

BROKEN AGAIN: LUTON TOWN LOSE AT PORTSMOUTH

FINE FORWARD WORK.—(By "CRUSADER")

PORTSMOUTH 3 goals
LUTON TOWN Nil

PORTSMOUTH.—Kane; Probert, Davison; Davies, Parker, Martin; Meikle, Mackie, Haines, Watson, Beedie.

LUTON TOWN.—Shepherd; Till, Tirrell; Anderson, Jennings, Walker; Hoar, Kerr, Hosen, Danskin.

Referee: Mr. F. Todman, Croydon.

"We just about deserved to win," said Tom Parker.

"We just deserved to win, but had a good bit of luck," said one of the Portsmouth officials.

"We got two lucky goals," said another Portsmouth official.

These comments were made in my hearing after the game, and the only amendment I would like to make is in the third of the above remarks. There was more than an element of luck about each of the goals, and while the first two cases were due more to perversity of circumstances rather than poor play, the third was the fault of slackness in the Town defence. It is distasteful to any writer to decry the referee, but ever since his conduct of the Luton v. Birmingham Cup tie in 1920-21 at Luton I have felt that Mr. F. Todman, of Croydon, while a good fellow in himself, was not capable of taking charge of such games. On Saturday he was as whimsical as ever. In the case of the second goal Beedie was off-side when he initiated the movement that led to the goal; the third goal came after a mix-up in the Luton goal area in which two fouls were committed without being noticed by the referee. Hosen was



Hosen (Luton Town)

practically under the nose of the referee, yet he did not make the award that was deserved.

Having said that one must admit that on the balance of the play Pompey deserved to win, but their superiority was not evident until they gave the Town a ten-minute lead in the second half. That entitled them to take the points.

It was a good game, both from a player's and a spectator's point of view. There were few unpleasant incidents, and the players were all on good terms generally, although the defenders did not allow liberties. The foul on Hosen was the worst of the game, and he was hurt. Jennings, Haines, Watson, and the crowd got a dribble in the second half, and Martin tripped Kerr, and was in turn sent off his legs. That was about the sum total, and the 11,775 spectators got full value for their money. There would have been a much larger crowd but for heavy rain just before the game.

In the first half there was not much to choose between the teams. Luton certainly had quite as much of the play—a lot more than the crowd expected—and had as many chances. They had no such luck as did Portsmouth in front of goal, but then, it must be admitted that the Portsmouth backs and goalkeeper did not allow much luck to enter into the argument. Kane's goalkeeping was magnificent in this half, and that was the work of Butcher and Hoar were the principal features. Kane and Hoar came together to the dressing rooms at half-time, and the crowd gave them

AN OVATION.

Play commenced in lively fashion, and the Town forwards swarmed round Kane, who repelled a centre from Hoar, and caught a smart shot from Anderson and disposed of it. Pompey came to the other end after good work by Parker, and Shepherd turned round the post a hot shot from Mackie. Then he punched away the flag-kick, and the ball went out to Meikle. The winger tried to shoot, but the slippery ball slipped off his instep along the ground to the foot of HAINES, who could only just tap it, but the direction was right, and the ball went into the net close to the post just beyond Shepherd's reach. For the next ten minutes the Town forwards kept the home players on tenterhooks, the right wing giving a lot of trouble, and several corners were forced without success. Pompey could not get near Shepherd for some time, and when they did get through Beedie was well offside. He was not pulled up, however, and the ball went into the net. The winger had gone out if Walker had kept MEIKLE off instead of beating him for possession, but the Town half played the ball at the same time as the winger, and the latter, according to the appeals of the Town, used his hands once in the tussle before he shot hard and low against Shepherd's leg, and the ball glanced into the net.

For the next quarter of an hour the Town forwards played splendidly. Hosen and Kerr kept swinging the ball out to the right, and Hoar was too fast for the opposition. Butcher was also dribbling grandly, and thrice Kane made great

saves, and eventually the attack was beaten back.

Pompey then had a turn at the Luton end, and, not so protracted, but quite as incisive, and Shepherd won applause for clever fielding of hot shots that would have scored but for his agility.

Then the Town had another go, and Hoar and Butcher outwitted the opposition time after time, but the centres the former sent over could not be turned to account. Once, however, Hosen drove in a terrific shot for Kane to make a thrilling save by turning the ball over the bar. This was his best save of the match. Hosen was afterwards brought down in the penalty area, being sandwiched heavily, but the referee allowed the offenders the profit thereof, and we went on to the interval with the score 2-0 against us.

The second half was just as keenly contested, and with the exception of the period referred to, when the Pompey onslaught was marked by great vigour and determination, the Town again had

A FAIR SHARE

of the play. Danskin, who had not been much in the picture because he had few opportunities, was now more actively engaged, but the main danger still came from the right wing. Kerr, however, was closely watched, and was promptly challenged when he got possession, and given very few opportunities to shoot. Kane had to be very much alive on many occasions, especially near the end, when the Town had several corner kicks, but these were unavailing. Pompey's third goal came from HAINES, and wound up a great assault. There had been the penalty incident a little while before. Following appeals for offside and fouls and a general melee in the goal area Mackie shot hard, and a goal would have been scored but for Tirrell beating the ball out in a style a goalkeeper could not have improved upon. Meikle took the kick and blazed hard at goal. The ball was fired high up to the right of Shepherd, but he leaped aside and turned it over the bar in magnificent style. Still Pompey maintained the pressure, and their right wing took advantage of some loose play and sent the ball into the middle. HAINES got it, and, although a long time before he shot, when he did so the ball hit the post as Shepherd dived, then traversed the goal line, struck the other post, and the twist carried it into the net. That completed the scoring, and, although the Town played strongly afterwards, they were beaten pointlessly.

