

UP THE TABLE.

LUTON TOWN WIN AGAIN.

READING THE VICTIMS.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 1 goal
READING nil.

LUTON: Brookes; Anderson, Till; Walker, Jennings, Millar; Thirlaway, Shankly, Kerr, Reid, Dennis.

READING: Duckworth; Eggo, McConnell; Wilson, Messer, Evans; Smith, Braithwaite, Ferguson, Davey, Springell.

Referee.—Mr. H. E. Gray, Forest Gate.

There were real feelings of relief when the final whistle recorded that the Town had earned the two points. For the time being the position on the table is quite respectable, and we should reach Easter without any serious lapse. It will be the holiday programme, I think, that will decide the security or otherwise of the Town from the danger of the two bottom positions. Brentford and Merthyr appear to be the ill-fated pair to seek re-election, and as the Town meet Brentford at Easter, that should be the decisive period.

The Town just about deserved their success over Reading, but there was not a great deal in it. From the scientific aspect the Town were the better side, but the conditions favoured the

BURLY BISCUITEERS,

and they seemed to become more dangerous as the game grew older. A good start was made, play travelling two lengths of the field, and then the only goal came. Anderson came forward, ostensibly to throw the visiting forwards offside, but the ball came straight back to him, and he volleyed up the field. Kerr dodged Messer and gave to Shankly, who forged ahead. Then McConnell and Evans tried to sandwich him, but he touched the ball to Thirlaway, and the latter dropped it well in front of goal. Eggo was anxious to see that Kerr did not get it, and the ball came over both their heads to REID, who headed into the net. Duckworth was taken by surprise, and did not seem to attempt a save.

From that point the visitors

SHOWED IMPROVEMENT,

and while the Town had rather more of the ball, the rapid rushes of Reading were fraught with danger. The Town backs made one or two mistakes, but the halves were on the alert, and all three showed excellent recovery, and Brookes was seldom troubled except from long range. The Town, however, came nearer to scoring, and there were several good opportunities close in, but they were just a pace too slow, and nearing the interval the Town defenders were glad of assistance from the inside forwards to help expel the persistent attacks of the "Biscuiteers." So the interval came with the score:—

LUTON TOWN 1 goal.
READING nil.

The second half was not very different from the first. The Town had the advantage of the little breeze, and had more of the play for a considerable time, and Duckworth had a few stiff handfuls, while his goal had several narrow shaves. Good efforts were made individually and collectively by the Town forwards, but that little bit of quick finish was still missing. At the other end the raids of the visitors were always dangerous, because they were apt to beat the Town backs by sheer impetus and weight, and there were one or two anxious moments for Brookes. On the whole, however, the Town had the more chances, and would have won by a more pronounced margin had they finished better.

There were

FEW MARRING INCIDENTS,

but Mr. Gray did not start too well, and the crowd became annoyed, especially when he tried to order Reid to bring back the ball when he kicked it after being given offside. There was nothing out of place about Reid's action, as far as I could see. I thought he was kicking it to Eggo, and the latter failed to get it. If not, then he was simply preventing Eggo stealing a march on the Town defence by taking a free kick before they were in position. This is a point which needs to be settled. When a free kick is awarded, and the referee whistles for it to be taken almost within the same breath that he signalled the offence, has a defending player justification for preventing the quick taking of the kick? I confess that I think he is. I will not say to the extent of kicking the ball away deliberately after it has been placed for the free kick, or even to lunge it out of range immediately the whistle has gone. I think, however, that if a player wishes to take advantage of a decision by taking the kick before opponents generally have fully grasped the situation, then there is nothing improper about one of those opponents getting so close to the ball as reasonably to delay the taking of the free kick.

MR. GRAY DID BETTER

as the game wore on, and with his general refereeing few would find fault. His decisions were given quickly, and usually endorsed by the linesmen if there were any doubt.

The Town deserved their win; man for man they had the balance, and in football without bumps they would have won by a big margin on points for skill basis. The defence was fairly sound, and such mistakes as there were could be forgiven owing to the nature of the ground. Brookes had several warm shots to deal with, and was safe. Once he let the ball drop after stopping a drive, but he retrieved quickly and got the ball away. Anderson and Till were more polished than the visiting pair,

and the only drawback was that they had not the weight to resist some of

THE ROBUST RUSHES.

