

TURBID TUSSLE.

LUTON TOWN 4 goals
SOUTHEND UNITED nil

LUTON TOWN.—Bailey; Semple, Tirrell; Molyneux, Parker, Walsh; Hoar, Butcher, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.

SOUTHEND UNITED.—W. Mather; Lawson, Evans; Wileman, Shaw, Martin; Baldwin, Myers, E. Mather, Walters, Dorsett.

Referee.—T. J. Duke, London.

Tradition has it that whenever Luton Town and Southend United meet the laws of the game are of little account. Last season's games and the match at Southend this year were not a very happy character, although the last-named match was rather quieter in view of the fact that both teams were booked for important Cup-ties the week following. On Monday night Southend arrived with a team containing several youngsters, men new to Division III. football, and so there was every indication of a quiet game. This indication miscarried, for within five minutes Evans created trouble, and as he persisted in it, things became a bit warm in his locality. I have heard a lot of severe criticism of George Butcher, and I cannot defend the St. Albans youth in any way, for I do not believe in retaliation. The referee should be wide-awake enough to put a stop to foul play at once, and Mr. Duke would have cleansed the game if he had exercised his authority and cautioned Evans at the outset.

Mr. Duke appears to be a very nice man, and he certainly has a sound knowledge of the game, but his reluctance to show the iron hand led to a lot of trouble. Let me close this chapter by hoping that our players will neither be initial transgressors nor retaliators.

The Town's four goals were far from being the actual measure of their superiority. Far away the better side in every department of the game, they frittered away many chances, and had a heap of hard luck. SIMMS alone might have come somewhere near the goal record of Joe Smith, the Bolton Wanderer, had his star been in a propitious situation. He got the first two goals, and worked well enough to score half a dozen more, but he missed many glorious openings. It was patent that all the Town players were anxious that Simms should keep his place at the head of Division III. goal scorers, and so they plied him with the ball very freely, and he missed by

THE BAREST MARGIN

time after time. So persistent were the Town forwards in feeding Simms that the Southend defenders moved automatically towards him when danger threatened, and SID HOAR took advantage of this early in the second half and instead of passing he

shot into the net at a great pace. Some claim that a second shot from the same foot was well over the line when the goalkeeper scraped it out, but the referee thought otherwise, and it was left to Bookman to complete the bag with a pretty shot—two goals being scored in each half.

The amount of pressure exerted by the Town was more than in any previous game this year, and no goalkeeper has had such a severe time on the Town ground. The luck of the toss was with Tirrell, and he had the advantage of a strong wind, but as the game progressed the wind slackened, and the rain came down smartly. In the second half there was scarcely a capful of wind, but it was all the same to the Town, for Southend could not get going except for a few spasms on the left, and most of these came when the home team were taking things too easily. How the Southend goalkeeper escaped with so few surrenders is a mystery, and Mather must have been heartily sick of the game long before the end.

As a combination, the Town have
SELDOM PLAYED BETTER.

In pace, skill, and constructive attack they excelled, and the main feature of their play was the strength of the middle line, which dominated the game through. In nursing forwards as in breaking up, some strong work was seen, and frequently one or other of the middle men was acting as a sixth forward, and Parker and Molyneux each had hard luck in not scoring. Parker again proved that he is the man for the pivotal position, and in spite of what some people think and say, I adhere to the opinion that he is the cleverest player we have for the position. Molyneux played finely in spite of severe handicap, for his toes presented a frost-bitten appearance after the game, and he had to change his footgear at the interval. Walsh played vigorously, and gave the opposition little rope, but he has to learn the wisdom of keeping the ball on the ground. As a spoiler he is rugged; but as a nurse he is lacking. Semple took the place of Lennon, who was suffering from a swollen neck, and Johnny shared well with Molyneux the task of keeping in hand the more dangerous of the Southend wings. He kicked well and played with his head. Tirrell was powerful as ever, but neither had a lot to do, and Harry Bailey's share was very largely a matter of gift work from his backs. The forwards were in great form, and Sid Hoar has never played better. It must not be forgotten, either, that he was up

AGAINST EXPERIENCED MEN,

for Martin is the former Derby County half-back, and Evans has a long experience. Neither could hold him, however, and he centred with wonderful accuracy. Moreover, he cut in for goal, and the majority of his passes were little taps in front of goal, while those from the wing were just right, and I am pleased to see that he has taken some of that steam off. He owed much to the tricky and unselfish work of Butcher, who was at his best, and both Simms and Hoar would give a certificate to this effect. Simms led the line well, in spite of the persistence with which Shaw "policed" him, but he should have got more goals. He tried hard for hat-trick, too. Mathieson was in delightful mood, his wonderful juggling evoking much applause, and he looked after Bookman and Simms better than usual. Bookman had less to do than Hoar, but he ran and centred well, and on this form the line is good enough for anything.

Southend were badly hit. Mather could not be blamed for the goals. He kept exceedingly well, and many of his saves were applauded. The backs were oppressed, and they bore the brunt of the work, for the halves were weak. So the forwards got little chance, and Dorsett was the only man to show first-class ability.