

READING'S REWARD.

Luton Town Defeated at Home by Plucky Defence.

(By "CRUSADER.")

At Luton.

READING	2 goals
LUTON TOWN	1 goal

LUTON TOWN. — Gibbon; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Jennings, Roe; Hoar, Butcher, Walker, Irvine, Clarkson.

READING.—Kane; Walker, Allan; Dand, Eggo, McGarry; Carr, Gardiner, Jennings, Roulton, Springell.

Referee: Mr. H. C. Curtis, Rayleigh.

It was a victory well deserved, for the simple reason that a plucky defence held out against a lively attack, and a visiting forward took two chances that he could hardly have been forgiven for missing. That said, one can only add as comment on the bare result, that Luton would have won with ease had they shown decisive marksmanship in front of goal, for play was in the vicinity of Kane thrice as often as it was in the neighbourhood of Gibbon.

It was

A BIG HANDICAP

to the Town that Reid should be away from the forward line on the first occasion that Higginbotham was missing. He was badly missed on Saturday. Early in the season, when we were "stumped" for a leader, I suggested that Walker, who had scored a couple of goals on the only occasion he figured there last season, should be given another chance to show what he could do. His inclusion at Bury broke

any hopes some of us had in that direction, and we had no fancy for him in the position on Saturday. He quite failed, to make good, although, as always, he tried hard, and he could not be blamed any more than anyone else. That should be



G. Butcher.

made quite clear. The forward line played attractive football in the open, but in front of goal they met a resolute defence, and that and their own shortcomings in shooting, was the main cause of defeat.

Reading were superior in stature, being

A FINELY BUILT SIDE.

and the heavy ground seemed more to their liking than to the Town's. They got off the mark quickly, and SAM JENNINGS scored a capital goal after less than three minutes' play. Poulton was the initiator, a clever dribble taking the ball through. At the right moment he passed squarely to Sam Jennings, who was quite unmarked and had plenty of time in which to aim and drive the ball past Gibbon. Thereafter Kane was the man most in the picture, for fierce onslaughts were made almost continuously, and his goal had many lucky escapes. Hoar hit the bar, and the side net, and on several occasions the Town forwards were almost on the goal line shooting and shooting again as the ball rebounded, but they could not find the net.

Then shortly before the interval Carr broke away and beat the opposition, to centre nicely, for SAM JENNINGS again to have

PLENTY OF TIME

in which to beat Gibbon for the second time. He was again unmarked, and the crowd began to grow angry about it, visiting their resentment upon the head of Will Jennings.

When it was seen that Molyneux had exchanged places with Walker in the second half the crowd showed their appreciation in no half-hearted manner, and Billy started as if he were going to do the job right away. He came very near it, too, and it was his clever pass, after snapping up a ball from Tirrell, that enabled BUTCHER to dart round Allen and score the Town's only goal eight minutes after the re-start. Reading had a desperate struggle to keep their goal intact afterwards, but with the aid of the veteran Walker and the adoption of

A PURELY DEFENSIVE GAME

by more than half the side, he managed it, and so Reading repeated their performance of last year by winning at Luton.

Most criticism for the defeat was levelled at Jennings, and he certainly did not play in anything like his usual form. Or was it that his brother knew just the weak point, and took advantage of it. Anyway, Sam Jennings is a dangerous centre-forward, and I take the view it was not so much that his brother neglected him as the fact that he had an eye for position, and that was why he so often had



T. Irvine.

what appeared to be plenty of space in which to operate. Even so he should

have been more closely watched, and in each case he got more time than he should have had to score, because of hesitation in tackling by the defence. He is a big, strong fellow, and

TAKES SOME SHIFTING.

but he plays fine football. Carr and Poulton were his best assistants, with Eggo also a clever helper. McGarry was the worst man on the field for dirty play. Walker did great work at back in spite of his forty years, and Kane is a fine goalkeeper, although he was nearly caught napping when Hoar hit the bar.

The Town forwards played neat football, and, considering the handicap, they were often attractive in style and combination. It was in marksmanship that they failed most. Butcher was the smartest of the inside forwards, and did a tremendous amount of work, and that goal of his was long overdue. Hoar was equally good, but Clarkson did not reach his best. Irvine showed clever footwork, and although he may not yet be regarded as assured of his place in the forward line, eventually

HE WILL GET THERE.

Of the halves, I have referred to Jennings. He did better in the second half, but did not get in as is his wont. Molyneux and Roe were on top of their form, and in the first half the former gave Springell, the young amateur who has been boomed a good deal, very much chance of showing his paces. Carr was a big handful, but Roe got through his task with great credit, and did a lot of work. Walker was better in the middle than in the front line without touching his best, but then he is

NEVER COMFORTABLE

on the flank. Lennon was slow, I thought, in tackling when the first goal came, and Tirrell was beaten when the second came, and both have played better. They improved in the second half, and Tirrell tried tremendously hard to get the equaliser. There is necessary one thing in particular in the matter of our half-back and back play. Time after time Tirrell stepped forward at the right moment and appealed for offside, only to find that one of his halves had fallen back and put the situation all right for the opposition. Reading's backs and halves had a better knowledge of working this, and it is time the Town had.

There were just over 6,000 spectators, and they were very disappointed with the Town's failure.