

EARNED FULL BONUS.

LUTON'S FIRST WIN IN FOUR MONTHS.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC DEFEATED ON MUD PATCH.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 1 goal
CHARLTON ATHLETIC Nil
LUTON.—Brookes; Anderson, Till; Mills, Jennings, Millar; Thirlaway, Shankly, Kerr, Reid, Dennis.

CHARLTON.—Preedy; Smith (N.), Herod; Purdy, G. H. Arncliffe, Steele; Allen, F. Traylor, Goodman, Cox, Smith (S.).

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

For the first time Mr. J. E. Head got into trouble with Luton supporters on Saturday. He got the usual cordial reception, and there was much satisfaction when he stepped through the mud to open the game. Before long, however, some of us began to wonder what had happened to him since he was last at Luton, for quite a number of offences were unnoticed. Things did not improve, and eventually Mr. Head took a step which he regretted, I am sure, but which was justified. However natural it may be for spectators to express disapproval with players or officials, they are not entitled to use

ABUSIVE LANGUAGE.

That was why Mr. Head called the attention of the Town officials to the behaviour of some of the crowd at the Oak-road end. The criticism he did not mind, but the language in which it was couched was the reason for the complaint.

In his general handling of the game Mr. Head was as good as ever, as witness his off-side decisions, and on that score there was little room for complaint, but I am bound to say that I have never seen him so lenient. Possibly he made more than usual allowance for the conditions, and he certainly did not receive very strong support from his linesmen, especially in the second half, when the sun was in his eyes on two or three occasions when offences were committed, and notably when a Charlton defender palpably handled in the penalty area. That he penalised the visitors frequently is proved by the statement of a stand spectator, who told me after the game that for foul play alone Charlton were penalised no fewer than 28 times. I can verify that in part, because in the opening half-hour of the second half I kept

A RECORD

of such offences, and mine said that the whistle pulled up Charlton 11 times to Luton three. Offside and "hands" were excluded. Personally, I am not going to alter my opinion of Mr. Head, endorsed by Mr. Green when he spoke to the crowd, that Mr. Head is one of the best referees one can have, but I prefer his better self, although he may then be styled a martinet. I only wish every referee were as capable as he is at his best.

And now we may shake hands on having seen the Town win once more. Four months is a long time, and, allowing for the enormous amount of ill-luck they have had, they should have succeeded in many games ere this. That they merited their victory none can doubt, and, in view of the awful state of the ground, I think even those supporters who are opposed on principle to the bonus, would hardly begrudge it on this occasion. There can be little doubt that

THE RUMOURS

that the match would not be played owing to the state of the ground kept many spectators away, and it is probable that many grounds have been declared unfit when the conditions were not so bad, but the fact that the match was played to a finish was sufficient warrant for playing it, and postponements are getting to such a pitch now that there will be serious danger of overcrowding of fixtures at the end of the season. Perhaps ere long there will have to be some ruling by the F.A. to the effect that players must pass an examination in swimming and diving before taking part in a game, if we continue to have weather such as during the last month. The police game on Wednesday made matters worse than they would have been, perhaps, but in any event the ground would have been in a dreadful state. Old players told me that they had never seen it worse, and certainly I have not.

After the foregoing one cannot say it was a wholly clean game, either from the point of view of soiled clothes or improper play, but tempers were never frayed, and the players were disposed to forgive more than were the spectators. The Town

WON ON MERIT.

and chiefly because they adapted themselves better to the conditions. Charlton held their own for about half-an-hour, and only two very fine saves by Brookes prevented them scoring. At the other end, Preedy also made some splendid saves in this period, but thereafter there was a big difference between the teams, and the Town enjoyed the advantage. Especially noticeable was their superiority in the second half, and only the brilliance of Preedy kept down the score. Time after time he saved when all his fellows had been overcome, and he won strong praise by his coolness and cleverness in tense circumstances.

The only goal was scored by REID four minutes after the interval, and he deserved high praise for the way he seized and fructified a chance. There had been three offences against the visitors in the opening stages of the second half, and a fourth came when their left-winger fouled Mills. Anderson took the kick and lifted the ball over the ruck. Reid was alert, and as he saw the ball sail over the heads of attackers and defenders, he rushed past the back, snapped up the ball,

PLOUGHED THROUGH

20 yards of slush, and wound up with a fast shot that struck the base of the post and

skidded like a flash into the net, Preedy being helpless to avert a score. Immediately afterwards the Welshman had hard luck, for he again got through in similar fashion, and as Preedy advanced he lofted the ball beautifully over the keeper's head into the net. Unfortunately the whistle had gone for offside against Kerr, although the latter was walking away and not attempting interference with the play.

