

LUTON TOWN'S DISAPPOINTING START.

CHALTON DRAW AT LUTON.

(By CRUSADER.)

LUTON TOWN 2 goals

CHARLTON ATHLETIC 2 goals

LUTON.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Jennings, Walker, Roe; Reader, Higginbotham, Brown, Butcher, Hoar.

CHARLTON.—Wood; Purton, Herod; Dowling, Whalley, McKinnon; Castle, Rees, Filliston, Steele, Smith.

Referee: J. E. Head, London.

When I was leaving the football ground on Saturday afternoon a friendly gentleman in blue informed me that I had to face a conundrum, meaning, of course, that I had to explain here just why the Town did not win and, I take it, to express an opinion as to the course that should be taken by those in authority to ensure improvement in the play.

It is no conundrum, for while hoping that the Town would improve on the splendid record of the opening months of last season, and believing that rightly used we have players capable of doing it, I do not think the constitution of the team as on Saturday can ever do it.

The fact that a player is a good player, and should be included in the side merely because he is such, is not the best method of team selection. The predominant factor must be how far he goes towards making the team. And on Saturday we had not a good team because the men were not used to the best advantage. If I were to detail my views on the changes that should be made I fancy that more than a little surprise, and probably a lot of disgust, would be expressed in certain quarters, and on the principles of

AVOIDING FRICTION.

I refrain. Perhaps, as this is written before the game at Brentford, all my theories have been confounded.

This is not criticism of the directors, let me hasten to say, because I doubt not that they did find the selection of the side highly problematical for the first game, and although one phase of difficulty was removed, others cropped up. It is always so at the outset of a campaign, and while we were all very disappointed, I believe that the directors will do their very best according to their lights to rectify the deficiencies as revealed against Charlton. That is all I intend to say on the matter at the moment, but it will be further dealt with in the "News."

It was a poor game—as scrappy as any during the whole of last season. Both sides had been well trained, or they could not have maintained the pace so consistently: well-trained, that is, from the aspect of pace and stamina, and Charlton were not inferior. Indeed, we were lucky to survive without a goal against us in the first quarter of an hour, for it seemed as if the Town players wanted to start on a low key and work up to high pitch; whereas Charlton wanted to strike the top note at once. Fortunately their unsteadiness counter-balanced the Town's dilatoriness. When the "Whites" did get a move on they were no better than the "Reds," and the latter had the advantage of a shrewd tactician at centre-half. His influence meant a great deal to Charlton, unostentatious though it was, for he kept their

REAL UNDIMINISHED.

and in this way was not a little responsible for the point.

The nearest approach on the Town side to the personality of Whalley was Jennings, and for the life of me I cannot understand why he is not played in his proper place. This is no disparagement of Walker, who would be a good player on the flank, I am certain, but Jennings has a way of his own—a masterful way—and I am convinced that if he were given the central berth he would transform the team. Occasionally on Saturday he showed glimpses of this gift of leadership, but he was in the wrong situation to give us the full benefit of it. And in this I know that practically the full body of support is with me. If control were vested in Jennings for once it would not be easily removed.

Charlton merited the point, but as much through the shortcomings of the Town team as by their own mettle. Their defence was quite as good as ours, and their middle line a steady, compact trio. Their forwards were a better machine, but mainly because of greater determination than any excess of skill. But we had no wing as good as Rees and Castle, the pair to cause most of the earlier trouble.

OUR BEST EFFORTS

came from the left wing, and it was due largely to the work of Butcher and Hoar that we were able to open the score. Brown muffed a simple chance from Hoar, and gave Wood time to parry his shot, but with the goalkeeper down HIGGINBOTHAM had the simplest task to score. Two minutes later a ball from Castle struck Tirrell's leg and went behind for a corner. Castle placed well, the ball travelling along the face of the bar. Bailey made a big effort to flit away when the safer course was perhaps to lift it over the bar. He could not quite reach it, and McKINNON, waiting close to the farther post, slipped the ball into the net.

The most deserved point of the game came as the result of another left wing attack by the Town, and a corner accrued on the opposition wing. This was placed well, and after the ball had hovered about for a while Butcher got it when Wood was on the ground and shot for the net. McKinnon slipped across the goal and turned the ball round the post with his hand. The penalty kick was taken by HOAR, who gave Wood no chance, and we again had the lead, and held it until the second half was 25 minutes old. Then Castle and Rees forced play on the right, and from the former's high centre Bailey fluted, but the ball skidded down to FILLISTON, who managed to push it rather than kick it, and it slowly crept into goal just inside the post.

In the closing stages the Town did the more pressing, but there was

NO EDGE

on the attack, and Charlton frustrated all efforts without extreme difficulty.

Bailey saved on several occasions when the situation appeared hopeless, but his work was not as clean and crisp as last season or as in the practice game in which he figured. Lennon was the better back, and seldom was in error, but Tirrell was bothered by the speed of Castle and the quickness of Rees. Jennings was the outstanding half-back, and Roe was almost as good—some people said he was the best half on the field; and Walker was fitful-brilliant at times, but frequently failing to stem the rushes of the earnest Filliston. Of the forwards, Hoar was the pick of the bunch, mainly owing to his good work in the first half, but later he held on to the ball too long. He was well nursed by Butcher, who gave the best passes seen in the game, but was still lacking in shooting ability. Reader was only moderate, and did not get too many chances, and Higginbotham worked hard without touching his best. I am not going to write down Brown as a failure, but his need of experience was obvious. It was asking a lot for him to face in his first match a craftsman like Whalley, and he probably appreciates now the difference in pace between this class of football and the Central Alliance game. He has time and physique in his favour, and he will do better.

Charlton's best men were Burton at back, Whalley, and McKinnon at half-back, and Castle and Rees forward.

With Mr. Head I am afraid we shall never be wholly satisfied.