

FOOTBALL NOTES

(By CRUSADER).

A MODIFIED REVENGE.

LUTON TOWN 1 Goal.

MERTHYR TOWN Nil.

Luton Town.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Walsh, Parker, Lamb; Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Butcher, Bookman.

Merthyr Town.—Lindon; Holmes, Ferrans; Brown, Jennings, Clarke; Williams, Walker, Beale, Crowe, Edwards.

Referee: A. E. Caseley, Wolverhampton.

In theory a win by 1—0 is better than a win by 4—1, but it is hard so to persuade the spectator. His appetite for goals is insatiable: he pays to see them: he deserves to see them. Well, he only saw one legitimate goal last Saturday, and he went away disappointed and unsatisfied. It was a poor sort of game for anyone charged with the duty of describing it, and I strongly hope that it is the poorest we shall see this season. Rough is a mild expression for some of the things that happened, and while the Merthyr men seemed to relish it, the "Hatters," who certainly did their share, sacrificed a good deal of usefulness, spoilt a lot of good work, and wasted many opportunities by it.

Those who read my notes in last Thursday's "News" would probably be prepared for a hustling game. There was so much bustle that there was little room for skill, and the spectators were reminding the referee of the flight of time a few minutes before he actually sounded the "stand-at-ease." It was not surprising, for players and spectators alike must have been heartily sick of it.

In the first half Luton were a long way superior, but they could not drive home any attack except that at the end of four minutes, when Bookman forced a corner from Holmes and then got the ball across so nicely that SIMMS headed through. Often the "Martyrs'" defenders were in desperate straights to keep the home forwards at bay. Once Clarke kicked over his own goal from some fifteen yards out, and Lindon made several good saves, while one stoppage from Simms was a really brilliant effort, the ball being kept out as the result of a great leap and a turn of the ball round the post for a corner. Higginbotham, too, dribbled to within a yard or two and then feebly kicked out, while when he did get the ball into the net he was given offside.

It must be admitted that the Town were just as lucky in the second half as Merthyr had been in the first. Near the end Lindon saved his goal by rushing out and turning aside Simms' shot, when the latter received a perfect centre from Bookman, with only the keeper to beat. But they could not get going well together, and I began to fear that the pessimistic forecast by one of the directors before the match—that the Town would lose—would be fulfilled. It was not to be, however, for the only occasion the visitors got the ball into the net was when Crowe fouled Bailey as the keeper saved a free kick. Had the inside men been as capable as the wingers they might well have won, for the Town defence was not by any means sound, and more than once got severely rattled owing to lack of understanding or miskicking. Bailey was very fortunate on his re-appearance, for he only had one shot to stop in the first half, and when the visitors were pressing in the second half he had only three or four shots to stop. One save was a good one—from a free kick, and that was when he was fouled, but there were very few shots put in by the visitors.

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visitors.

The rough, scrambling character killed much of the interest, and many of the spectators were speculating rather on someone being ordered off rather than the scoring of goals. Trouble began when Jennings tripped Simms as the latter was going through right on the edge of the penalty area, and the ex-Norwich player was not allowed to forget it. The crowd gave him a rough time, and hooted him in great chorus. Thence it was a case of "Jack as good (or as bad) as his master," and I think all the canons of the game were violated by one or another player. And the ill-feeling was not removed by the pleas of the referee. Mr. Caseley should have taken stronger measures, and more than I expected to see a player leave the field under compulsion.

I am not going to single out any individual player, for those of us who went to Merthyr can understand how it was, without taking into consideration the question of provocation players might have received on Saturday.

The main fact remains—the game was spoilt, and our goal average was not vastly improved. Bailey had practically nothing to do, and his little work has been referred to. Tirrell was the better back in all respects, Lennon having his hands full in playing behind a strange co-adjutor in Walsh. Parker was the smartest half, and he did a lot of sterling work, while Lamb was a spoiler of merit. All these need to amend their forward passing, however, for the ball was up aloft too often. The forwards were quite good in the first half, but missed a lot of chances in the second, and were never working in a line. Sid Hoar, who was not thoroughly fit, did well in the first half, but was not so good in the second. Bookman was always dangerous when he received a proper pass. Simms led the line well, but the ball was not swung about enough. Butcher and Higginbotham put in a lot of hard work without achieving conspicuous success.

Merthyr have a good goalkeeper in Lindon, and Holmes and Ferrans were smart backs, especially the latter. Jennings did the work of two men at centre half, and Brown and Clarke played a solid, if not a polished, game. Williams and Edwards were the pick of the forwards, but the inside men were neither so thrustful nor enterprising as on the previous Saturday, and seldom got in a decent shot at goal.

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