

THE LEAGUE—DIV. III.

LUTON WIN THROUGH AGAIN.

Merthyr Town Defeated.

(By CRUSADER.)

LUTON TOWN 3 Goals
MERTHYR TOWN Nil

Right.

LUTON TOWN.

Left.

Bailey.

Lennon.

Tirrell

Molynaux

Walker

Roe

Beer Higginbotham Mathieson Bookman
Simms,



Nicholas Foxall Beale Turner Williams
Crowe Poole Brown

Jackson

Langford

Jones

Left.

MERTHYR TOWN.

Right.

Referee: Mr. J. Tolfree, Southampton.

Justly proud as we are of the Town's position on the League chart, those of us who have full vision of promotion cannot but look back to certain events at Southampton and—more galling still—Newport. The misfortunes we experienced there will haunt us for a long time, but they are not the sole reasons why Plymouth Argyle take precedence over us. Goal average has usually been regarded as the decisive factor in drawing up the League tables until, as Ernest Simms put it on Saturday night, Luton were involved, and they must be given the lowest possible position. Certainly Plymouth deserve the highest rung of the ladder: their goal average is not quite a quarter of a goal better, and that goal they were lucky to get at Reading on Saturday, when the "Biscuiters" played for over an hour with only ten men. Luton do not get that sort of "jam."

Before the game on Saturday, I wrote: A convincing victory may place the Town at the head of affairs again, and the crowd is looking forward to a few goals to-day.

The victory was certainly convincing, but goals were too few. Three goals appeared to satisfy some of the Town players, and yet two more would have given them the leadership. Luton will never be guilty of that "Swindon touch," of which they themselves were the victims last season. We may be in need of goals at the end of the season, and I do not overlook the fact that the Town have scored more goals than any club in the Division, and that only two clubs out of 86 have scored more. That is something to talk about, but not to rest upon, and that was the mistake made by the Town in the last twenty minutes. They were content when the crowd looked for more and should have had more.

With the exception of one period in the first half, and another just before the end, Merthyr were struggling gamely against long odds. Plucky and willing they were, quite as much as Luton, but they were outpaced and overplayed for the greater part of the game, and but for the very fine display by their young goalkeeper, Jones, they would have been much more severely beaten—unless, as is quite likely, the Town had been content with three if they had got them earlier.

MATHIESSON'S opening goal was prettily obtained, and came about from a perfect centre by Hoar. HIGGINBOTHAM'S was a characteristic effort ten minutes after the interval. It was reminiscent of the two goals he scored against Preston North End last season. A quick summing up of a chance, a rush through the defence, and a terrific shot. The third goal was deserved by SIMMS. He had experienced wretched luck before he managed to nod through Bookman's flag kick.

It was always an interesting encounter, and one could quite conceive that the Merthyr forwards would not want much encouragement. They were not well served by the men behind them, however, and that made all the difference between the teams. For the strongest line on the field was Luton's middle line.

Bailey had very few shots to stop, and nothing very difficult. He was certainly well beaten just before the end when Tirrell, who had fallen back to the goal-line, headed out from under the bar. Tirrell has made this a habit, and he certainly was responsible for Bailey's clean sheet. Lennon and Tirrell did not have a heavy day, but now and then they were called upon to give of their best, and they responded well. Unless he is careful, Lennon will have the Scottish F.A. talking about a cap for him. The difference in style of the two backs is always noticeable, but they fit splendidly. The middle line was the most energetic and successful part of the side, and everybody was glad that Motynous had a really good day. He came nearer to last season's Cup-tie form than in any previous game this season. Walker was superb. His progress has been remarkably rapid. His speed has improved wonderfully, and his power of recovery is extraordinary. I hope he won't lose his ability to pass along the ground—a faculty that is of great value to Simms and Co. Roe was generally the master of his opponents, a wing that included Rees Williams, the Welsh International, and gave them very little rope, and Mathieson and Bookman have never had a more intelligent belgmate.

The forwards were again in dangerous form, and the only complaint that can be made, perhaps, should be directed chiefly against Mathieson. Everybody was pleased with his display until the third goal, for his clever initiation of attack, his readiness to shoot, and his unselfish passes to Bookman and Simms had the Merthyr defenders in desperate straits. After the third goal, however, he frittered away many opportunities by amusing himself at the expense of the opposition. He amused the spectators, too, but they would have preferred goals. Simms was in thrustful mood, and with any luck he would have done the hat trick. Higginbotham was in characteristic vein, and his goal was typical. He looked after both Sid

Hoar and Simms, and helped Molyneux when necessary. Hoar and Bookman touched their best form, both being remarkably fast and tricky, and getting the ball in front of goal practically every time.

The visitors are not as strong as last season by any means. Their record suggests that they fare much better at home than away, which is understandable to those who have seen the ground, perhaps. Jones is a young goalkeeper who has superseded Lindon, the old Coventry man, and he is certainly a discovery if Saturday's display may be taken as his average form. He never made a mistake, and he brought off some remarkable saves. Langford and Jackson were useful backs, but not brilliant, and the former was inclined to be hasty. Crowe was the best half, Brown being outpaced, and Poole, while a fair spoiler, was erratic in passing. Williams and Turner were a good wing, the former being very clever, and Beale a dangerous forward. Although there were one or two spills, it was not an unpleasant game by any means, and was a vast improvement on last season. Mr. Tolfree was about as good as any referee we have had this season.

MERTHYR MASTERED.

Brilliant Half-back Play by

8/10/21 Luton Town. 21/22

*Luton Town.....3 Merthyr Town.....0

MERTHYR TOWN were outmatched at Luton. They played with splendid grit and perseverance; but the result does not flatter the home team, who, but for over elaboration, would probably have scored more goals. MATHIESON got the first goal with a neat header from a perfect centre from Hoar, but Jones had previously saved brilliantly, and Simms had twice struck the bar.

HIGGINBOTHAM's goal, ten minutes after the interval, was the reward of enterprise, while Simms scored from Bookman's corner kick.

Jones was several times cheered to the echo for clever work in goal. He kept his nerve under tremendous pressure, and never erred. The full-backs kicked with more strength than judgment, and the half-backs were not fast enough to keep pace with Luton's forward line, neither did they help the forwards much.

Williams, Turner, and Beal had to forage for their chances, but they were always dangerous when on the move, and Beal twice narrowly missed scoring.

Bailey had few shots to deal with, so well was he covered by Lennon and Tirrell, both of whom kicked and tackled with fine perception. The middle line was the best part of the side, however. Molyneux gave his best display, while Walker played magnificently at centre half-back both as a spoiler and a feeder, whilst Roe had no superior in the field.

Hoar and Bookman were always prominent, thanks to assiduous attention from the inside men, and both were fast and centred well. The inside men were clever, Mathieson especially doing well.

Luton Town.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Walker, Roe; Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Mathieson and Bookman.

Merthyr Town.—Jones; Langford, Jackson; Brown, Poole, Crowe; Williams, Turner, Beal, Foxall, and Nicholas.

Referee: J. Tolfree, Southampton.