

FOOTBALL.

READING OUTCLASSED.

Luton's Biggest Victory of the Season.

(By CRUSADER.)

Some people are never satisfied where goals are concerned. I plead guilty to a feeling of that sort. At the end of the season Luton Town will not be allowed to forget that Swindon beat them by 9-1 at the beginning of the season. There will be reminders and recollections by the scribes and historians of football. Luton Town will deserve it. In two matches this season they have had the opportunity of wiping out that Swindon debacle, or, at least, of rendering it insignificant. At Luton on Christmas Tuesday they defeated Gillingham by about 5-0, and should have run into double figures. Yesterday they might comfortably have doubled their score against Reading, who were outplayed in every department, and showed nothing like the class one would expect. Perhaps those who could hardly swallow the statement that the Town players were never fully extended at Reading will now believe it, if they saw yesterday's game.

Reading were unfortunate to lose Smith. Well, I am not so sure. At the pace the Town were then playing Smith was not so potent a factor as was the offside rule worked so successfully after his departure. The offside rule pulled them up time after time until they got settled down to it in the second half, and then they did not seem to care whether they got more goals or not. We may want those goals at the end of the season if all goes well with us in the next two or three League matches.

Luton had Simms for Roe as the only change from the team that defeated Reading last Saturday. The visitors had no change in defence, but put Spence in place of Broskom at outside-right, and Weston in place of Andrews at centre-forward.

For nearly 20 minutes the game was just interesting, the Town doing most of the pressing. Then one of the visitors had a determined effort to get through. So Luton began to play, and within six minutes they were three goals up. SIMMS opened the scoring. Bookman and Wilde had a race for the ball, and the full-back tried hard to kick it on to the forward that it might rebound over the line. It rebounded across goal instead, and Simms got to it before Crawford and sent it into the net. Five minutes later HOAR dashed through on the right, and, beating Wilde, he banged the ball hard in from the line. Crawford could only kick at it, and it skidded off his foot into the net. Then HIGGINBOTHAM got the ball near the middle of the field and went through on his own. One shot was saved by Crawford, but the inside-right got at the ball again and crashed it into the net. Again the Town came with speedy footwork and sharp passing, and in trying to stop a rush Smith went for Butcher and missed him. He fell on his wrist and so damaged it that he took no further part in the game.

Crawford kept out several shots, two from Bookman, and the ball was not got away from the latter's second shot, and Simms promptly netted.

The second half saw play very much spoilt by the offside game, but Luton were always masters of the situation, and might have notched many more goals had they been in earnest. SIMMS got a couple. Higginbotham was responsible for the working of the first, for he tricked several opponents and then gave Simms a simple opening, from which he completed the hat-trick. A little while before the end Hoar centred right into goal. Butcher got the ball and could easily have scored, but he let Simms have it instead, and the latter completed his bag of four, and brought the total to six.

The visitors were let off lightly. Their defence, the halves especially, was no match for the home forwards. Wilde did a tremendous amount of work, and whenever possible Mavin tried to assist him, but his hands were full, for both Butcher and Simms required a lot of attention when they were en route for goal. The forwards were very poor indeed, the only men to show real ability being Carr and Bailey. These tried very hard, but were not allowed much rope, and their efforts came to naught.

Few of the Town players unduly exerted themselves. The defence had a very light task, and Bailey was idle for the greater part of the game. Lennon and Tirrell were quite safe and sound, both kicking and tackling smartly when the halves left them anything to do. The middle men dominated the game, and they were always too quick on the ball and too robust to be knocked aside by the visitors, although the latter were not lacking in physique. All three played well, and pleased the crowd immensely. Butcher was the most active of the forward line. His footwork was brilliant, and he never ceased working from the moment he came on the field until he went off. He was always eager, and he baffled Mavin and Getgood with surprising consistency. Higginbotham was at his best, and his craft has never been more apparent. Hoar and Bookman were fast, as usual, and the only complaint that could be made was that Bookman did not have quite enough to do. Simms' four goals show that he was as dangerous as ever in front of goal, although he seldom took any risks.

Luton 6 goals

Reading nil

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

READING.—Crawford; Smith, Wilde; Getgood, Mavin, Christie; Spence, Bailey, Weston, Cameron, Car.

Referee: Mr. J. W. Duke, London.