

EIGHT GOALS AT LUTON.

TOWN DEFENCE WOBBLER AGAINST SOUTHEND.

HOAR'S TWO PENALTY KICKS.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 4 goals
SOUTHEND UNITED ... 4 "

LUTON.—Shepherd; Anderson, Till; Walker, Foster, Millar; Hoar, Green, Kerr, P. Clarke, Hoten.

SOUTHEND.—Hall; Evans, Dreyer; Kay, Edwards, Slater; Johnson, Dobson, Goodwin, Davies, Middleton.

Referee—Mr. F. Todman, Croydon.

It was not a very inspiring wind-up to the old year. Neither was it an inspiration for the Cup-tie. I am not going to share the opinion of so many who declared that Shepherd was wholly to blame. I think that he might have prevented two of the goals, but there were earlier blunders than his that enabled Southend to score more goals at Luton than any visiting club since 1920. But it is not the first time that Southend have scored four goals at Luton. They did it in 1915, when they won by 4-3. On the general run of the game they could by no means urge that they should have won, for the Town had far more of the ball, were more often on the attack, and had the greater number of chances. The reason that Southend took a point away was because of

A GENERAL UNRELIABILITY in the Town defence. The forwards were none too good, but Southend, when they got going, made light of the task of beating through the home halves and backs, and had they been more efficient in front of goal they might have run up a record score against Luton Town on their own ground. Poor goalkeeping, backs disposed to wander from position, and half-backs that were as often out of place as in it, such were the reasons for the "Shrimpers" scoring four goals. How many times Goodwin and his extreme wingers had practically a clear field from the centre line it would be difficult to say, and frequently we saw Anderson or Till alone between Shepherd and three of the visiting forwards. The Town were cleverer individually, but they might have been a side picked up from seven or eight teams for all the combination there was—team combination—and none would have credited them, unless he knew it, with going through so many games without losing a goal.

To be perfectly frank, I think that

THE QUALITY MOST MISSED

was the personality of Jennings. We wanted a rallying force, and there was none. Anderson and Till tried it, Hoten, Kerr and Hoar tried it, but the forwards were in the wrong place, and the backs, when they had placed their forwards on the attack, were unplaced when the ball was returned up the field. I do not blame Foster. He was not at his best, but that I attribute to the fact that he was far from well, and he could not recover with the facility that characterises his play usually. It was a good thing for Goodwin, perhaps, that Foster was not thoroughly fit, or, I feel sure, the visiting centre-forward would have found his work much more difficult. But the most patent fault in the middle line was the lagging from position of the flank halves. Time after time they were tottering helplessly in the rear of the opposing wingers, and this was how the way was paved for Southend's goals. Millar remedied this fault to a great extent in the second half, so that the visitors' breakaway were fewer than in the first half.

I may be old-fashioned, but I have never yet been convinced that it pays to leave the outside winger to the full-back.

IT DOES NOT PAY

Luton, at any rate, and, if the same tactics are followed in the Cup-tie, I can see Rutherford and Dr. Paterson enjoying themselves immensely. Roe's success as a half-back was never pronounced until he tended the wing man and left Pat Tivrell to deal with the inside man, and those were the tactics that paid in the most successful Cup-ties the Town have played.

The secret of successful football teams is the opening out of the game, and there were occasions on Saturday when the only players that could be said to be in recognised position were Shepherd, Anderson, Hoar and Kerr.

The first goal came at the end of ten minutes' play, and the fourth ten minutes later. Hoar placed a corner kick right across goal, too far for the forwards to reach, but MILLAR cut in and hit the ball hard, true and low at a difficult angle, to score a beautiful goal—the first by a half-back this season. We seemed to be in clover then, for the Town were making rings round the visitors, but suddenly Southend got away, Middleton having a clear course on the left, and he dropped the ball!

PLUMP IN THE GOAL-MOUTH.

Till failed in a tackle, Shepherd came out and got the ball, but GOODWIN

robbed him and sent it into the net. Before we had got over the surprise, Middleton was off again with a clear course, and although he was temporarily held up, he got a corner. This was beaten out after a scuffle, but the ball went to DAVIES, and he tried a shot, which travelled past a crowd of players and took Shepherd completely by surprise as it entered the goal close to the post.

The Town made things hum round the Southend goal after this, and after several warm attacks had been beaten off in quick succession, Foster helped his left wing to a nice pass. Clarke gave to Hoten, and the winger dribbled cleverly before passing the ball into the middle for KERR to snap up and equalise in easy fashion. It was

PATTERN WORK IN GOAL-GETTING.

The Town had the better of the play to the interval, and several times came near scoring. Kerr once went through cleverly, and everybody had a shout on his tongue when the home centre's shot hit the lucky Hall on the foot and came out. Southend got the ball in the net again, but Middleton, who did it, was given offside. They got a legitimate goal just before the cross-over, however, but it was a most disappointing affair. Johnson got off on the right, Dobson in attendance. Foster collared the ball from the latter, but he dallied in getting it away, with the result that a corner kick was forced. This was placed well, but the ball was partially got away. It was returned again on the right wing, and JOHNSON centred beautifully into the goal-mouth. Shepherd appeared to have the ball in safe keeping, but, to the general consternation, he pulled it down over the line and the referee allowed a goal, although he seemed somewhat dubious about it. So the visitors crossed over with the lead.

