

Football Features.

BY "OLD CROCK."

TOWN TEAM'S FIRST WIN FOR A MONTH.

One of the attractions at Saturday's match on the Town ground seemed to be the new Press box, erected in front of the hut that serves as office, stores, and referees' and linesmen's room. It was quite an improvised affair, but all the same an unexpected provision, and one that was much appreciated and tolerably comfortable until we had a mishap. There were two uneasy spirits who seemed to miss the "crow's nest" even more than the Pressmen—Mr. Harry Smart and Mr. Isaac Smith. So accustomed to an overhead view of the play, the director solved the problem by perching himself on the roof of the office hut. Mr. Smith could not tear himself away from his Press-box associations. He was content to stand behind the scribes for the first half, but after this he decided there was room on the form for another, and no sooner was the seat called upon to bear extra weight than it collapsed. The incident caused a little excitement that was not exactly unwelcome, for up to this 6,000 spectators had found precious little in exchanges that would have bordered on dullness, but for the robustness infused into the game.

Luton relied upon the same team that won a point at Hove, and the only change made by the Albion was the preference of McAllister for Fuller at inside right. Teams:

Luton Town.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Stephenson, Walker, Millar; Bassett, Higginbotham, Read, Butcher, Hoar.

Brighton and Hove Albion.—Hayes; Thompson, Frebure; Woodhouse, Coomber, Bentley; Nightingale, McAllister, Doran, Neil, March.

Referee, Mr. W. E. Greenwood, London.

The first really dangerous movement was initiated by the Albion, March crashing the ball inches wide of the post from Nightingale's centre in the opening minutes, but this was nearest they came to scoring before change of ends. In midfield their forward passing was of quite a superior order. Both wings exhibited perfect understanding and Stephenson was frequently engaged in a hopeless chase, but Nightingale and McAllister found Millar a hard nut to crack, and nothing could have been more marked than Walker's subduing of Doran. On the few occasions the halves were slipped, the backs butted in with such fine kicking and tricking that what shots the visitors got in were all at harmless range.

Young Reid found Coomber a difficult obstacle, but nevertheless he distributed the ball to nice advantage and if the Town's forward work was not the last word in polish, it was not wanting in virility. Both backs kicked with such excellent length that the scoring chances presented were few compared with Luton's advantage in the exchanges, but Hayes' charge had some narrow shaves. One of the narrowest when Gentley sought relief from a rush by Higginbotham by putting the ball back to his goalkeeper and was just sufficiently out of his reckoning that Hayes could not have been blamed if Reid had got there first and scored. Hayes was also in trouble with a low shot from Bassett which he fumbled, a free kick award helping him out of an awkward situation. Again he could only push away a lofty centre from Hoar and Butcher just failed to steer in a cross drive from Bassett. Higginbotham was unlucky in having a fine shot following a brilliant piece of individualism miss the mark, and in the closing stages Bassett loomed large in the picture, hitting the upright direct from a corner kick and having two nice shots

saved.

The second half was always Luton's. In the first five minutes Reid and Higginbotham went close with fine shots, Hayes saved from Reid and Butcher, and was very lucky to catch the ball when it rebounded from the bar from a capital left foot drive by Bassett, and again when from the corner Walker had a terrific shot barred by one of the defence. Higginbotham would probably have been a scorer had he allowed a centre from Butcher to drop instead of heading.

When Brighton broke away they swung the ball about more than in the first half, and some one in the crowd had only just sung out, "Where's Doran?" when the Irish international headed inches wide from a centre from the right. This was the Albion's last look in. Reid had two shots that came to hand and then, seventeen minutes after the re-start, he headed down a clever centre from Higginbotham to the foot of Butcher who half volleyed in with terrific force at three yards' range. Bailey had some trouble in saving a hot shot from Doran in the next minute, but all the rest of the goalkeeping work fell to Hayes. Both Reid and Bassett missed glorious chances from a centre by Hoar, but they atoned by assisting to make the game safe with twenty minutes to go. Reid beautifully drove the ball out to the right, Bassett passed inside at the identical moment and Higginbotham with a clear passage ran in and scored a gem of a goal.

The retirement of Woodhouse with an injured knee reduced the Albion to a hopeless position. The depleted defence was overwhelmed by the Town's enterprising raids, and the bulk of the work fell on Hayes, who came out of a trying ordeal with infinite credit. It was a miracle how Higginbotham missed with a left foot volley that the goalie never saw, and nearly as lucky that Hayes just diverted a cross shot from Butcher sufficiently to rob Reid of the goal he had been trying hard for. Higginbotham got in another beauty which was just tipped over, and Reid found the bar with a header, and so Luton had to be content with a final result of

Luton 2, Brighton and Hove 0.

It was the Town's first Third Division win for a month, and on the eve of the meeting with our Watford neighbours, the performance was a refreshing one. Especially was this the case with the forwards' display. It may not have been equal to the front line in its palmiest days, but it was brimful of life and energy. Young Reid was up against a tremendous hand cap in the dominating heights of Cumber and the Brighton backs, but he was a magnificent trier with a heart as big as a week. Besides bustling through with heartening vim and feeding his wings with nice discretion, he was always alive to opportunities for shooting, and it was not his fault that he did not meet with success. The outstanding personality, however, was Higginbotham, who has rarely played a better game on the Town ground. Not only did he discharge his customary function of taking

all the rough work, but he foraged with splendid resource, his manoeuvring and passing touched high water mark and not often has he shot better. Next to him Bassett was most prominent, but this was due largely to the fact that he was more advantageously assisted by his partner than Hoar was by Butcher, who frequently did finely up to a point but failed to finish.

Bailey's office was almost made a sinecure by a sterling defence in which Stephenson alone failed to reach the general level. Lennon and Tirrell had one of their best days, but the most prominent figures were Walker and Millar.

LUTON'S RETURN TO FORM

Luton..... 2 Brighton..... 0

Luton had little the better of this game in the first half, but in the second they quite outplayed the Albion, and Butcher and Higginbotham scored in quick succession, while Hayes kept out half a dozen splendid shots.

It was an interesting game, and Luton's young players, Reid, Miller and Stephenson, did well. The first-named, at centre, twice hit the bar, and Hayes got in the way of other good shots. For Luton, Lennon, Tirrell, Walker, Miller, Higginbotham and Hoar were the pick, while the Albion were best served by Hayes, Feebery, Woodhouse, Nightingale and Neil.

Luton: Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Stephenson, Walker, Miller; Bassett, Higginbotham, Reid, Butcher, Hoar.

Brighton: Hayes; Thompson, Feebery; Woodhouse, Coomber, Bentley; Nightingale; McAllister, Doran, Neil, March.