

# FOOTBALL.

## LUTON'S VISIT TO READING

### Hat-trick by Home Player.

(By CRUSADER.)

It was worth the visit to Reading to see the burst of sunshine at three o'clock. We had come through a lot of rain, and arrived at the Berkshire town to find skies overcast, and a ground that, as expected, was heavy in parts. There was quite a strong muster of Luton directors, Messrs. Gibbs, Mouse, Pryor and Godfrey, as well as Mr. Chas. Green. No wonder the sun came out in strength. The programme told us that Harry Higginbotham had been an inspiration to the Reading side in their success at Charlton on Saturday, and that Harry Cockerill also played well. Both were in the team, and the Town fielded the side that lost at Swindon.

**READING.**—Duckworth; Eggo, McConnell; Wilson, Messer, Cockerill; Smith, Higginbotham, Fergusson, Braithwaite, Springell.

**LUTON.**—Brookes; Johnson, Graham; Mills, Walker, Millar; Hoar, Shankly, Kerr, Dennis, Brown.

Referee: Mr. A. L. Grinstead, East Ham.

Eggo won the toss, and the Town had to face the glaring sun and a stifling breeze. Reading at once made headway, but were repulsed, and Dennis prettily sent Brown away. The winger should have centred but he dallied and was robbed, and the "Biscuiteers" made progress, Brookes saving under the bar, and Fergusson lost a good chance when he shot over from close range. Hoar was going through merrily when badly fouled by McConnell, but the free kick was got away. Another dash by Reading was "nailed" by Graham and Millar, and then the Town by nice passing got down and Duckworth had to save. A corner was forced and this was well placed by Hoar. Dennis headed the ball forward, but Shankly put over the bar. The Town were playing well together, and the ball was kept in the home half for a long period. Then the referee had to stop the game for a few moments while he

#### REBUKED SPECTATORS

behind the home goal. Johnson cleverly held up the home left wing, and Eggo did the same for his side, while Wilson put in some strong tackling, in the course of which Dennis was injured and had to leave the field. While he was off Reading attacked hotly and forced a corner, from which Brookes punched away, but Mills was fortunate to get in the way of a hot drive from Messer, and a loud appeal for a penalty for "hands" was ignored. The "Biscuiteers" kept play in the Luton half for a little while, and when Dennis resumed and essayed to send Brown away the latter was wrongly pulled up for offside. Higginbotham made a flying dive to get at a centre from Cockerill, and then Hoar and Shankly mastered the opposition, and the former cut right across to Brown, who won a corner, which was well placed, but the ball was scrambled away. A decision against Mills enabled Higginbotham to win a corner, from which Messer shot over. There was

#### MUCH AMUSEMENT

when the Town right wing was jockeyed offside, and a corresponding indignation when Graham served Smith a similar trick. At the end of half an hour the Town were quite holding their own, although Higginbotham once went through and shot a foot wide from long range. A warm attack by Reading found Brookes in position for a header from Fergusson. A bit of "old soldier" by Higginbotham when he handled the ball down on the ground was not overlooked by the referee, but the Town could make no headway, passes going awry, and the home team pressing almost continuously. The Town right wing endeavoured to work an opening, but were expelled, and seven minutes before the interval Springell got away and centred. Higginbotham pushed the ball across to BRAITHWAITE, who shot without hesitation from fifteen yards range, and Brookes was beaten all the way. The Town halves were again showing signs of collapse, and Springell was allowed to go through entirely

#### ON HIS OWN.

He centred, and while the Town defence appealed for offside against Higginbotham the ball was snapped up by Fergusson, and but for the vigilance of Millar another goal would probably have accrued. He bowled over the attacker, and the ball went out. Hoar and Shankly made another raid, the former dodging several opponents to give Shankly a clever pass, but the latter shot wide. The interval came immediately afterwards with the score:

READING ..... 1 goal

LUTON TOWN ..... Nil

Immediately the game was restarted Reading made headway, and Brookes had to handle in the first minute. Then Graham and Johnson each checked dangerous raids, in which Springell was the leading spirit. The Town could not get on at all, and there was no concerted effort. The referee made a mistake when he gave a goal kick to Luton when Graham sent the ball behind, but he should have given a free kick against Smith. The Town got a footing in the home half after some time, but they showed no sort of passing, and whenever there was a chance they were given offside. Hoar did not get a touch of the ball for nearly ten minutes after the restart, and then Shankly took the ball and passed inside, but Higginbotham fell back and cleared. Twelve minutes after the restart BRAITHWAITE took a pass from Springell, and although he lost possession temporarily, he regained, and, shooting suddenly, he beat Brookes quite unexpectedly with

READING ..... 3 goals  
LUTON TOWN ..... Nil

### COMMENTS.

Again we had "a half-hour team," and again there was nothing whatever in the play to indicate such a margin at the finish. Reading have a better side than last season, much better, but they are little more than a "win at home, lose away" side. They were bigger and stronger than the Town, but the main reason for their success was the better understanding they had. Their defence was not impressive, though vigorous, and the middle men were all hard workers, with some degree of merit. Cockerill played quite a useful game, but Wilson was the best. Their forwards were fast and swung the ball about, and Higginbotham, who played a really sporting game, was a craftsman in the way he initiated attack.

Brookes had no chance with the third goal, but opinion was divided concerning the other two, which were registered by snap shots. He might have got the ball farther away in his clearances. Johnson and Graham again made a plucky resistance, but once more were overburdened. Graham had no superior on the field, although he did balloon a little, and he made valiant efforts to turn the tide. Johnson also did well until the last twenty minutes, when he got rather shaky. At half-back there was no difference from Saturday except that Millar played a little better, for his cold was not so bad. Hoar would have been the most dangerous forward could he have got the ball, but it seldom went his way. Dennis did splendid work until injured, and was a trier afterwards. The others were moderate, and there was no combination at all. A noticeable factor, however, was the manner in which the ground diverted the ball in odd ways, and two or three times the referee examined the ball.

What the directors will do for Saturday's game with Aberdare, I neither know nor dare to predict, but some step will have to be taken to find a winning team, unless we are to understand that it is sufficient to go through the season content to remain anywhere in the League. Injuries have accounted for a good deal, it is true, but not for all the trouble, and the fact to be faced is that the quality of the play is a long way below what we hoped for or expected. It will not surprise me in the least to see drastic changes for Saturday's game with Aberdare.