All the middle men played well. On two occasions Walker lacked harmony with Anderson, and once there was serious danger for the Town in consequence. Generally, however, he was too good for the Reading left wing, and played more like the Walker of 1922. Millar had the hotter wing to face, and he realised the necessity of a tight rein on Smith, who got few chances without interference. Jennings again was in fine form, and worked with such tremendous energy that Ferguson scarcely had a shot at goal.

The forwards again were more attractive in midfield than in front of goal. They passed well, especially the right wing, and are now better together. I liked Reid, for while he was sometimes out of place and slow in getting off the mark, he worked hard, and he took the shortest route for goal. Shankly plied Thirlaway with many capital passes, and the winger responded finely. Shankly might have done a bit more for Kerr, and Thirlaway was pulled up several times for encroaching, but they were the best wing on view. Dennis and Reid were more self-reliant, but both of them did good work as a wing, and Kerr was an enthusiastic leader, still lacking a little good fortune.

For the visitors, Duckworth was safe, Eggo the more reliable back, and Messer the best half on view, while Smith and Braithwaite were the pick of the forwards.

There were 5,000 spectators.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

RESERVES DOWN AT COVENTRY.

(By "THE GOVE.")

COVENTRY CIT YRES. 2 goals
LUTON TOWN RES. 0

COVENTRY.—Bosworth; Winship; Campling; Allen, MacLachlan, Ballantyne; Deeming, Morris, Wood, Dando, Tweddle.

LUTON.—Orr; Meekins, Graham; Davis, Neal, Roe; Mackey, Butcher, Keen, Gunnell, Brown.

Referee.—Mr. P. W. Bayan, Willenhall.

The visitors soon created the impression of being a well-balanced team, and were first to exhibit signs of real marksmanship, good shots being sent in by Mackey, Butcher, and Gunnell. Coventry were first to score, however, thirty-five minutes from the start, WOOD getting round Graham and putting in hard with his left foot. Luton had a fair share of the attack up to the interval, but were unable to draw level. Luton exerted a good deal of pressure after resuming, and it was fortunate for the home team that Campling had dropped back into goal, for he cleared after the custodian had run out and been beaten by Butcher. Thirteen minutes from the cross-over MORRIS screwed through a centre from the right wing and strengthened Coventry's lead. Gunnell looked a likely scorer during a Luton raid, only to finish up by hitting one of the posts, and later Keen was well held when forcing his way through. Luton kept pegging away without success right up to the finish, and had more of the game than the score indicates.

The Luton forwards were hardly fast enough to break through the sound defence of the home backs. Brown made more ground than anyone in the front line, only to run up against a strong tackler in Winship. Gunnell and Butcher were too closely watched by the opposing half-backs to make much headway, or carry on openings made by Keen, who was a hard-working centre-forward. Mackey, who was renewing acquaintance with old comrades, made some nice runs and used his left foot cleverly, and once put in a clever shot from a difficult angle. Of the half-backs, Neal was the outstanding exponent, his defensive work being extremely valuable, while he did not hesitate to shoot when within range. Roe had the strongest Coventry wing against him, the task of Davis being comparatively easy. Meekins and Graham at back stood up gallantly against the rushing character of the home attack, and went for the ball with great determination. Orr had no chance with the shots that beat him, and kept down the scoring with some smart saving. Coventry had just that extra turn of speed that led to success.

BEDFORD SPORTS NOTES.

(Continued from column 4.)

Lightweight.—After a good fight Brumwell beat Bevan iii.

Welter weight.—Aitken beat Jesty in the final.

Middle weights.—Bevan ii. beat Allen in the final.

Bevan i. had a walk-over in the heavy weight competition, having no challenger.

Most of the finalists in these weights represented the School in the inter-School tournament between Bedford School, Eton College, Haileybury College, and Dulwich, at Dulwich, on Saturday.

In connection with the above, Bedford School won the boxing, being successful in five events out of seven, and were second in the "Gym" display. The School were also first in sabres, and second in the fells.

ACCOTT SCHOOLS LEAGUE.

Eaton Bray 5, Edlesborough 1.

NORTH WERTS LEAGUE.

Welwyn Res. 0, Kimpton 1.