

BRILLIANT ALBION.

LUTON TOWN BEATEN AT BIRMINGHAM.

FOOTBALL OF THE BEST.

(By CRUSADER).

WEST BROMWICH ALBION 4 goals
LUTON TOWN Nil

WEST BROMWICH. — Ashmore; Smith, Perry; Magee, Reed, Richardson; Glidden, Carter, James, Wilson, Byers.

LUTON. — Brookes; Anderson, Graham; Mills, Neal, Millar; Mackey, Butcher, Tricker, Reid, Dennis.

Referee.—Mr. A. H. Kingscott, Long Eaton.

There was not a single supporter, and probably not a single player from Luton, who regretted the visit to West Bromwich, heavy as was the defeat sustained. Position alone would suggest that the Albion have the finest combination in the country. In their general play in League games is of like quality to that in this Cup-tie, the marvel is that they are ever beaten. After the game the Town players met and fraternised with Notts County players at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, and the First Division Club players were frankly surprised that Luton Town had got off so lightly. A week or two ago the Albion visited Nottingham and defeated the County by two goals clear, and one of the County players admitted on Saturday night that the Albion should have beaten them by about half-a-score. Certainly, I believe that had the Albion gone all out in the second half they might well have doubled their score, just as the Town might have had a couple. One or two of the home forwards, however, were disposed to play to the gallery, and the Town defenders fought so

RESOLUTELY AND DETERMINEDLY

that there was no spectacular goal in what is known as the Corinthian style. All the goals were obtained simply by accurate combination between two or more of the Albion forwards. The understanding between forwards and half-backs was the foundation of their success. There was no secret process or understanding. It was all so simple that none could fail to realise it. Well trained in the matter of speed and stamina, well taught in the importance of keeping the ball low, passing accurately, and thinking before parting with the ball, so that every player seemed to know who was in the best position to make progress. Brains, brains all the time beat handsomely a team of triers, for that is all the Town looked in comparison. In remarking that most of the Albion players are local products, and commending the Club for attention to

LOCAL FOOTBALL.

one has to bear in mind that Birmingham is a very large area from a sporting aspect—much larger than a city. Still, it is extraordinary that they have so many players from the immediate neighbourhood of West Bromwich. Then, again, comes the fact that the Albion Club throughout is controlled by men who have spent the greater part of their lives in attention to sport, both as business and pleasure. Few clubs have such a striking advantage in that matter. Several of the directors, as well as the trainers and groundsmen, are well versed in the game, and their knowledge and experience in the best of football has been passed on to these young men who are now making football history. Yet another factor is that almost the whole of the team have been associated with the Club and have played together and risen together in ability for three or four years. Further still, there is that greatest of all assets—freedom from financial worries, for when one bears in mind that the Villa, Birmingham and Coventry City were all playing at home and had attractive draws, and yet there were over 30,000 spectators at the Hawthorns, there is

PROOF ABSOLUTE

of the immeasurable advantage they have over clubs like Luton. Thirty-six players were named by the Albion Secretary at the end of December as being eligible and possible starters against the Town. So one might go on, not in the way of making excuses for defeat perhaps, so much as drawing attention to the difference between the two clubs in the matter of resources, and emphasising some aspects of administration which might be copied as far as possible.

There were four goals registered, and three of them came when little expected. Long before half-time, however, we had realised that it was only a matter of margin of success, for the Albion were superior in every department except, perhaps, at back, and as the Albion backs were only occasionally at full stretch, we do not know just how capable they might be in emergency.

THE FIRST GOAL

came two minutes from the start. The most polished player on the field, Carter, gave Glidden a delightful pass, and the winger swung the ball right in front for WILSON to take the ball ere it struck the ground, and with a beautifully placed gliding sort of shot send it into the net out of the reach of Brookes. The second goal came two minutes before the interval—what should have been two minutes, but accidents extended the time. Glidden made a brilliant run and placed the ball accurately in front for JAMES to spin sharply and hit the ball first time, and Brookes again had no chance to save. Some thought he had, but James had all the goal to shoot at, and was only a few yards away.

