

ANOTHER FRUITLESS FRAY.

WATFORD'S GALLANT DEFENCE SUCCEEDS AGAIN.

LUTON'S SUPERIOR FOOTBALL.

By "CRUSADER."

WATFORD Nil
LUTON TOWN Nil

WATFORD.—Williams; Horsman, Johnson; Toone, White (V.), Carter; Stephenson, Poole, Mummery, White (C.), Foxall.

LUTON TOWN.—Gibbon; Anderson, Till, Walker, Jennings, Millar; Hoar, Green, Kerr, Butcher, Hoten.

Referee: Mr. R. R. Crump, London.

When Mr. Crump sounded his final trumpet on Saturday afternoon at Watford, one of the home backs jumped high into the air and gave vent to his relief in no half-hearted manner. The advantage of ground had not given Watford that success they had hoped for when they left Luton the week before, after the most harassing time they have had this season. The struggle against continual threat of defeat ceased at Luton only to be resumed as intensely as ever at Watford, and once more it was very largely due to the glorious steadfastness of Williams, Horsman and Johnson that the Hertfordshire club were able to add one more point to their bag.

That defensive work was just as brilliant in its tenacity and doggedness as at Luton. In writing of the game the week before I said that Williams could hardly have another day so full of hazard and so replete with good fortune. That suggestion was correct, for he did not have nearly so much hard work to do. The reason was simply that the Town's inside forwards were even less effective in front of goal than at Luton, but for no other reason. On the general run of the play they were far, far superior to the home team, and chances were evolved with a consistency that aroused their grand following to

A HIGH PITCH

of enthusiasm, only to be missed with a regularity that almost reduced one to despair. The Town's game once more conclusively proved that the inside forwards have only to discover their shooting boots to be able to hold their own with the best. There was not a dissentient word from anyone as to the marked superiority of the Town. It was amazing how utterly incapable the Watford halves were in the face of the nippiness and skill of the Town forwards, and equally astonishing how comfortably the Watford forward line failed to overcome the Town halves and backs. By comparison Watford were for the most part a disorganised rabble. It is true that Carter was hurt and had to take his diminished energies to another position, but long before then the Town had given evidence of their better skill and understanding, and no amount of reshuffling of Watford's forces improved the outlook.

On the whole it was a very clean game. In the first half Toone and V. White were frequently penalised for rough and unfair play, and the former laid out Butcher in a way that merited severest censure, but the Town did not retaliate. After the interval play was much

BRIGHTER AND CLEANER.

and practically the only incident that called for rebuke was when Hoten and Horsman clashed. I thought that the Town player fouled Horsman quite unnecessarily, and so did many others by the demonstration that followed, but the referee consulted the linesman who was close to the spot, and the latter evidently exonerated Hoten, or opined that there was nothing to choose between the pair, and there was no punishment or rebuke of any kind. Afterwards Horsman showed a disposition to "get his own back," but it did not come off.

For five minutes play was even, but then the Town forwards seemed to get into their stride, and only at infrequent intervals did the home team get dangerous. On the other hand the Town forwards were almost constantly operating in the Watford half, and Horsman and Johnson were kept very busy indeed. Backs could not have played better, and several times when Williams was beaten Johnson hobbled up and averted disaster.

Early in the second half there appeared to be some improvement on the part of the home side, and once Poole got in a brilliant drive that seemed to be a certain goal, but the ball struck the post and rebounded. That was the best, and for a long time the only decent effort that came from Watford. The Town forwards and halves maintained

AN INCESSANT ATTACK.

but, try as they would, they could not get through. Williams made many fine saves, but, as was remarked to me afterwards, Watford had three goalkeepers, for more than once Williams and his backs were on the goal-line repelling shots. In the last ten minutes Watford strove hard to snatch a win, but they never gave Gibbon much trouble, and in the last few

seconds Luton attacked fiercely, and only good saves by Johnson and Williams enabled Watford to retire undefeated.

