

POINT GAINED AT SOUTHEND.

Not having won a League match since the New Year, Southend set about doing so at the expense of Luton last Saturday. Considerations of the cup-tie with the purs on Saturday were thrown to the winds, save that Reid and Whalley were not disposed to turn out. The main thing was to give the supporters confidence that they could win. Luton Town, on the other hand, were very deeply concerned about keeping fit for the match with Preston, and it was only after the Sea-rovers had given the Town a few reminders of their earnestness that they began to impart some energy and pace into the game. Even then they never attempted to give out their best—except in defence and were content to keep the ball somewhere in the middle of the field. Had the Town players risked everything in the same manner as their opponents, another win would assuredly have been registered. As it was, we had to be content with sharing two goals and two points.

It was not a nice game, by any means, and in this respect the hopes of the Town were false. They had hankered after a free and easy sort of game in which there would be no injury and no stern struggle for victory, and it must be confessed that if they had maintained throughout the indolent attitude with which they started the game, they would have lost. Had all the real chances been taken they would have won comfortably. Southend's speedy rushes were always dangerous, but there was nothing like the understanding and skill in the work of the home team as a whole in comparison with that of Luton. Candidly, however, I must admit that the left wing should be excepted from this. In the first half they played really artistic football, and some of their short passing runs were as good as anything they ever did in the higher class football. Dorsett, in particular, was both fast and clever, and had he been as well nursed in the first as in the second half, Luton would probably have come away empty-handed. When Luton attacked, there was always a cohesion and general helpfulness about their work that threatened goals. Much of this was due to the different methods of the respective leaders. Fairclough is certainly a dangerous shot, but very few cunning passes were served up to his wingers, and he never put Nicholls or Dorsett through as prettily as did Simms with Hoar and Bookman. Nevertheless, Fairclough is a useful leader, and when he hits the ball fairly and squarely, there is generally trouble for the goalkeeper.

It was through one of these rushes of Fairclough's that Southend took the lead after six minutes. The referee had missed a glaring trip by Fairclough on Parker, and a corner followed, NUTTALL converting Nicholls' kick with his head. Play was keener after this, and Luton's efforts to equalise caused many a flutter before SIMMS did the needful by sending the ball past Capper at the second attempt. The working of the goal was shared by Simms and Bookman. The former gave the winger a beautiful pass in the middle of the field, and bursting past all opposition, the Irish International centred cleverly for Simms to equalise in the simplest fashion.

Southend did a lot of good work, but they ran up against a strong and resolute defence, and they found a similar obstacle in the second half when they did more attacking. Luton, however, had the better chances of scoring, and on at least three occasions a goal appeared certain. In the last few seconds of the game, Simms was right on the goal-line with the ball, following a great run by Hoar and Higginbotham, but could not gather the ball properly, and the goal escaped. This was the biggest fluke of the match, and Southend certainly had reason to shake hands with themselves over it. They had their opportunities also, but nothing like this, and most of their work gave Bailey a chance to save, and he took it.

Still, a point from Southend is well earned, and may be more useful than at present appears.

Bailey kept the ball out and he