

THE KICK-OFF.

LUTON TOWN'S OPENING MATCHES.

Stirring Game at Home.

By Crusader.

At Merthyr on Saturday:—

MERTHYR TOWN 2 goals
LUTON TOWN 1 goal

MERTHYR.—Brookes; Findlay, Ferrans; Woodward, Hodnett, Clarke; Cruickshank, McGovern, Rumney, Arblaster, Abrahams.

LUTON.—Mingay; Anderson, Till; Walker, Jennings, Millar; Miller, Thompson, Thompson, Reid, Dennis.

Referee: Mr. E. Pinckston, Birmingham.

At Luton on Monday:—

LUTON TOWN 4 goals
BOURNEMOUTH & BOSCH 1 goal

LUTON.—Mingay; Anderson, Graham; Walker, Jennings, Millar; Miller, Shankly, Thompson, Reid, Dennis.

BOURNEMOUTH.—Wilson; Saxton, Collin; Butt, Smith, Leitch; Clifford, Roberts, Eyre, Bliss, Maidment.

Referee: Captain Prince-Cox, Barnes.

Few people, I venture to think, realise to the full extent the difference the new offside rule is to make in football. It is going to revolutionise the game. "Football is now a young man's game," was the expression used by an old player on Monday night, and I am sure that everybody who saw the game on the Town ground will agree that this is a neat description. There will be much less of artistry and pattern weaving; every forward will have to be in a hurry, and backs and half-backs even more so, for the team that can carve the quickest and shortest route to goal will be most successful, always provided that team is able to stay, for stamina will play a big part in results.

Luton Town have made A MODERATE OPENING

If the strength of the opposition is to be judged upon last season's positions, and on Saturday night there were many supporters inclined to despondency because defeat had been the portion at Merthyr. No account was taken of the possibilities of Merthyr having improved their team, and in view of the fact that the guests for Monday had opened with a fine win over Swindon, there were gloomy faces among the crowd when the teams turned out. Needless to say, the result effectually allayed fear of a worse season than last, although none would care to tip the Town as a promotion side on this one display.

At Merthyr the team began well, and our Welsh correspondent says that there was

NOT A GOAL DIFFERENCE

between the sides. Had Luton maintained the dash with which they opened the game they would have won, but they appeared to lose heart to some extent when the home team had equalised REID'S goal, which came after 15 minutes' play. RUMNEY was the man to head the equaliser just before the interval, and CRUICKSHANK got the winning goal for Merthyr a few minutes before the end, after Mingay had made a fine save, but was unable to get the ball far away.

"Luton's play was disappointing after the early stages," he continues. Mingay was not to blame in any way for the defeat, but the backs, after starting with confidence, allowed the speedy Merthyr forwards to overrun them, and with the inside men of the attack

SHOWING MORE METTLE

than we have been accustomed to at Merthyr for a long time, it was quite on the cards that the spoils would remain in the Welsh town. The Luton halves were strong, but Jennings' robust methods, once so much to the liking of the local crowd, did not please them now. However, he played a courageous game all the time, and without nursing his men so well as Millar, he certainly gave the wing men the long passes that are going to be useful under the new rule regarding offside. Walker was a good check, and he gave Abrahams very little room to work, but Arblaster was often too smart for him.

The Luton FORWARDS WERE STREAKY.

Miller was exceedingly fast, but he did not receive the attention and help he required. N. Thomson was slow and hesitating, and this affected both his partner and the leader, J. Thompson. The latter made several strong individual efforts lying well up the field, and but for the vigilance of Ferrans he might have won the game for Luton. Reid played very well, and he showed Merthyr that they had lost a good player through not watching local talent. He was the best of the inside forwards for Luton. Dennis did a few good things, but he missed one or two chances.

For Merthyr Brookes made a few good saves, but he did not inspire confidence. Ferrans was the better back, and the halves were a lot of tryers, with Woodward as good as any half-back on the field. In the forward line Cruickshank played splendidly, and Arblaster was the cleverest of the inside men.

AT LUTON.

When the above report arrived on Monday morning it came as no surprise that two changes were made in the eleven to represent Luton against Bournemouth on Monday night. There were 8,000 spectators present before the game had been long in progress, and if every man has spoken his mind about the game then there should be well over 12,000 present when Newport line up on Saturday.

The visitors were very confident when they stepped on to the field, but within a minute they had received a big shock, for a free kick was given against one of their defenders for a foul on Miller, while trying to force the Town winger over the goal-line just on the edge of the penalty area. When the players positioned for the free-kick, Miller noted SHANKLY unmarked in direct line, and he quickly pushed the ball in line to the Scot, who crashed it

INTO THE NET FIRST TIME.

and thus gave Luton the lead. There was a tremendous yell from the crowd, but the echoes had not died away before there was another fierce cry, with a note of alarm in it, for the visitors went straight down, thanks to clever work by Smith, and EYRE notched the equaliser with a quick ground shot that was well away from the reach of Mingay. In the following play the visitors showed more speed and better method than the Town, and there were many who would have tipped them to win, for they worked up many attacks that threatened goals, and the Town halves were not able to hold the opposing forwards at all well. Gradually, however, the home forwards began to take a stronger hand in the game, and the inside men did

A LOT OF FORAGING.

