

LUTON TOWN UNFORTUNATE.

How a Point was Lost at Newport.

Beyond a shadow of doubt Luton Town had the game in their hands at Newport last Saturday but for an inexcusable blunder by the referee. They were leading by two goals clear after fifteen minutes' play in the second half when, from the best movement of the afternoon, Hoar got another goal. One linesman signalled, the whole of the grand stand spectators, the Newport players, including the goalkeeper, frankly admitted that the goal was well and truly scored, and Cooper, the goalkeeper, actually admitted that he took the ball from the net and kicked it down the field to the centre. Yet Mr. Todman did not see it! He refused to allow a goal, and Newport were so pleased that they went away to the other end with such dash and determination, taking advantage of the excitement of the Luton players, that they rubbed off the arrears within five minutes.

A point away from home is always the result of hard work, whatever the side, and it was more than most of us expected at Somerton Park, but the Newport team, although considerably strengthened, never reproduced the excellent form they showed at Luton, and would probably have lost heavily but for the referee's mistake. The Town were well on top at that period, and the Newport defence was being kept at full stretch. It was extremely provoking, but the Town players should never have given way to their feelings in the manner some of them did. Had they treated the matter as one of the unfortunate experiences of football, and set about showing the referee that they could do it again, things would have been different. It was very disheartening, I know, but it is folly to wear one's heart on one's sleeve—unless, of course, it is a happy heart.

On the actual balance of play the Town hardly deserved their two goals lead at the interval, but on the balance of the teams they did, for they were altogether cooler and more intelligent in their work than Newport, who never made one combined run to compare with the attack they showed at Luton the week before. They played well up to a point, and seemed faster than the Town, but it was largely due to their grit and bustle that they ever gave the Town defence any work. There were desperate sallies in which the Town defenders were taxed to their utmost, but as a rule the Town showed more cleverness in scheming and resisting attack, and but for several bad trips in the first half, they might have enjoyed a much stronger lead. It is not often that the Town get goals from corners, and the two goals scored by Simms on Saturday were not directly obtained on the second kick from the flag kick. Both came from Hoar's side of the field, and the first, after fifteen minutes' play, came to SIMMS in a mix-up in the goal-mouth, and the centre-forward got the ball into the net by determination, for the ball came very awkwardly, and actually through off his leg. The second goal, shortly before the interval, was the result of another corner kick by Hoar. The ball dropped well in, and Griffin got his boot to the ball just as Simms was trying to shoot. The back kicked the ball and it went off SIMMS' foot like lightning.

The second half was fifteen minutes old when the unfortunate incident occurred, and three minutes later Newport got a corner on the right. Price sent the ball to the further end of goal and DEVLIN headed it through, Bailey being misplaced. Five minutes later there was a regular onslaught, and the ball came out to Lythgoe, who steadied himself and shot fast and true into the net.

Had the Town defence not pulled together after this, Newport would have won, and the rest of the team gradually woke up to the fact that they had a chance, and began to play again. Still they were not nearly the same effective side as in the first half, and it was a relief when the whistle went.

The Town deserved a victory until they let it slip from their fingers. On a very difficult ground, and under anything but perfect conditions, they played well, and if combination left something to be desired, the inside men played wisely in trusting to the wingers to do the raiding, and themselves collecting in the middle for a dash in. The Newport defenders, however, had been well reinforced by Walker, their captain, and if not always as clean as could be wished, he put in solid and effective work, while Griffin was an improvement on Flanders. Bookman and Hoar were the best forwards, and both were too fast and active for the opposition when the right pass came along. I share the opinion freely expressed this last week, that Roe's inclusion at left half has made all the difference to Bookman, who now gets more opportunities, and if Mathieson would only get the same idea and work on it, one would not have to keep on saying that the right wing is the better. Time and again Bookman beat the opposition when he was given an even chance for a sprint, and that disallowed goal was the result of one of his remarkable sprints from the middle line. Hoar was again on his best form, and won golden opinions. Mathieson is under a cloud at the moment, and is by no means in the best of health, but he needs to play his own game and to make better use of Bookman before he reaches international form. Higginbotham showed improvement, playing craftily in the first half, and Simms would have got more goals could he have gathered the ball better and not had a man at his shoulder almost throughout, but he distributed the ball well.

The middle line was better than in the match of the previous Saturday, and although Molyneux is yet below his Cup-tie form of last year, I thought that he did better than in any previous game this season. Walker also gave his best to date, and he infused more dash and vigour into his play, and he not only had many tussles with Devlin, but he frequently challenged Walker of the other side and got the better of the deal. Roe has assuredly come into his own, and once more I am content to quote the

opinion of another—the Football Editor of the "Western Evening News." He sat next me, and at half-time he asked where Roe came from and how much Luton gave for him, and finished with this tribute: — "The quietest, coolest, cleverest half-back I have seen for many a long day. He is another Smith (Cardiff City)." Lennon and Tirrell played magnificently. Each miskicked on one occasion, but the ball and ground were like a skating rink just about that time. They covered each other well, and gave Bailey splendid protection, kicking a fine length and tackling, each in his own particular style, with courage and resource. Harry Bailey maintained the improvement he has shown during this month. He came out with judgment on several occasions, and punched away or fielded shots, and he dealt with several corner kicks quite confidently, but I thought he did not position himself well for the corner kick that enabled Newport to score their first goal.

For Newport Cooper saved several good shots, and had no chance with the goals that scored. Arch played finely at back, and Griffin was a good helpmate. The middle line was undoubtedly strengthened by the return of Walker, who is a strong player, and well worthy of the confidence reposed in him by his colleagues. The whole line was strong and played with dash and perseverance. In the forward line Devlin took the eye most for dash, but Dobson was very clever, and W. Edwards played as well on the extreme left as he did the other side of the field in the previous game.

Of Mr. Todman enough has been said.

NEWPORT COUNTY		2 Goals
LUTON TOWN		2 Goals