

LUTON'S SMART PERFORMANCE.

SOUTHEND WELL BEATEN AT HOME.

Hearing that Derby County had beaten the Spurs in the Cup Competition, an on-looker at Southend remarked. "The bookies will have a good time. The coupons will be short this week." His friend gloomily replied, "And if Derby hadn't done it, Luton have." So they did, and if the victory were not the best performance of the season for the whole side, it was certainly the finest exhibition the defence have given. Gibbon and his colleagues had more to do in the first twenty minutes than they have had in ninety per cent. of their games this season, and although three goals should be good enough to assure victory in any game where the teams are anything like evenly matched, the defence earned just as much credit for the victory as the forwards. Indeed, the game might be divided into three parts: Southend's game for 25 minutes; Luton for 25 minutes; Southend for 4 minutes. There was unanimous opinion, voiced by the Southend supporters as we left the field, to the effect that "Southend ought to have won." On the face of things, yes, but on their merits did the Town dunderers deserve their

FULL BONUS.

If Southend were doing most of the pressing they were not getting most of the chances, and although they undoubtedly had more of the ball than the Town, it is a fact that they did not get as many chances at close quarters. They had to shoot generally from a range that permitted Tom Gibbon to get a good view of the shooter and the shot, and that was all that Tommy wanted. He had no earthly chance with the goal that scored, and on half-a-dozen occasions he appeared to be hopelessly situated when danger threatened, but he got there all right, and there were despairing gestures and ejaculations time after time as he thwarted really fine shots. It was Tommy's day out, and he won the applause even of this crowd, which is about as strong a testimony as the heart could desire.

In the early stages there was deep contrast in styles. Southend swung the ball about and made ground rapidly, and the Town halves and backs were frequently in desperate straits, but they barred the way to goal admirably, and if a forward beat one he invariably fell into the clutches of another. During this period there seemed to be no prospect of avoiding defeat, for the close game of the Town forwards when they got the ball was to the satisfaction of the home defenders, and Hall had

NOT AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.

But just when people were telling themselves that Southend only wanted a star to gain a great victory, a change came over the scene. The Town forwards began to hit the ball more, with the result that Lennon and Tirrell were in operation on the middle line. It was from this distance that Tirrell drove the ball with great power towards the Southend goal. Evans was in position for it near the edge of the penalty area, and attempted to volley, but he was a trifle too soon, and fozzled the ball. HOTEN, who had shown an eye for business, never gave the back a chance to recover. He rushed past him, stalling off Evans' challenge, pushed the ball forward a yard or two, and then as Hall framed for the shot at one end, the Town player crashed the ball into the net with a drive that nearly brought down the furniture. The Town were on top from this time until the interval, and a little more steadiness in front of goal would have given them a stronger lead than three goals. The difference between their chances and Southend's was of a vital character. Whereas the home team found a stiff barrier in the Luton goal area, the Town forwards outwitted the home backs and got to close terms with Hall. Butcher and Hoten kept drawing the backs, and then pushing the ball out to the wings, and Hear and Clarkson centred with nice precision. Once Reid sent over the top when close in, and on other occasions he hesitated before applying the boot. But Reid

SILENCED THE CLAMOURING

spectators with as near a goal as could be desired. The ball was shot to the left of the goal with the Southend defenders scattered towards the right. It appeared to be going out, and there was a laugh as Clarkson sprinted, for it seemed hopeless for him to get it. He managed it, however, and as Evans rushed across to repair the damage, the Town winger hooked the ball over so gently in front for REID to steer it with his head into the corner of the net right away from Hall. Almost before the home players and the crowd realised what had happened, Molyneux, Butcher and Hoar took a turn, and the last-named cleverly beat Evans and Booth and swung the ball into goal. Hall sprang to punch it as it came down, but he could not reach it, and from the face of the bar it fell, and REID nodded it into the net.

Southend appealed for something, but what no one seemed to know, and the Town came to the attack again, and Reid had two good chances to register his hat trick, but he dallied instead of shooting, and the chances were lost. Still it was a capital achievement to cross over with three goals' lead, and the Southend crowd were in a chastened mood when the teams turned out for the second half.

It was easy to see that both teams had formulated plans for the second half. After a brief incursion by the Town, Southend settled down to a strong attack, but, as before, they could not get the ideal position for shooting, and with Goodwin unable to shake off the attentive Jennings, attack after attack fizzled out. Gibbon saved many rattling good shots, but the home halves were the principal marksmen, and the forwards, if they appeared to have an opening, were

PROMPTLY CHALLENGED,

and had to shoot hurriedly or lose the ball. Occasionally the Town forwards broke away, and Hall was troubled, but in general the inside forwards were taking a hand with the halves, and the goal remained intact for 25 minutes. Then the home right got a corner, and after some finesse Dobson transferred to GOODWIN, who hit the ball first time and sent it hurtling into the net well out of Gibbon's reach. It was a lovely goal, but it concluded the scoring, and the Town won deservedly.

Southend played a good average game. Biasett was again the better back, Evans being too prone to unscrupulous tactics. Halley was the smartest half, and all the forwards played well.

Gibbon was in wonderful form in goal, and some of his saves deserved the most praiseworthy of adjectives. He was once beaten in the first half when Tirrell kicked off the goal-line a shot by Slater, but he appeared to enjoy his game thoroughly. The backs were at their very best. They had plenty to do, but covered each other with fine judgment, and their kicking was accurate in all positions. Lennon has not played so well this season as he did on Saturday, and he has never played better, and Tirrell was always

A SUCCESSFUL MARK

on the scheme of things. The best estimate of a player is the effectiveness of his opponents, and it was the typical Jennings we saw on Saturday. The sharpshooter Goodwin played finely, but when he wanted to shoot he was hauled so thoroughly that he never got in anything like a good shot until he scored. The Town centre-half was a big factor for his hefty work in defence, and he found time to collect his forwards and set them going. Molyneux and Bee were also at their best, and both in attack and defence did magnificent work.

The forward play was not remarkable for combination, but it was virile and snappy, and when the ball was swung about the Southend defenders were at a loss what to do. Reid's goals were simple, and illustrated once more the value of being on hand at the critical moment, but it seems to me that he is sacrificing some of his dash in an effort to be clever, and that

WILL NOT PAY,

He would do better to cultivate the art of distribution and marksmanship rather than the dribble. Butcher worked as wholeheartedly as ever, and his feeding of Hoar in the first half was very smart, while twice he nearly scored with hard drives. Hoar improved on the good impression he made last week. He fed and dribbled with real cunning, and he hustled the backs to some

tune. Both Hear and Clarkson were in fine fettle, thanks to the nursing they got. They were quick on the ball, took the shortest route for goal, and seldom wasted a ball. They did not get a lot of work in the second half, because the main concentration was on defence, a policy that was excusable when three goals up.

The game was clean generally, but the referee was as unsatisfactory as the previous week, and appeared to be unsettled by the crowd's improper attention when he turned out. The ground was in good condition, and if Southend had won the 6,000 spectators would have been better pleased.