

THE LEAGUE—DIV. III.

COURTED DEFEAT.

How Luton Lost at Aberdare.

(By CRUSADER).

ABERDARE 2 Goals
LUTON TOWN 1 ..

ABERDARE. — Leahy; Hindmarsh, Brooks; Sheldon, Gillespie, Archibald; Tompkinson, Rogers, Martin, Mayson, Danskin.

LUTON TOWN. — Gibbon; Lennon, Tirrell; Foster, Walker, Roe; Hoar, Reid, Thompson, Butcher, Clarkson.

Referee: Mr. R. C. Wildig, Southampton.

It may be in the nature of audacity to say anything against the governing body of the Town club, but the unpleasant things of life have to be faced, and so I may say at once that my opinion of the defeat at Aberdare on Saturday was in the first measure due to the decision made in the Board room that the team should make the long journey from London to Aberdare on Saturday. In the "Saturday Telegraph" I hinted that there was some lack of wisdom in the new arrangement, which was that the players should journey to London late on Friday night, and thence to Aberdare on Saturday morning. We all have to realise that the resources of the Town club demand strict economy, but wise spending is truer economy than a cheese-paring policy, and what was gained by the experiment on Saturday will be more than discounted by the effect on the gate next Saturday. The two points were, to my way of thinking, lost because of that policy, and they would have been worth a good deal more than the money saved.

The custom has been to journey to Cardiff on the Friday, and to return on the Sunday. The return is not of great importance, except that we like to get back on Saturday night if possible.

THE THING THAT MATTERS

is the journey down to Wales, and the old arrangement gave the players a chance of a good night's rest and time to stretch their limbs before a match. Last Saturday, if one may quote Mr. Mantalini, it was nothing better than "one long demolition grind."

The players were in no happy mood when they turned up at Paddington on Saturday morning, and although the G.W. Railway's black cat greeted them, as usual, circumstance rose superior to omen, and we felt before the game that much of our chance of victory had been washed out. The players were not satisfied over their stay in London, arrived at Aberdare in anything but athletic trim, and before the team had been playing five minutes it was obvious that they were feeling the effects of the long journey. They were stiff and slow, and while they had several chances of scoring in the first twenty minutes, they were not quick enough in front of goal. The game for half an hour was even, for if the Town made more raids than the "Darians," there was not the crisp, swingy method about their work as was the case with the home team's, and they were not nearly so dangerous in front of goal. Until

THE PENALTY INCIDENT,

the Town were slightly the better side in spite of their slowness, and I thought it was a mistake to let Hoar take the kick. The facts were these. A neat push out by



S. Hoar.

Thompson was snapped up by Hoar, who cleverly dribbled round Brooke, and the pair then raced hard for goal. Hoar verged goalwards and was within four or five yards and looked all over a goal-scorer, indeed, he could hardly have missed, when Brooke lunged out and lifted his legs right from

under him, so that he plunged head first to the ground all in a heap. He was obviously shaken up by the impact, and rested a minute before he took the penalty kick, but the referee hurried the taking of the kick. Instead of keeping the ball low, as he usually does, Hoar lifted it a little to the right of Leahy, who just managed to push it out and then fall on it and push it away as Hoar dashed in.

This encouraged the "Darians," and they rushed away. From nearly twenty yards' range, ROGERS banged in a great shot. Gibbon appeared to deflect it to the bar; it struck the underside, dropped and bounced outwards. Gibbon caught it and cleared. Aberdare appealed for a goal, but the referee gesticulated for play to proceed, and the ball went out to the right, where, after Roe had tackled Dan-skin, it went out of play. The Aberdare players surged round the referee, and

ALMOST MOBBED HIM.

So he whistled and crossed over to one of the linesmen. That worthy was a long way from the scene, with the strong sunlight right in his eyes. What he said I don't know, but the referee crossed to the other linesman, and then pointed to the centre of the field. It was the first goal Aberdare had scored at home since September 11th, and so the crowd went into ecstacy.

Personally I thought the ball fell over the line from the bar, but I am convinced that if it had not gone out of play the referee would not have allowed a goal. Gibbon admitted that the ball crossed the line, but quite incomprehensible was the fact that the referee signalled for play to go on, yet at half-time, when Gibbon told the referee it was a goal, the Town goalkeeper says that Mr. Wildig replied that he had not the slightest doubt about it. If he had no doubt he should have signalled a goal, should not have allowed play to proceed, and should not have consulted the linesmen.