Mr. E. E. Gibbs is not a man to lavish praise indiscriminately, but after the game, however disappointed he might have been with the result, he went into the dressing room and complimented the Town players on their fine performance. It was a deserved tribute. Great as were the Watford backs, they were no better than Anderson and Till. It is hard to make a comparison of their merits, for while the Luton pair were men of keen vision and tricky feet, the home pair were strong and dashing. Besides, the respective middle lines differed immensely. Gibbon had almost a holiday, so smart and reliable were the Luton backs. And once more the pair again went through the game without a free kick of any description being given against them. Their tackling was keen and true, and their kicking clean and of beautiful length. The middle men again gave a fine display.

"THE KEYSTONE OF LUTON"

was a term applied by a visitor to Jennings, and more need not be said, because it happily hits off his wonderful work in all phases of the game. Those who talk of his lack of feeding ability had something to think about during this game.



J. Walker.

Walker was nearly always the master of his job, and when White's clumsiness was too much, Walker had such understanding with Anderson that Luton supporters got few flutters from that wing. On the other flank Millar kept a tight hand on Stephenson, and I doubt if the latter has ever had so few opportunities in a game. The nursing generally, however, left room for improvement.

and if anyone doubts that and points out the number of times the Town forwards had the ball, I would ask them to watch more closely the number of times that Anderson and Till do the feeding.

There was no forward on the field to surpass Butcher. He juggled with the ball so cleverly that Val. White and Toone must have found their work much like shadow-chasing. The St. Albans man is now right on top of his form, and he cannot have played better in the whole of his long experience. Hoten got any number of errands as a result, and again did remarkably well. The Town left wing is now as good as the right—quite an unusual experience. Hoar was

OFTEN SCINTILLATING.

and time after time he took the short, quick route for goal, and it was no fault of his that the match was not won. Green attended to him splendidly, and no one now regrets that the Town signed him. He was occasionally inclined to hold on a little too long, and to cramp Kerr, while his shooting was below what we have been led to expect, but I would rather see a man with the dash and skill that Green has shown this last month than the man Green was in the opening games. He will not always leave the field pointless. Kerr was again disappointing in the matter of shooting. Upon his speedy recovery of his prowess in front of goal depends a rapid climb of the League ladder. He showed nice understanding, and I should be the last to suggest that any change should be made simply because he has not maintained the success he obtained against Portsmouth, but I hope to see a little more enterprise from him. Perhaps we shall get it at New Cross next Saturday.

Williams was not so severely taxed as in the previous game, but he played finely in the second half, and with Horsman and Johnson made a grand defence. What influence has been at work with Horsman I cannot imagine, but he is more effective to-day than ever he was, and Luton supporters readily

PAID WARM COMPLIMENT

to this improvement. His judgment was fine throughout, his speed and power of recovery quite remarkable. For Horsman's general play I have always had admiration, and now that he has dropped the "rough stuff," I think he is as good a back as I have ever seen in Watford's colours. Johnson got more applause, but it was not because he was better. He was in the limelight chiefly because he happened to join in partnership with Williams during the hottest moments of the attack, and achieved much success in that role. He, too, is a fine back, and on this form there is no reason why Fred

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Gregory should not continue to hold a watching brief.

Watford were again lamentably weak at half. Strain played fine games against Luton last season, and unless he has deteriorated to a painful extent, I cannot imagine why he should not be in the side. There is nothing in the Watford team at present quite so good on Strain's form of last season. Val. White was toyed with by Butcher, and he was inclined to mar the game by fouls; Poole wandered too much when he went to half, and Toone was the best, although he was poor in feeling. Carter started well, and before injury sent him forward, he performed many neat bits of work in his own stylish fashion. The forwards failed because they lacked the necessary assistance from the men behind them. Head and shoulders above the others was Charles White, the oldest of the quintette. He was the one man that could initiate an attack with anything like a blend of craft and speed. Watford have no better forward than Charles. He is worth a tremendous lot yet. Munnery wanted to be a forward, but could not get enough of the ball. Poole was no better at forward than at half. Stephenson was inconspicuous, and Foxall was the runner-up to White for general usefulness.

After the game Mr. Crump said he had never officiated at two games that had given him more pleasure than his last two engagements, and I can well believe it.

There were 2,407 spectators who paid for admission, and the receipts were £618.