

HOLIDAY FOOTBALL.

TOWN CLUB'S FIRST WIN FOR THREE WEEKS.

Luton Town wind up a gruelling Easter programme of four Third Division games with a visit to Bristol City to-day, and if they can manage to wipe out the unexpected reverse they sustained at home against the Rovers on New Year's Day, they will have scored appreciably over last Easter's results. A year ago, it may be remembered, they played like a completely tired out team at Bristol, and the Rovers were just as fresh and won 5-0, but the Town eleven just now appear to be getting over their staleness. At any rate, they touched their best form of the season against Exeter City on Saturday, and not the least pleasing feature was the success which attended the introduction to the side of Arthur Roe, Mathieson and Sharkland.

Saturday's game was bound to be dwarfed in interest by the Good Friday and Bank Holiday meetings with Watford, especially in view of Exeter City's lowly place in the Third Division table. The attendance was barely 8,000, and it was a thousand pities for the game was productive of one of the most exhilarating displays given by the Luton townsmen on the Town ground for some time. Teams:—

Luton Town.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Roe, Lamb; Hoar, Sharkland, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.

Exeter City.—Pym; Colebourne, Feebury; Crowshaw, Carrick, Green; MacIntyre, Martin, Steddis, Hetherington, Dockray.

Referee, Mr. J. W. Lucas, London.

In the first half the Town had the advantage of a blustery wind which blew with such force that it required all the lusty kicking of the Exeter backs to keep the ball out of their half for even a few moments at a time, but the forwards found it no easy matter to keep it under control. Mathieson shone more than any in this respect, and exhibited such sparkling footwork that he was constantly the pivot from which dangerous movements emanated. Inside seven minutes he set Simms and Bookman going with a lovely movement from which Colebourne was lucky to concede a corner off Bookman. Pym made a great save from the corner, and even a better when he dived out and took on the ground a shot from Simms, but only twelve minutes had slipped by when he was beaten.

Simms was the scorer, but much of the credit was due to Mathieson's resource and judgment. His only means of getting a pass to Simms was over the head of Carrick, the centre half back. When he tried it, Carrick headed it back, but he repeated the experiment and this time the centre half only just deflected the ball, and turning like a flash, Simms drove straight in.

The Towns never looked back after this success, and up to the interval they did everything but score. Only twice did the Grecians raise the siege to such purpose that Bailey was called upon, and on both occasions the danger came from the extreme wingers. Roe had the inside Exeter forwards completely subdued, and with head as well as feet did such excellent work that the home front line were rarely waiting for openings. Mathieson and Simms gave the visiting defence little relief, and although the backs were playing finely, Pym had to be at his best to turn over the bar a thirty yards range from Molyneux and keep out another great shot from Simms.

Pym was keeping a grand goal, but in the last eight minutes of the half his charge had a charmed existence. Twice in succession he was hopelessly beaten when Sharkland just topped the bar with a beauty, and Simms got right in front, but in a careful effort to place the ball well out of the goalie's reach, sent it just outside the post.

A goal-keep was nothing to shout about with such a strong wind in evidence, but Exeter were never given the slightest chance of making effective use of it. The home forwards played better than ever, much of their combination being perfect mechanism, and they were magnificently supported by the halves, and Pym and his backs had a gruelling time. Within five minutes of the re-start, Simms got the ball by Pym from a forward pass by Sharkland, but the whistle had sounded for offside, and in the next quarter of an hour he had at least half a dozen shots either cannon off defenders or saved by the goalie while Sharkland was twice equally unfortunate.

Simms' luck seemed dead out when receiving from Sharkland, and close in he had Pym hopelessly beaten with a shot that hit the post, but eighteen minutes from the end, he succeeded in again finding the net. Turrell lifted the ball up the centre, Simms sent to Mathieson, the inside left cleverly returned it between the backs, and Simms went clean through and shot well out of Pym's reach. He had every reason to hug the Irishman with delight, for it was a beautifully executed piece of work, and everybody was delighted when two minutes later Mathieson had the satisfaction of scoring the gem of the game. Hogg and Sharkland both had a hand in a fine movement which brought the ball into the centre, and with a first-time lunge the inside left landed the ball just inside the post. In the last minute a dazzling run by Bookman left Simms placed right in front, but once more the post saved Pym, and thus the final score was—

Luton 3, Exeter City 0.

The Grecians owed it entirely to the brilliance of Pym and the plucky display of Colebourne and Feebary at back that their defeat was not much heavier, for their halves were completely over-run by a forward line whose work reached a high level in the second half. Hogg completely recovered from a poor first half, and Bookman, although not quite so prominent, also did better, while the combination of the inside men was immense. Mathieson showed that he means to make a hard fight for his place by a display which revealed the capabilities that have for so long lain dormant. Nothing better has been seen on the ground than the artistry with which he feinted, dribbled and passed, and Simms could not have been better nursed. Carrick simply had to give up shadowing the centre, and Simms fell into the Irishman's movements to a nicety and was unlucky not to get more goals. Sharkland was on the slow side, and inclined to boot the ball too hard, but in the second half he passed with excellent judgment and shot strongly.

Roe was an excellent success at centre

half, and had a lot to do with the workman-like combination of the inside forwards. Molyneux and Lamb were also very nearly at their best; Tirrell was the stronger of two strong backs, and Bailey did all that was required of him.