Portsmouth were the more polished, better-poised side. There was a level quality, and one line fitted in with another nicely, but I would not like to say that they are a championship side. That they

FOOTBALL TRAINER'S ESCAPE.

Luton Town Kit Lost.

Fred Westgarth, the trainer of Luton Town Football Club, had a narrow escape from death or very serious injury on Saturday evening while travelling from Portsmouth to London.

In the hope of being able to catch the mail train from St. Pancras, the player hurried over dinner at the Fratton Hotel, and caught the 4.3 p.m. train from Fratton. The train was overcrowded before the large number of passengers entered at Fratton, and travelling conditions were uncomfortable, most of the party of fifteen having to stand.

Fred Westgarth and Danskin were in one compartment, and the former put the portmanteau containing his training requisites, close to the door, end up, in order to get a precarious seat.



Just before the train reached Guildford, when it was travelling at great speed and swaying ominously, the door flew open. The bag fell out of the train, but the Town trainer managed by a great effort to fling himself forward and so avoided following the bag.

The occupants of the compartment were unnerved by the mishap, but congratulated Westgarth on his presence of mind and escape. The loss of the bag was promptly reported to the officials when the train stopped at Guildford, and again at Waterloo.

RESULTS IN BRIEF.

Bendish 0, Kimpton 7 (R. Field 3, E. Durrant 2, W. Day, H. Wallis).

Whathamstead 0, Kimpton 1 (H. Ivory).

Batford O.B. 4, Markyate 2.

will take some shaking off their perch is true, but it should be done by the Town on Saturday. The defence is strong, and there is no doubt that Tom Parker is the finest purveyor that a forward line could wish for. He it was who kept the forwards on the move, and their play was at times similar to that of the Swansea forward line. If they can keep it up when the grounds get heavier, they will have a good change of promotion. Kane is a fine goalkeeper, apt to play to the gallery. Probert and Davison were strong backs, and

THE COMPLIMENTS

received match after match by Tom Parker were shown to be well deserved. He played a magnificent game, nursing the forwards with admirable discrimination of positional advantage, and on occasion he shot with great power and several times went dangerously near the target. He proved fully and clearly that he is not only a capable player, but a fine leader, and he is receiving from the Portsmouth crowd and club that measure of praise that he deserved but did not get in Luton. Their forwards were fast and clever, showing intelligent combination and playing most unselfishly. Haines is a good leader, but he gets there, and he has alongside him men who can make openings for him, and who can get the best out of two brilliant wingers.

As a side the Town did exceptionally well in the first half. The defence was shaky at times, and both of Pompey's goals should have been avoided, but on the whole they played well. In the second half, however, that level was not maintained. The many goals scored, and it was mainly due to the gallant defensive work of Till that Portsmouth did not overplay the Town at one period of the second half. There was a lack of balance, for while the right flank of the team was always good, the left flank did not reach the average required.

Shepherd saved well on many occasions, and I should be loath to charge him with responsibility for any of the goals, but he was obviously ill at ease. Moreover, he cannot get the ball far away from goal. He has not a strong kick, and even goal kicks were taken by Tirrell before they were of use to the forwards. Shepherd has good points, but he is in the same category as Bonall—not yet ripe for the first team. Till played

A GREAT GAME.

and at the finish the Portsmouth players and officials were high in their praise of his skill. His kicking was true and not too far for his forwards to use, and his tackling was clean, clever and thorough. He is settling down well, and has made his place in the team secure for the time being, while he continues to improve as he has done during the past three weeks he will vie with the best in this Division. Tirrell did pretty well in the first half, but he fell off badly in the second. The Town captain is not playing with the confidence and judgment he showed last season. I attribute this mainly to the fact that he misses the assistance that he got from Roe last season. Neither was fast, but the excellent understanding they had was better appreciated by their opponents than by the crowd. I have only seen Roe in two games, and I am not going to say that he is showing up as well with the Reserves as he did with the first team last season, or that he should be in the first eleven now, but the above is my candid opinion of what is wrong with Tirrell. He has had three different halves in front of him, and in Meikle and Mackie he faced a pair as clever as the Swansea right wing.

Anderson again put up a magnificent show for over an hour, and then he seemed to lose some energy, but later he came out of his shell again and

FINISHED STRONGLY.

It is not generally known that in two games with the first eleven he has been suffering a severely damaged toe, and when this fact is taken into consideration it must be recognised that he has done wonderfully. He vied with Jennings for being the best of our halves. The centre-half was again a tower of strength, and the backbone of the side. His vigour and optimism were remarkable, and he was ever in the thick of the fray. Walker rather gave better than the previous week, for he gave more attention to Meikle than the latter liked, but the defections are still apparent.

The inclusion of Butcher was a great asset to Hoar and made him the best of the Town forwards. They played rare football, and gave the lion-hearted Martin a lot of anxiety. Time after time they manoeuvred their way through, and goals should have accrued from their work. Upon this pair I win my fair bet for the game next Saturday. Kerr found the opposition very attentive to him, and he got little chance. There was one feature of his work that pleased, and that was the frequency with which he endeavoured to set his wings going, and he was often successful. The same may be said of Hosen, who gave Hoar a good deal of work, but might have given Danskin more to do. The latter got help from Jennings, but his opportunities were limited. Nevertheless, the first half forward work was a great improvement upon that of previous games.