularly against Getgood and Christie. But for the sage experience of Mavin, I am afraid Reading would have been in very sore straits, for, good as the backs were, the old Fulham centre-half was very firm in defence.

Both pairs of backs were in rare fettle, and Wilde is one of the safest I have seen this season. He has not the style of Lennon or the elegance of Cresswell of South Shields, but he has a habit of mixing it and is as smart in getting at the troublesome spot as most backs. Smith concentrated on Bookman, and so gave Butcher more scope than he should have done. Lennon was in his very best form, and his speed in tackling and excellent placing were features of the game. Tirrell put up stern opposition, and his vigilance neutralised the cleverness of Bailey, Reading's smart inside-right.

With such capable defenders the goal-keepers had a comparatively easy afternoon, and had small cause for apprehension. Luton's middle men were splendid, and except for one instance in the first half, they abjured finnickin' work in defence. They foiled and spoiled the opposition and toiled consistently to keep the forward line moving. If Parker and Lamb were better than the jolly Molyneux it was because the last named had the most virile of Reading's vanguard to deal with. Indeed most of the home team's attacks were directly traceable to the speed and cleverness of Carr, just as their conception was mostly attributable to Mavin. But Molyneux and Lennon were in such trim that Carr was

PRETTY WELL SUBDUED

before the second half had long been in progress.

Reading's halves suffered by comparison. Mavin was certainly good, but the wing halves spoilt most of their work and brought a heap of anxiety upon the defence by the frequency with which they fouled opponents.

Mavin deserves exclusion from this statement, for he fought fairly and squarely, and the Town forward relished the tussles with him. He is still a wonderfully fine player, and Fulham must often have longed for his shrewd presence. Getgood is a very clever player, but was equally blameworthy with Christie for overworking the whistle.

Butcher earned the palm forward, and his quick wits soon enabled him to grasp Smith's harassing attitude concerning Bookman. His footwork was often brilliant, and his passing neat. Higginbotham, too, did a lot of carpet beating without unduly extending himself. In midfield Roe was quite as smart as Simms, and it was only when an attack required consummation that Simms was missed. Roe's footwork and passing was true and clever, and he faced the burly defenders quite fearlessly, but his shooting boots were still missing. It is, and will always be, my constant regret that Roe cannot discover the finishing touch that would make him a real first-class forward. To his detriment, Hoar's speed has been compared with that of Wilde, and in the daily papers Wilde has been declared the faster. Perhaps before this has been read, provided Hoar's ankles have recovered, the knowing bird who makes this statement has had an opportunity of revising it. It is a strange thing that in the few direct sprints Hoar had on equal terms with his opponent he got the ball and put in a centre. Bookman, whenever he had the chance, was yards faster than either Getgood or Smith, but they were bent on restricting his opportunities, and while he always did well when he got the chance, his best work came in the first half before he was "found out."

The home forwards, with the exception of Carr, were a moderate lot. They seldom combined attractively, and were lacking in shooting. Andrews was unable to overcome Parker, Cameron was slow, Bailey was too well watched, and Broskom needs much more experience before he is class enough for Lamb and Tirrell.

On the whole, the 6,000 spectators, excluding those who only paid to see Reading win, got value for their money, if that was one of the best games they have seen at Reading this season.