There were many subsequent attacks and any number of flag-kicks for the Town, while all the forwards banged away at goal, and once Thirlaway appeared to have a gilt-edged chance, but he could not get his feet out of the mud quickly enough. Charlton made one other determined effort, but without success, and the game ended as stated.

Only in three instances did I think the Athletic equal to the Town in ability—the wingers and the goalkeeper. Preedy saved them from something like rout; and Allen and S. Smith played cleverly when they were given a chance.

IN OTHER RESPECTS

I think the Town were better. Brookes had not much to do, and was always safe. Anderson and Till did not kick so heavily as the Charlton pair, but for tackling and placing they were much better. Neither missed a kick, and they played so well behind a spanking half-back line that Charlton rarely got dangerous after the first half-hour. Jennings got a special cheer at the end of the game, and deserved it. He blotted up the mud, but blotted out the visiting inside forwards in the second half, and he was on his best form in spite of a crash that spoiled his face and his comfort very early on. Mills was

IN THE WARS

a good deal, too, but he kept going, and played finely throughout, while Millar, after early recognition of the nippliness of Allen, kept that lively little fellow very much in subjection. The feeding of the forwards was better, too, and the result was reflected in consistent attack. All the line played well, and Reid has surely earned his title to a place in the first team now. He did remarkably well. So did Kerr, and the pace the latter got up in the mud at times was wonderful. A goal would do the centre-forward a heap of good. Shankly got back to his best again, and had hard lines on several occasions. Dennis again proved a strong left-winger, and was always doing good work when he could get the ball, while Thirlaway improved on his first game because he got more of the ball. He pleased everybody, and should now make thoroughly good his position before the end of the season.

There were 5,000 spectators.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON RESERVES' HEAVY DEFEAT.

Northampton Score Four Goals.

(By "THE TANNER").

NORTHAMPTON RESERVES 4 goals
LUTON TOWN RESERVES Nil

NORTHAMPTON.—Hammond; Johnson, Needham, Chapman, Wood, Sheppard; Farman, Cook, Buckley, Molloy, George.

LUTON.—Orr; Spacey, Graham; Davies, Walker, Neal; Wenle, Butcher, Keen, Roe, Brown.

Referee: Mr. E. Pinckston, Birmingham.

Luton Reserves' visit brought about 1,500 spectators to the County ground, Northampton. The pitch was in a muddy state, and it was seen at once when the teams turned out that the home-side had the advantage in physique. Luton were called upon to defend immediately, but the ball was got away by Graham, and Butcher brought play into the home quarters, but Hammond ran out. He sent the ball on to Needham, but it came back direct and the goalkeeper cleared as the Luton forwards closed in. The "Cobblers" returned to the attack, and won two corners, while Orr made a grand save from Farman. Luton made a spurt on the right, and Butcher was hurt in a collision and had to leave the field. The home team pressed hotly, Molloy being prominent. Wood broke up an attack by Luton and swung the ball out to the left. George rounded Spacey and muddled. Orr came out to meet the centre, but could not get the ball away, and COOK lobbed it into the net. The "Cobblers" continued to have the better of the exchanges, and Cook and Molloy went close with good efforts. Butcher's return, although he was obviously in pain, helped Luton to get in two or three hot attacks, but Hammond was not severely tried, the state of the ground preventing the forwards shooting. Keen made a forceful attempt, but Needham just managed to get the ball away, while Roe and Brown gave Chapman and Johnson a lot of anxiety. Interval:—

NORTHAMPTON RES. 1
LUTON RES. 0

The home team had Orr engaged as soon as the game was re-started, and he made splendid saves from Cook and Wood. Then Luton had a turn, and Hammond was tested by Keen, while Walker shot wide. Wenle got across a nice centre, but Johnson got the ball away, and the "Cobblers" attacked hotly. George made a capital effort and all the inside forwards missed an easy chance, but Farman returned the ball, and Wood rushed up and headed into the net. Northampton were playing strongly, and Luton could make little headway. Cook drove in a great shot, but Orr saved. A raid by the Luton forwards found Hammond safe, and COOK got the reward of a clever display when he tricked two opponents and gave Orr no chance. The home team maintained the attack, and a penalty kick for "hands" was converted by WOOD, and the result was as above stated.