

# HOLIDAY FOOTBALL.

## LUTON TOWN'S BUSY EASTER.

### THREE POINTS FROM THREE GAMES.

(By "CRUSADER.")

At Brentford on Good Friday:—

BRENTFORD .....

LUTON TOWN .....

BRENTFORD.—Young (W.); Kell, Steel; R. Rowe, Graham, Walton; Garnish, Lane, Allen, Parker, Young (H.).

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

Referee.—Mr. A. J. Caseley, Wolverhampton.

At Luton on Saturday:—

LUTON TOWN .....

BRISTOL ROVERS .....

LUTON as above.

BRISTOL ROVERS.—Whatley; Armitage, Gibbs, Daws, Wragge, Thomson; Charlesworth, Phillips, Whatmore, Morgan, Lofthouse.

Referee.—Mr. F. Todman, Croydon.

At Luton on Easter Monday:—

LUTON TOWN .....

BRENTFORD .....

LUTON as above.

BRENTFORD.—Young (W.); Kell, Steel; R. Rowe, Graham, Walton; Garnish, Lane, Allen, Parker, Young (H.).

Referee.—Mr. A. B. Caseley, Wolverhampton.

#### LOSS.

Now that Easter is over the supporters of Luton Town will be glad when the season reaches its end, for the hope of something special during Eastertide did not happen, and with three points out of a possible six, two of the games being at home, is by no means an impressive performance. After four consecutive games without the loss of a goal, and seven points of a possible eight, it was hoped that the visit to Brentford on Good Friday would bring another brace of points. Alas, from the start of the struggle Brentford were winners, and with three goals up at the interval, they never looked like losing. The Town defence was very much off colour, Brookes excepted, but the whole of the team found headway difficult, and it was seldom that they got near Young (W.) in the first half. In five minutes ALLEN rushed the Town backs and scored, and eight minutes later LANE got the second goal by shooting past Brookes from a very narrow angle close in. At the end of half an hour ALLEN again forced his way through and scored a third goal, and Brentford had then, to all intents and purposes, won the game.

The second half was very much more in favour of the Town, and they should have scored on several occasions, but they let chances go through indifferent shooting and slowness in front of goal, and they were well beaten at the end.

#### DRAW.

On Saturday against Bristol Rovers at Luton one could hardly credit that the Town players were the same as on the previous day, for they overwhelmed the Rovers, and for more than three parts of the game were peppering away at the Rovers' goal, but, try as they would, they could not take toll of the chances that came their way. Whatley, the Rovers' custodian, gave a wonderful display of goalkeeping, and he, more than any six men on the Rovers' side, was responsible for a point going back to Bristol. Some of his saves were marvellous; his intuition was never at fault, and he was as safe as the Bank of England with any shot that he could see. The Rovers, in spite of the severe dressing down they had on the run of the game, were always on the watch for a stray chance, and it came just before the interval, after Luton had done all the pressing. Anderson erred in not getting the ball away immediately; he had cleverly beaten Lofthouse, and when he slipped Lofthouse had a simple task to slip the ball across goal for Whatmore to shoot. Brookes saved splendidly, but knocked the ball against the post, and WHATMORE recovered to shoot into the net. The Town swept the Rovers back into their own goal-area time after time in the early part of the second half, and DENNIS headed a capital goal from Thirlaway's flag-kick. Thence it seemed to be a question of time only before the Town collected a lot of goals, but there was not time enough, and with brilliant goalkeeping by Whatley, the end came with the scores level.

In the home game with Brentford on Easter Monday the Town managed to win, and they deserved to do so, as far as the general run of the play was concerned, for they were the better side. Nevertheless the "Bets" put up a robust game, and it was noteworthy that they scored in the first minute, and Luton scored in the very last — indeed, with the last kick of the game. There was too much of the rough house about the game to keep it thoroughly enjoyable, and the visitors used their advantage in this respect without compunction. Brentford got through and scored through GARNISH in the first minute of the game.