This error, however, was on a par with his general conduct of the game. None of us could grudge the home team the goal, for it was

A BRILLIANT EFFORT.

but to delay in the manner he did, and then say he had no doubt—well, it was too funny.

The game was evenly divided, right to the interval, but we always felt that the "Darians" were the more likely to score, for whenever they spied a chance they let fly tremendous shots, and one from Martin nearly knocked the Town goalkeeper off his feet. Leahy was by no means idle, and he had many shots to deal with, but there was not such stung in them as in those directed at the Town goal.

The second half opened with a strong attack by the home team, but it was beaten off, and then the Town got together better and set up a persistent attack. Corners were won without avail, and Aberdare defended desperately. They played the offside game effectively for a time, and when that was beaten they packed the goal, and regardless of laws or limbs, they fought for their goal. Thompson was once about to shoot when

Gillespie held his legs as in a vice, but the referee disregarded the appeals for a penalty. Following a corner, Foster was just about to drive in when Gillespie deliberately pushed him in the chest, but again there was nothing.

Then came a breakaway by the "Darians", right wing, and after a scramble

in the goal-mouth, Tompkinson shot hard in. The ball would have travelled far out of goal, but it struck MARTIN'S foot and ricocheted into the net. The Aberdare player know no more about it than Gibbon, who never saw it.

From this point

THE TOWN RALLIED,

and they were getting the better of it, but the "Darian" halves and backs, and Rogers, tripped and pushed relentlessly, and there were several unpleasant scenes. Three or four times the referee spoke to Gillespie. Twice he rebuked Rogers, and Archibald came in for just as much, but took no notice, and eventually Hoar retaliated after two or three bad fouls, and the result was that both players were called before the referee and spoken to. Butcher was badly kicked by Gillespie, and had to retire for a few minutes.

in desperate plight before the end, and The home defenders were several times Tirrell and Lennon were on the middle line. The former had several shots at goal without success. Leahy made one or two bright saves, and only three or four minutes remained for play when REID scored. He had made one or two good efforts and eventually he got the better of Brooke and beat Leahy with a smart shot from a difficult angle, the custodian touching but failing to prevent the ball entering the net.

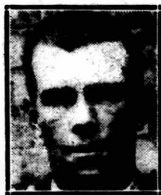
So we lost by the odd goal in three. So far as combination was concerned, Aberdare were the better side. They were

QUICKER ON THE BALL

and much sharper in front of goal, and for this reason they deserved their win. Nevertheless, they were fortunate to do so, and they will be a long time before they get such lucky goals again. At least, we should have brought one point away, and but for the reason mentioned in my opening above, I am quite sure we should have won.

Gibbon was not deserving of any sort of reproach. He kept goal well, and got rid of some tricky stuff. Lennon and Tirrell were reliable in the main, but each had a lot more work to do by reason of the comparative slowness of the home wing halves in the opening half. Our supporters had the opportunity of seeing what Tompkinson and Danskin could do, and each was too fast for the Town flank halves in the early stages. Later on both Foster and Roe improved, and put in fine

work, feeding the forwards and smashing up attacks, save for single-handed raids. Conversely, Walker played brilliantly during Aberdare's most dangerous period, and he tackled with great success. Before the end, however, he tired, naturally, for he had pretty well played himself to a standstill.



A. Roe.

The forwards suffered most. The left wing was the better, and Clarkson was by far the best forward. He

GOT MORE WORK,

and on half-a-dozen occasions he nearly brought about the downfall of the Aberdare goal. Butcher attended to him well, and following one nice run, the St. Albans lad all but beat Leahy with a high shot. Hoar had to make his own chances as a rule, except when Thompson helped him to passes, and he seldom did aught amiss except the failure with the penalty kick. Reid was not a good partner, although he did many smart individual things in the second half. Thompson was not so effective as the previous week. Now and then he showed glimpses of his best, but he was obviously tired. He had no training during the week, spent anxious days and nights at the bedside of his little daughter, who was suffering from pneumonia, and on Friday he travelled nearly 300 miles, and so covered over 500 miles in fewer than 24 hours before the game. Yet he played pluckily against a much stronger line than we saw at Luton the previous week.



G. Lennon.

Aberdare's side was improved out of all conception. The whole of the rearguard was changed, two of the middle men and two forwards, and with advantage. Leahy kept goal well, and Hindmarsh and Brooke were strong backs. The middle men tackled strongly, if unfairly, and Gillespie was at once the cleverest and probably the most unscrupulous of the three, although Archibald was not far short. The forward line played pretty football at times. Martin was a good leader, but Rogers was the most dangerous inside forward, and both wingers played well.