

SUCCESS AND DISAPPOINTMENT.

LUTON WIN SCRAMBLE WITH SOUTHEND.

(By CRUSADER.)

LUTON TOWN 3

SOUTHEND UNITED 0

LUTON TOWN.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Foster, Walker, Roe; Bassett, Butcher, Simms, Mathieson, Hoar.

SOUTHEND UNITED.—Capper; Dellow, Evans; Wileman, Lawrence, Martin; Harris, Reid, White, Hawarden, Kettle.

Referee.—R. Callick, London.

No doubt football followers in Plymouth and Southampton scanned the results on Saturday night with eager eyes, and hearts were hopeful that Southend United had done the unexpected. And then they would read the result and think once more what a sound and reliable side Luton have, and on the face of it, the result would satisfy most people—especially those not present at the match.

It is not unusual for success to be wedded to disappointment, and it is a very human characteristic to dwell on the dull rather than on the bright side. So it came about on Saturday night—and since—the supporters discussed and sighed for "what might have been," namely, twice as many goals. As I mentioned in "Sports Chat" on Saturday night, opinion on the change in the forward line was sharply divided, and there were numerous predictions that Bookman would be returned to the forward line. The main reason for this was not so much on account of any deficiency in Bassett's performance as the disparity between Hoar's work on the right wing and the left wing respectively. Personally, I did not see much difference in Hoar's play, and quite a number of people were convinced that his performance proved that the left was his proper location. The deterioration, if any, was slight, and confined to the faculty of centring. Initiation and construction of attack were quite as keen and attractive as usual, but he was not so facile with his centres as when engaged on the other side of the field. Putting aside one's personal predilection for Bookman, I think the constitution of the line was quite good enough, and the combination did not suffer so far as the extremes of the wings were concerned. The lack of goals was the lack of decision and finish in front of goal, and that is the point upon which the directors will have to concentrate.

All three inside forwards should have scored goals. They missed easy chances. Could they have driven home their attacks with the strength and incision that obtained in midfield, they would have won by a big margin. Simms has an even keener appreciation now than he had a fortnight ago of what a crowd expects from a player possessing an International cap, and especially a centre-forward. His worth is weighed by his deeds in front of goal, and no account is taken of his intelligence in midfield. Apart from shooting, Simms played finely, and his thoughtful distribution of the ball was as good as ever it has been, but his shooting was only a little better than that of his immediate colleagues.

Mathieson did not reach his best, and we shall soon be strangers to it, for he has not been in good form for several weeks. His tendency to dribbling stunts is more amusing than effective, and until he is content to outwit one man at a time instead of a crowd, the line must suffer. Butcher is not renowned as a goal-getter, but a more virile, agile, and crafty architect we do not possess. He is a trier all the time, too, and brings speed into the vanguard. The St. Albans lad has earned his place unless we can find one who combines equal cleverness with goal-scoring ability.

The remainder of the side was more satisfactory, and the half-back line was the most powerful factor of the team. They are such a level, well-balanced trio, that it is difficult to grade them singly. Foster has found his best form. Surely a man who can play as he did must be quite fit. Fast and resolute in tackling, he has also an enthusiasm for getting into the thick of the fray, and an eye to the main chance. His goal capped a remarkably fine performance. Walker has rapidly won a reputation, and he deserves it. He quite overshadowed the Southend centre and in the second half the visitors deemed it advisable to make a change, but Walker's domination continued. Roe found the hardest nut of the Southend attacking machine in Harris, but played his usual game, never rattled or unsettled, always intent on the ball, and keeping it low and moving accurately to the aid of his forwards.

The defence had a comfortable time. Only in long separated spasms were they in difficulties, and even then, I thought only because of the disposition to make light of the opposition. Lennon's form was maintained—fine length kicking and judicious tackling. Tirrell was solid and strong, and foresight compensated for lack of speed. The few calls upon Bailey were chiefly from long range, and involved nothing very exacting. He was once beaten by a brilliant shot from Harris in the first half, but the cross-piece got the force of the blow.

Southend's defence was the best part of the team. Capper was a clever, if lucky, goalkeeper, and saved many shots that looked certain scorers. Dellow and Evans were industrious backs, and if the latter was cleverer, I liked Dellow better because he was clean and sportsmanlike. Wileman was the best half, but not capable of holding Hoar, and Harris was the only forward who could count on a place in a team as good as the Town Reserves.

Clever and attractive as were the Town's midfield movements, the tactics of the visitors often turned the game into a mere scramble. There was not so much dirty play as we have seen on Southend's visits.

and most of the offences were of a trivial character. The first goal was scored after 25 minutes' play. Evans punched out a shot from Butcher when the ball was almost over the line, and SIMMS' spot-kick flashed into the net over Capper's head. The second came ten minutes after the resumption, FOSTER rushing in to shoot as the ball emerged from a scrum. The third was a lucky thing. Taking a free kick forty yards out, TIRRELL hit the ball hard for the goal. It travelled low and appeared to be going out, but swerved a little and glanced into the net from the post. And the Town captain grinned.

LUTON OUTPLAY SOUTHEND.

Bad Shooting and Capper's Skill Keep the Score Down.

Luton Town..... 3 Southend United 0

Had Luton Town's forwards finished their work as cleverly as they organised it, the followers of Southend United would have been mourning a very severe depression in goal averages. With almost monotonous regularity Luton went through the opposition, only to fall at close range. Capper helped materially to nullify the brilliance of the Luton line, some of his saves being wonderful, but on four or five occasions he should have been beaten.

Simms opened the score from a penalty 25 minutes after the start, Evans having punched away a shot from Butcher, and Foster scored a second soon after the interval, and Tirrell obtained the third with a shot from 40 yards range, the swerve beating Capper at the finish.

The winners were the better balanced side, were heavier, faster and more resourceful. Their combination was good, too, but the shooting atrocious. Bailey had little to do, and his back only a trifle more, the Town halves playing a remarkable game, and Foster in particular doing well. Hoar was the star forward.

Capper was the best of the visitors, his work being excellent. Evans was a good back, but Dellow not only played well, but was sportsmanlike, too. Wileman outshone his colleagues, and Harris was the outstanding figure in a line of triers.

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Southend United: Capper; Dellow, Evans; Wileman, Lawrence, Martin; Harris (F.), Reid, H. White, Hawarden, Kettle.