The Town then settled down and should have scored on many occasions, but the shooting was wretched. Eventually Walton handled in the penalty-area and DENNIS scored with an unstoppable shot from the spot. Shortly afterwards SHANKLEY got a fine goal with a shot from 20 yards, the ball glancing off the post. With the last kick of the game DENNIS again converted a penalty-kick given against Walton for tripping Reid, who was right through.

The Town fielded the same team as during March, and by Monday night the same eleven had played in nine consecutive games, resulting as under:—

| W | L | D | F  | A | P  |
|---|---|---|----|---|----|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 13 | 9 | 10 |

This is certainly an improvement, but it is not good enough for Luton supporters, who are not content with two halfpennies for a penny. Moreover, it is not a true reflex of the displays given by the team as a whole, for with the exception of the very poor game at Brentford on Good Friday, they have had a lot the better of most of the games, and the main reason they have not taken 15 points out of the possible 18 has been the bad finishing of the inside forwards. Spectators are often apt to condemn a whole team for the inefficiency of the few, and while quite aware that the team could be improved in other positions, I am sure that with better marksmanship the club would be figuring in a far better position than it is at the moment.

Marksmanship and enthusiasm of themselves do not make a perfect attack, but in most of the games the forwards have played far

#### BETTER THAN RESULTS

would indicate. It was galling on Saturday and Monday to see the wretched finishing to strong and sometimes very clever combination by the forwards—more especially on Saturday, and had they been able to finish off their work as well as it deserved they would have put their goal average on the right side. In the match at Brentford in the second half they had enough chances to have drawn level, and again on Monday they should have doubled that score without any penalty kicks. Kerr, who was our leading marksman last year, seems to have lost confidence, and where we used to see quick-firing from anywhere within 20 yards' range, now he seldom gets in a shot. In some games his leadership, apart from his shooting, has been very good indeed; in others a long way below average. He has received small encouragement from the crowd. There are always round the rails a considerable number whose only experience of the sport has been with the "bawl"—spelt with a w. They think that every round object runs true, without "side." They would soon be taught otherwise if they were given the opportunity. However correct an aim, unless the ball is running true it is always possible for it to go

#### WIDE OF THE MARK

unless one cannot miss. It is Kerr's misfortune that he has missed all sorts, but the crowd has not been of much assistance. Reid and Shankly have not been consistent. The former has shown great improvement, and but for a slight but annoying affliction he would give few qualms as to that position, for he is a young and enthusiastic worker, and shares with Dennis the honour of being the best marksman. Shankly has been "in-and-out," but is doing well for Thirlaway, who has done some good work without giving pause to the International Selection Committee. He has earned his place in the side. Dennis has been the most effective forward, and has done really fine service.

In the middle line the most surprising feature has been the improvement of Walker. Had he been content to fit himself for the flank position a couple of years ago it is not improbable that he would never have been out of the side, but his leaning towards the pivotal position apparently weighed too much with him. I do not want to go into any unpleasant details, but none is better pleased than I that he has in the last nine games showed ability to settle down at right-half, and in the last half dozen games he has played magnificently. At Brentford on Good Friday he was the

#### ONE BRIGHT SPOT

in defence, and on Saturday and Monday he proved more than equal to the task allotted, and did great work both in attack and defence. Millar had an off day on Friday, as did Jennings, but in the other

games they have played exceptionally well, and on the present form the line is good enough for most opponents.

In the defence Anderson and Till had a bad first half at Brentford, but they have done well in other games. If football pure and simple were played Anderson and Till would vie with any pair of backs in the League, but they have been at a disadvantage in the matter of height and weight. In the Brentford games this was most apparent, and the number of fouls that were committed upon them was out of all proportion to the number that were recognised by the referee. For kicking and tackling Anderson and Till are a splendid pair, the only drawbacks being a tendency to hang on too long, and the need for a better understanding between Anderson and Brookes. The Town goalkeeper has done very well, but he has not had as much to do as goalkeepers in opposition.

The "gate" on Saturday was upwards of 7,000; not enough to run a first-class side. The "gate" on Monday was only about 6,000, rain undoubtedly affecting the attendance.