The Town were not long in settling about recovering the lost ground, and after several warm attacks had been beaten off, Green was well in the danger zone when he was brought down by Dreyer. A penalty kick was awarded without hesitation, and although the visiting players urged an appeal to the linesman, the decision was confirmed. HOAR gave no chance to Hall to stop a fast, low drive. Immediately, however, Southend got away again, and more weak defensive play enabled Johnson to centre, and there was

TOO MUCH FINNIICKING

about by the Town defenders in front of goal, with the result that the visiting forwards got two or three chances, and eventually DAVIES, who was unmarked, sent in a high shot that had Shepherd well beaten, although it was not a difficult shot to stop, for it went right over the keeper's head. The Town players showed no loss of courage, and they looked capable of getting goals almost as they wished, so easily did they get through the visitors' defensive lines, but they often hesitated in front of goal, and it only wanted a hefty clearance by one of the visitors' backs to send their forwards away again on a dangerous expedition. The Town had the better of the exchanges, but these Southend raids were always fraught with peril, for there was a lack of stability about the Town defence that was displeasing to the spectators. Strong attacks were made by the Town, chiefly through the agency of Hoar and Hoten. Hall's goal had many narrow escapes, but it did not fall until another penalty came Luton's way. Hoten, who was very active indeed, tapped the ball into the middle, and Dreyer reached across and knocked it with his forearm. The linesman signalled promptly as a loud appeal for a penalty went up, and the referee pointed to the spot. Dreyer and his colleagues gathered round the official, who went over and spoke to the other linesman, and then came and ordered the kick to be taken. HOAR scored again with ease, and the scores were

LEVEL AGAIN.

Southend's goal had many escapes in the moments that followed, but nothing nearer than that which followed a characteristic effort by Kerr, who went half the length of the field, right into the goal-mouth, and then, just when a goal seemed an absolute certainty, he sent the ball a few inches wide. Had there been any other forward up, there must have been a score, for the ball only trickled just wide of the post.

So the game ended, a very unsatisfactory game from the Luton standpoint, for the individual merits of the players showed Luton as the faster and the cleverer side. Where the visitors did so much damage was in the watchfulness and promptness to snap up opportunities as they came along. Seldom did they fail to make ground once they were given the chance, and they did not do an inordinate amount of dribbling.

Dobson and Davies did the "fetching and carrying" for Goodwin and the wingers, and the latter swung the ball about whenever they were in danger of losing possession. It was a profitable policy, and they deserved all they got by reason of this excellent spirit.

They were not a brilliant side, but they were triers and opportunists. Hall kept goal well, but his backs were never very safe. Evans was the better. Edwards played finely at half, and his colleagues were industrious, Slater being a trifle

TOO EXUBERANT

at times. All the forwards played nice football. There was little to choose among them. Dobson was the cleverest, perhaps, but his mates were equally useful. Goodwin is still a very fine leader, but he was not particularly strong in front of goal.

Of the Town players, Shepherd made two or three good saves in the second half, but he was at fault with at least two of the goals, even allowing for the failures elsewhere. Till did not seem able to get going at all, and he was much below his average form, for he has never before played such an erratic game. Anderson seemed to be affected by the insecurity of the halves, but he was the best of the defenders, with Millar quite the best of the middle line, thanks to a considerable improvement in the second half. Foster's unfitness was most unfortunate for him, as his displays in the second eleven have made many feel that he should be in the first team. He frequently did good work, but he could not recover sharply. Walker neglected the opposing winger far too much, but there was one feature of his game that pleased, and was most useful—his co-operation with Green and Hoar. The three of them initiated many fine attacks, and Walker's passing was remarkably true. Percy Clarke did not show to great advantage in the first half, but after the interval he put in some pretty passes to Hoten, and the winger

REVELLED IN THE WORK.

Clarke is young enough to make a sterling player, for he has speed, courage and dash, and when he discovered that service to his partner was the paying game, he did it well. Hoten was about the best of the line, and there were times when his thrilling runs made us all wish that he were back in his old position at inside-left. Often he was fouled, but recovered well, and altogether his game was as good as any he has played. Hoar, considering that he came into the team unexpectedly, put up a fine show again. His only fault was a tendency to centre a little too far, but otherwise he was generally the master of the opposition. Green nursed him well, dribbling forcefully, and shooting fairly well, but he was often out of position. Kerr played better than in the last two or three games, and had distinctly hard lines in failing to win the game, for he made two or three thrilling runs that deserved goals.

The ground had been rolled, but it soon cut up, and this perhaps affected the play of the Town more than that of the visitors. The attendance was just under 7,000.