

# LUTON TOWN'S FALL.

## FIRST DEFEAT AT HOME.

So far as this season is concerned it seems that we can let loose all our hopes of promotion. Something like a miracle will have to happen if we equal last season's record. With more than a third of the season gone, we are seven points behind the leaders, with a goal average that is a blot by comparison, and our match-card shows that of the remaining engagements we have to play seven clubs now above us and six below us in the League table. That does not sugar well for the future, and while I fancy that we shall climb higher in the League table, I shall be considerably surprised if we reach the place we held at the end of last season. Comparing last season's results against the same clubs with those and this season we find the following:

|      | P  | W | L | D | F  | A  | P  |
|------|----|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| Last | 16 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 24 | 16 | 20 |
| This | 16 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 27 | 22 | 17 |

We are thus three points worse off, and although we have scored three goals more, we have had six more against us. Yet where would you find anyone to agree that the forward line is better and the defence worse than last season? Certainly, we have had none too much good fortune, and it is worthy of attention that of our six games lost we have gone under on five occasions by the odd goal. There might appear to be a ray of hope in this, but that is balanced by the fact that the teams now above us are doing so much better this season than last, and they are playing consistently withal, which is more than can be said of our players.

It is unfortunate, for whatever may be said of the play, there is no room for doubting that every player is doing his level best. Win or lose, I am sure there is no player that could be justly accused of not trying. As I have already said on several occasions, the directors have not yet been able to strike the happy combination, and until they do so we must be prepared to face losses equally with wins. In our next two games we have

### A CHANCE OF PUTTING STRAIGHT

those three points, as will be seen in my notes referring to Bristol City's visit on Saturday.

After our misfortune at Watford we expected to win at Luton, and none could deny that on the balance of play we should have won by a substantial margin. What luck there was going went to Watford, and the goal by which they gained the day will never be accounted a good one by any Luton spectator. There was absolutely no intention of sandwiching Pagnam maliciously. All the players concerned went for the ball, and Pagnam was in the middle. He dropped between Walker and Jennings to avoid the bump, and he was not hurt at all. There was no tripping, kicking, striking, jumping, handling, holding, pushing, violent or dangerous charging, or charging from behind. Those are the offences for which a penalty may be awarded, and it would be interesting to know under which head the alleged offence came. As at Watford the previous week, a case of handling by a Watford defender escaped the referee's notice, and so it is easy to see

### WHERE THE "JAM" WENT.

I do not want to withhold an iota of credit from Watford for their victory. It was not won by their forwards, who were not half so convincing as in the previous game, but by their defence, and I will go so far as to say that Williams deserved what luck he had because of the three magnificent saves he did make when all seemed lost. No, the Watford defenders played with grand gameness, and it was their good fortune that the Town forwards could not do the right thing often enough to get one goal.

The Town had much the better of the game all through, and for every five minutes that Watford attacked we had ten—if rushes for the opponents' goal may always be termed attacks. But the rushes were not often neatly executed. Now and then we saw a passing movement on the flanks, but often as the ball dropped into the Watford goal-mouth it was bound to find a customer in Williams or his backs. Butcher twice and Thompson once seemed to have the goal at mercy, but Williams brought off marvellous saves, and it was to his credit that we sustained our

## FIRST HOME DEFEAT.

of the season.

The Watford forwards were sharp on the ball when they got going, but Gibbon was only put to a severe test once, and that was when he saved from Pagnam, who had the goal at his disposal, but could not steer the ball past Gibbon. Smith, on another occasion, banged fiercely over the top when he should have netted easily, and Stephenson once dropped the ball on to the bar, and it fell in front of goal and was cleared by Foster before a Watford defender could get near it.

But the Luton forwards got into the Watford goal-mouth times out of number without being able to get one really good shot past the opposition. I am not going to say that they received the best possible assistance from the halves. They did not, but still they got quite enough support to have won the game. It was the first time the Town had failed to score in a game at home this season, and it is obvious that the need is for coaching in combination, just as the middle men need it in feeding.

Gibbon once held on to the ball rather long, but was otherwise quite safe; Lennon, who was

### A DOUBTFUL STARTER

owing to a troublesome knee, played well throughout, and was not often in serious trouble. Tirrell put up a fine game, his kicking being strong and clean, and he was not often beaten, his judgment standing him in good stead. In their defensive work the halves played with their customary skill and strength, and in powers of recovery they showed speed and craft. Walker had Pagnam quite in subjection, and in a straight tackle was always master. The crack leader of the Watford attack had practically no chance until near the end of the game, so closely was he watched. Foster and Jennings were equally busy, and it was due to the vigilance of all three that the Watford forwards got so few chances. In feeding, however, there was no improvement, and the forwards were too often overshot. Jennings certainly did best in nursing.

Butcher did the best work in the vanguard, and he was the player who showed consistent aptitude for getting the ball to the carpet. His dribbling was fine, and he found Clarkson a lot of work. Of the other forwards there was not a lot to choose. Reader did pretty well in the first half, but not so good in the second, and he lacks the fire and persistency of Sid Hoar.

For Watford, Williams and Horsman were the great defenders of the breach, and they came through a gruelling ordeal with success. Gregory was not so sure as Horsman. Carter was again the smartest middle man, and in stopping and feeding did splendidly. Smith was the most successful of the forwards, but few real opportunities came the way of the front rank.

It was a glorious day, and over 11,000 spectators paid £670 to see the match.

|                                                                                                                   |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| LUTON TOWN .....                                                                                                  | Nil    |
| WATFORD .....                                                                                                     | 1 Goal |
| LUTON TOWN.—Gibbon; Lennon, Tirrell; Foster, Walker, Jennings; Reader, Higginbotham, Thompson, Butcher, Clarkson. |        |
| WATFORD.—Williams; Horsman, Gregory; Toone, Strain, Carter; Stephenson, Smith, Pagnam, White, Mummery.            |        |