

ONLY ONE POINT.

Luton's Home Match With Merthyr.

ANOTHER DISAPPOINTING DISPLAY.

(By "CRUADER.")

LUTON TOWN 1

MERTHYR TOWN 1

LUTON. — Gibbon; Anderson, Till; Foster, Walker, Roe; Hoar, Green, Kerr, Butcher, Hoten.

MERTHYR. — Lindon; Smith, Ferrans; Callaghan, Sewell, Thomas; Thorne, Turner (H.), Turner (E.), Arblaster, Morgan.

Referee. — Mr. J. E. Head, West Bromwich.

There were barely six thousand spectators on the Town ground on Saturday, but I did not expect nearly that number, although the weather was so springlike, for I felt sure that the poor display against Newport would have a bad effect on the attendance. And the game on Saturday was not a whit better. It is amazing that with players as clever as we know the Town eleven to be, there should be such scrappy exhibitions as we have seen during the last four months. One of the first remarks made to me as we left the ground was, "It's a wonder how the spectators stand it." And I think it is a tribute to the spirit of loyalty in Luton that 6,000 should be found at a game upon which nothing more than two points hang, when the team is so disappointing week after week.

It is only since Christmas that the Town have fallen so badly, for if they had maintained the standard they showed between October and Christmas we should have been practically assured of promotion, but unless there is a return to that form we shall be fortunate to finish in the top half of the League table.

DRASTIC AMENDMENT

is needed, but opinions differ widely as to the best means to remedy the fault. The trouble is most manifest among the inside forwards, but I am not sure that is the seat of it. Many have grumbled and blamed the directors for changing the team, and many of us think that the inside forwards should have the chance of showing what they can do with Jennings behind them again. Before he got hurt at Christmas 13 matches were played without defeat, and 25 points taken out of 33. He restarted too soon, but is now well, I understand, and while Walker has played some good games, I still think that the personality of Jennings has been missed. It should not be inferred from the above that I am attributing deficiency of skill to Walker, but merely suggesting that as the team did so well with Jennings as pivot, the forwards should be

GIVEN OPPORTUNITY

to show what they can do with a reversion to the old order. That is due to them, and it is due to Jennings.

Actually the Town had the larger share of the play because of the strength of the middle line, for in all-round play they were a better line than Merthyr's, but for spotters I have not for a long time seen three more effective than the visitors. They seemed to scent the danger spots, and they attached themselves so thoroughly that a Luton forward deserved to succeed if he got through. While they were concentrating on defence they were not helping their forwards a great deal, but the Town halves

DID NOT SHINE

in this respect, and it was as often from the skimming kicks of Till and Anderson and the Town forwards as from the halves that the Town forwards got the ball.

Merthyr had to be content with raids for the most part, but their forwards showed better understanding whenever they got going, and they were quick to seize a chance to shoot at goal. It was this opportunism that gave them a lead at the interval. Anderson miskicked, and ARBLASTER seized and shot with unerring aim, Gibbon having no chance.

The Town had much more of the ball than the visitors in the first half, but this possession was more pronounced after the interval, but the finishing was still very poor. When the goal came it was from the foot of Butcher. Foster took a free kick from the touch-line 40 yards out, and dropped the ball well in the goal area.

IT SKIDDED

from Kerr's head to the foot of BUTCHER, who promptly kicked hard, and Lindon had not the slightest chance to save. Gibbon was then tested twice in quick succession, but made fine saves, and the Town were soon retaliating, but, try as they would, there was always something wrong at the finish. Perhaps the best effort was a fine burst by Kerr, but Lindon made a clever save.

There were indications of temper long before the end, and neither side was guiltless. Smith and Hoten were the principals in several scenes, but the worst

offender, I think, was Thomas, who deliberately fouled Hoar on half-a-dozen occasions. However, with three or four exceptions, the players

GAVE A CLEAN SHOW.

and it paid them to, for, judging by his actions, Mr. Head would have had no nonsense. Somebody facetiously remarked that he was the best player on the field, and I do not think there was a sharper intelligence. Here and there among the crowd there was a malcontent, but the average supporter was well satisfied with Mr. Head's control. The only suggestion of complaint that I could have made would have been that he should have allowed time for the several lengthy stoppages, especially in the second half, when Sewell's knee gave trouble. I should think that seven or eight minutes were lost by stoppages. Still, 30 minutes of Mr. Head is preferable to a day of some officials, and he was

THE BEST OFFICIAL

we have had this season, or shared that honour with Mr. Sambrook, who refereed the games with Plymouth.

In the visiting defence Lindon kept goal well as far as he was engaged. His backs were lusty kickers, and they never stood on ceremony. Smith was not so steady as Ferrans, but he rendered good service. Sewell was the pick of an industrious middle line. A shock-headed youth, he worked himself to a standstill, and usually he was alongside Kerr. So Thomas played leech to Hoar, and Callaghan did much fine work until he got tired in the second half. The forwards were bippy, and E. Turner was an active leader, well served and serving well the men on either side, but for

CONTROL AND INTELLIGENCE

I thought Arblaster was the cleverest of the inside forwards on view. The wingers were speedy and showed nice control.

Gibbon, although his half was usually clear, had as much difficult work as had Lindon, and his two aces in the second half were very fine. Anderson was not so safe as usual, and I still think that he is better at half back. Till made no mistake in a clever display, beyond giving us a few qualms when he dribbled too often. So smart was the footwork of both backs that I caught myself wondering how they would both shape in the forward line! Roe again excelled at half-back, his play being stamped with thoughtfulness and skill. Walker was not so good as in the previous three games, probably because he was

ANXIOUS TO SEE GOALS.

and he might have attempted a coup similar to that of the previous game had he been less unselfish. Foster's strength came in useful, but his feeding was not brilliant. The ball, in fact, was in the air more on Saturday than in any of the previous six games. Hoar was the best of the home forwards, but did not get enough opportunities. So far as building up attack was concerned Green improved the forward line, especially in the first half, but in the second half he was not so good. Hoten was only moderate in the first half, but in the last half-hour he was the foremost raider on the Town side, and with a little luck he might have won the match. Butcher dribbled well as usual, and he had as many shots at goal as any other player. Kerr got little chance to shine, for he was well watched again, and could make little impression against virile opposition. There will have to be changes if the team is to win at Merthyr next Saturday.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE.

ST. ALBANS CITY v. THE CASUALS.

"Sphinx" writes:—"One of the prettiest exhibitions of football on the Clarence Park ground this season, was that seen on Saturday between the City and The Casuals, for points in the Isthmian League. It was a striking contrast with the match on the previous Saturday, and the spectators evinced their enthusiasm in the struggle, which was devoid of any unpleasant episodes. There was not an intentional resort to questionable tactics throughout, and so an ideal display resulted. The ground, like the weather, was perfect, and both teams were in splendid form. Seldom have St. Albans given a more brilliant account of themselves in every department, but in spite of being in form, the issue was in doubt until the last fifteen minutes. In the first half there was a magnificent struggle for supremacy, the play being fast and well sustained. Obviously the Casuals were out to draw first blood and secure a lead

(Continued in next column).