

THREE GOALS BEHIND

LUTON TOWN SUFFER DEFEAT AT READING.

Reading were value for their fourth consecutive win over Luton Town. Under conditions that were more appropriate to their heavy weights, they sort of romped home on actual goal scoring, and with the exception of the first goal, I would be loath to withdraw from them one iota of the credit they deserve. Even the shot that scored this opening goal was deserving of its fruit but the first goal is always a valuable asset, and on this occasion it came after a decision that was hotly disputed. Moreover, before the game started the general opinion gave it that the side adopting the more open game would win, and up to the scoring of the first goal I thought Luton would be the successful side. They did not swing the ball about to the same extent as Reading, but they made better use of it and often got within an ace of scoring, but

LACK OF PUNCH

in front of Kane and wild shooting spelt defeat. At the other end, Jennings and his comrades let drive with great power when they got a chance, and they did not try to carry a ball through a barrier, but shot from twenty yards if there was a possibility of running up against much obstruction. In the first half Luton had much more of the ball than Reading, and Hoar and Clarkson put across centres good enough to have won the match had there been sufficient will, weight and wisdom among the middle men to utilise the openings. Even the biased vision of the home crowd recognised that the best movements in this half came from the Town right, and on two occasions especially, Hoar

OUTSTRIPPED HIS OPPONENTS

in clever style, and although Kane saved on one occasion, a centre on the next was good enough to have brought a goal. It was not to be, however, and when, four minutes before the interval, Reading scored, there was more than a slight element of luck about the point. Jennings hit the ball hard out to the right when tackled by Tirrell, and Roe, running back, was struck by it on the shoulder and upper part of the arm. The referee signalled "hands," and almost before the players were in position, EGGO had placed the ball and banged it into the net out of reach of Gibbon. It was a great shot, but the Town were very sore with the referee's decision. Even then, the equaliser would have come before the teams retired had Reid not used his hands to get the ball under control, for with one of his expresses he had Kane beaten, but the referee had seen him handle at the moment of breasting the ball, and the chance was lost.

There was

LITTLE TO CHOOSE

between the sides in the second half until Reading got their second goal through JENNINGS. Chief credit belonged to Springell, who ran through and shot hard from an awkward angle, and when Gibbon was beaten Tirrell kicked out, but without waiting to place the ball Jennings drove it home more quickly than it came to him. From that point, while the Town were always trying hard, Reading were masters of the situation. They played with great dash and vigour, and but for Roe and Tirrell they would probably have scored on other occasions, for Springell, Jennings and Poulton tried to rush the defence many times, and the first-named had too much latitude. The third goal came as a result of his work, for he got clean through to lift the ball into the goal-mouth, when GARDINER had only to nod it past Gibbon. After this, Luton recovered considerably, and right to the end Luton were trying, but their efforts

ALWAYS FAILED

at the crucial moment, and they left the field losers.

It was strength and thrustfulness that were the big factors in the success, and Reading had them. The Town were the smarter individually, and with equal promptitude in front of goal they would have won. Reading played the more open game, and while the Town forwards held the ball too close, the home team slung it about. Kane had not a great deal to do; Walker was the strong man in defence, and especially in the second half he had the Town left wing and centre in subjection. Eggo was the best half again, without being so good as at Luton. Jennings was a clever, bustling leader, and Poulton and Springell were his best helpers towards the result, although Carr would have been a danger-merchant but for the close attention paid to him by Roe and Tirrell.

THE TOWN DEFENCE

was all right until the second half. Gibbon had little chance with the goals registered against him, and he made two or three fine saves. If Lennon and Molyneux had maintained the same respect for Springell in the second half as in the first, Reading would not have scored three goals. Before the interval I turned to one of the Luton party and commented upon the fact that Molyneux seemed to have Springell under a spell. Up to the change over, Molyneux played a really great game, and he was working in harmony with his right wingers. Lennon, too, did well up to this point, but in the second half neither bestowed half enough attention on the diminutive winger. On the opposite flank, Tirrell and Roe did not make that mistake. Carr's runs were seldom made without a deal of embarrassment, and Tirrell shared with Reading's Walker the honours in defence. His kicking was excellent, and he got into position with nice judgment, although once more his "offside" movements were spoilt by

ABSENCE OF CO-OPERATION.

Roe tackled smartly, and was better in attack than usual. The substitution of Walker for Jennings promised well until near the interval, and he played policeman to Jennings assiduously. Thereafter he fell away, and Jennings and Poulton would have done more damage but for Molyneux's frequent help and Tirrell's watchfulness. There was one improvement in Walker's play that calls for commendation. Several times in the first half he set his forwards going in first-class style, and I do not think he has ever fed better than for the first half-hour. Personally, however, I prefer Jennings on his average form.

The forwards' work was attractive enough in its way, for the dribbling was superior to that of the Reading quintette. Unfortunately, it was overdone, and the tendency to hold on defeated its own purpose, especially against so astute a player as Jock Walker, who is wise enough not to rely on his pace. Hoar and Butcher were

THE BEST WING ON VIEW.

faster and more crafty, and they never lost sight of each other. Butcher was the ring-leader in attack, and provided most of the chances for Hoar, who touched his best, but was unlucky. Some of their advances, with Molyneux backing up, were delightful. Reid and Irvine each suffered from the delusion that time did not count. They would both have learned something at the County match at Bedford last Thursday, when the Oxford forwards got the ball under control and went off at full speed almost in simultaneous action. Reid was not so dashing as usual, and he must resist that temptation to use his hands. He got the ball into the net twice, on each occasion with good shots, but prefaced each effort by

USING HIS HANDS

quite unnecessarily. For Irvine's cleverness I have a good deal of admiration, but he is terribly slow in getting off the mark, and was robbed several times simply because Dand found that he had only to go in at once to get the ball. Clarkson was pretty good in the first half, but his stock depreciated afterwards, and he did not get a lot of assistance. Few of the halves and forwards, however, were able to pass with consistent accuracy, and scarcely any were exempt from this failing.

Generally it was a clean and pleasant game, but the referee left something to be desired. Nevertheless, he might have been worse.