

LUTON TOWN SURPRISED.

Reading Repeat Last Season's Feat at Luton.

Not a few went away from the Town ground on Saturday vowing they would not come again until next season. They will then expect to find a team capable of carrying off the championship of their Division and winning the F.A. Cup as a side-line. Well, we may say at once that it cannot be done. Simply because Reading managed to obtain their first away success of the season at the expense of Luton, these dire threats of withdrawal of support are as childish as they are unsportsmanlike. I hold no brief for those responsible for the selection of the team, because very often I differ from their views, but they do their best, and while they are responsible they are entitled to their own way.

The situation at the moment is none too bright, if not exactly critical, and it is difficult to see how it can improve with gates as low as 6,000. If we have a tip-top team we must have tip-top gates, and it is all very well to talk about winning teams bringing big gates, but money is needed to secure a winning team, and the burden of financial responsibility already weighs very heavily upon the shoulders of the directors.

It was a keen disappointment to lose to Reading, and I frankly admit that we ought to have won—that the blame for defeat was equally with attack and defence, but other home clubs have similar experience, and Reading's supporters have had to put up with four home defeats and five home draws against three and four respectively of Luton. Moreover, let us not lose sight of the fact that the Town were labouring under disadvantages on Saturday, for it is no small matter to lose two of the inside forwards at once.

Reading won because they were bigger and better suited to the conditions than Luton: they made better use of fewer opportunities forward, and they showed a more resolute defence.

The Town were attacking for the greater part of the game, some of the initiatory work by the wings was very attractive, and in the early stages of the second half the whole line moved nicely, but a fault was the holding of the ball too closely, tactics which suited the visitors' heavyweights, for they fell back on goal, and at close quarters their strength was a big factor in thwarting the home forwards. On the other hand, they swung the ball about surprisingly well, and their advances came chiefly through the agency of Carr on the right wing. Moreover, SAM JENNINGS was given too much room for so active and dangerous a leader, and it was this that helped him to get the two goals that enabled Reading to win. The first capped a smart dribble and pass by Poulton, and the second followed a nice run and centre by Carr, and between these two goals the Reading defence had a very warm time. BUTCHER'S goal was a splendid effort soon after the interval. Tirrell came up the field, shoved the ball up the middle to Molyneux, who neatly transferred for the inside man to dodge the back and score with a fast rising shot with the left foot. The subsequent work promised the equaliser many times, but there was no fulfilment, and near the end there were one or two raids by the visitors that put the Town goal in peril.

Gibbon had no chance with the two shots that scored, and although he had few others, they were all of the cannon-ball character. Lennon and Tirrell have both played better, especially than they did in the first half, but they had a lot more work than usual, for Jennings, Carr, and Springell were always well up the field, and the first-named lay well on the backs for the greater part of the game. Molyneux and Roe were as good as ever at half, but Will Jennings was not so effective as usual in the first half, although he nearly touched his best in the second. Butcher was the best of the inside forwards, dribbling and foraging as energetically as ever. Irvine showed clever footwork, and was very unlucky in front of goal. Clarkson was clever by fits and starts, and Hear shared with Butcher the honours forward. Walker did his best, but he only impressed the on-lookers with the fact that he is a better middle man than anything else. Molyneux improved the line when he took the onus of leading, and, on current form, Billy is about as good as anyone in the club.

Reading were best served by Kane, who kept goal well, Walker at back, Eggo in the middle, and Carr and Jennings forward.

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, Poulton, Springell.