The third goal came immediately after the restart, and most of us in the Press-box agreed that the initiation of the movement was off-side. James had encroached about a yard

when he received a forward pass from Reed, and sent out to Byers. The latter made ground, and then centred right in front for JAMES to again hit the ball first time, and Brookes

AGAIN WAS HELPLESS

to avert the score. The fourth goal came 2 minutes after the resumption. Neal had robbed James and attempted a pass to Millar, but Carter nipped in, and slipped through to pass to JAMES, and the latter completed his hat-trick.

All the time between the goals, however, the Albion halves and forwards were playing masterly football, dribbling, passing, shooting, with an accuracy that never gave the Town defence much rest. When the Town forwards did get away, as they often did, they found the Albion defenders so much quicker on the ball that it was well-nigh impossible to get in a timed shot. Ashmore had to handle many times, but the nearest that he came to being beaten was a shot by Mills that would have scored had it been a few inches lower, for it was going right away from Ashmore at a great pace.

There were

A FEW SCRAMBLES

near the Albion goal, and Reid, Tricker and Dennis might each have scored with a little good fortune, but I think the only effect would have been to make the Albion go all out to get another goal or two in retaliation, and, after all, the margin was not nearly so big as most Luton people appeared to think it would be.

Carter was the finest player on view. Tall and well-proportioned, he got the ball under control, and was away with it all in one movement. His route was always direct, and he guided the ball among opponents with unerring accuracy, to finish with a perfect pass that enabled someone to increase the danger. Indeed, whenever the Albion got going there always seemed to be prospects of a goal. There was no jostling of each other, the forwards spread out, and every man did the duty that was assigned to him, and Carter's brilliance was accentuated thereby. Glidden was a grand winger, fast and hefty, and seldom did he place a ball wrongly in centreing. On the other wing, Wilson and Byers combined well, were fast and bustling, but not so smart as the right wing pair. James is a gem of a centre-forward. Alert, thrustful, with good control, a nice distributing pass to the wings, and a most deadly shot, for he hit the ball

HARD AND TRUE

from almost any position.

Magee was the star half-back, though the smallest player on the field. He had a score of tricks, was fast, and his footwork was wonderful. Richardson was nearly as good, and both were better than Reed, although that player did his work as pivot. The backs seemed to be the most unreliable part of the team, and one could imagine them being beaten often were they worked harder, but the middle men saved them a lot of work. Ashmore was never severely tested, and most of his handling came through his backs and halves, sending the ball back to him.

Brookes kept goal magnificently, and received an ovation at half-time. He saved shots from close range and from long range. His fielding was clever, and twice he got at terrific shots when it seemed impossible to avert a goal. Anderson and Graham stood up to a gruelling task, and kicked and tackled well. They have never done so much running about in any previous game, and, all things considered, they did very well indeed. The halves were equally valiant. Millar had the toughest job, and he never flinched or shirked, but he would be the first to own that he had never faced such an elusive pair as Glidden and Carter, and he had

NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF

in seeing them so successful. Mills was the best half we had by reason of his experience. He controlled the ball well, was swift in his tackling, and recovered well. Neal made a sturdy showing, and the praise he received for his pluck and perseverance was well deserved. Just before the change of ends he got a tremendous blow on the head with the ball driven in from a free kick, and the wound over his eye sustained the previous week was re-opened. He was dazed at half-time, but he came on again to play as hard as ever. The forwards moved well at the beginning, because the ground looked hard, but after a few minutes it was very greasy on top, and control was extremely difficult. Tricker would have done better had the ground been harder, but he did enough to show that his

CHIEF DEFICIENCY

is lack of experience. He made some nice touches to the wings, and one or two spurts on his own, and when he has had a little regular training he should be well entitled to the leadership of the first team. Butcher was handicapped by the sticky nature of the ground, but he fed Mackey smartly, and the latter got across several dangerous centres. Reid was again too slow in taking his shots, although in the second half he improved in the matter of helping Dennis, and the latter responded as bravely as ever. The Albion experts were agreed that Dennis was the best forward on the side.

The Town were defeated, but not disgraced,

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for they all did their utmost, and never slackened in face of a hopeless task. The solace to the Club comes in the share of the gate receipts. The exact amount to be received is not yet known, for there are the entertainment tax and other expenses to be deducted. There were 30,287 paid for admission, and the receipts amounted to £1,772 10s. There were probably a couple of hundred supporters from Luton.