It was this assistance to the half-backs that enabled the Town to get the lead, for Reid chased Roberts and took the ball from him, making some ground before pushing it through the middle to THOMPSON, who was clear of opposition. As Saxton closed upon him the Town centre-forward shot from over 25 yards' range, a great drive, and the ball flew into the net wide of the desperate Wilson. It was a spectacular goal, and pleased the crowd immensely. Even then the visitors held their own in the general play, but the Town were doing better, and before the interval they were slightly the better side.

In the second half the visitors' goal underwent a hot pressure, and had many narrow escapes, while Wilson made half-a-dozen saves when he might have been excused failure. Occasionally there was a raid on the home goal, but for the greater part of the time the ball was

IN THE DANGER ZONE

for Bournemouth, and the bar and post were struck by shots, while two or three easy chances were missed. Half-an-hour of this half had elapsed when the Town increased their lead. Saxton had run up the field and was tackled successfully. He went down as the ball went out to THOMPSON, who got away at once. He cleared all opposition, and then shot suddenly with all his might at a range of 25 yards, and Wilson was hopelessly beaten by the speed of the ball. Saxton had to leave the field, his ankle being injured, and in his absence Luton had very much more of the play, but did not seem to trouble a lot about goal average. Just before the end, however, Thompson and Reid had the benefit of some clever work by Millar, and either of them might have scored. REID took charge, and stalling off Collin he shot into the net out of Wilson's reach.

It was A SPIRITED GAME

for an hour, but at the end of that time the visitors seemed to have expended all their energy, and the Town were playing as fast as ever. The home team won because of their superior fitness as much as anything else. Mingay comforted those who have had fears about his daring. The goalkeeper is going to play a much more important part in days to come than hitherto, and I fancy that Mingay will be one of those who will shine. One marvelous save he made late in the second half when Eyre appeared a certain scorer, but generally he had far less to do than Wilson. Anderson did well, but Graham was probably the best back on the field, and in view of the work all four backs were required to do, this is no disparagement of the others. Graham

SHOULD RETAIN HIS PLACE

while he plays as well as he did on this occasion. The halves were not good in the first half, and Jennings appeared unable to do anything right for half-an-hour. Fortunately, he improved, and was more like his best in the second. Walker, too, was a bit slow at the start, but his best came after the interval, and he had much to do with the success of Shankly. Millar has not reached the standard of the end of last season, but he was the pick of the line. Of the forwards, Shankly was the most prominent, and, like Graham, on this form he is a certainty for the premier team. He has not yet learned how to get the best out of Miller, but that will come with association. All that is necessary is to give the winger

PLENTY OF ROOM,

and plenty of work, and I am sure the effect will be reflected in the goal average. As usual, there were uncouth spectators who began hectoring the winger, but they did not know he was suffering an injury which may keep him out of the side next Saturday. Miller must have room to operate and then he will succeed. Reid and Dennis came near to something like their best as a wing, and the former was as forceful in attack as ever. Thompson's shooting is good enough for anything, and when he can get off the mark a little quicker he will be a prize specimen.

The visitors owed a good deal to Wilson and Saxton, while Butt was probably the pick of their whole side. They have a smart little winger in Clifford, and a centre-forward of great promise in Eyre, but the others appeared to weaken a great deal before the interval.

RESERVES OPEN WITH A WIN.

LUTON TOWN RESERVES 2 Goals
COVENTRY CITY RESERVES 1 ..

LUTON TOWN RESERVES.—Purdy; Graham, Struthers; Bedford, Richards, Neal; Moffat, Shankly, Littlewood, Rogers, Robinson.

COVENTRY CITY RESERVES.—Findlay; Houldy, Pratt; Brown, Watson, Ballantyne; Pearce, Ball, Parain, Breslin, McGregor.

The Town Reserves opened with a win at the expense of Coventry City Reserves, but they had a very hard task to get both points, for the visitors played a strong game, and for long periods were quite the equal of Luton. The only goal of the first half was scored by SHANKLY, but MCGREGOR equalised from a free kick early in the second half, and after Findlay had saved a penalty kick taken by Graham, ROGERS got the winning goal with a shot that went in off a defender.

It was a very good game, and if the teams engaged in Southern League football play as well as this all through the season, there should be big gates and a lot of encouragement for the Town Reserves.

Purdy kept goal splendidly, and he had a lot to do. Graham was in good form at back, and Struthers showed up better than he did in the practice games.

RICHARDS' FIRST GAME

had been anticipated with a good deal of interest, and he showed a lot of skill, both in interception and feeding of his forwards, while his huge frame came to the rescue of the defence many times. He does not yet appear to be quite fast enough, but that may be accounted for by the fact that he is still suffering leg injury sustained in training, and he felt it on Saturday. Bedford and Neal were hefty workers, the former doing a lot of excellent defensive work, and the latter was as tireless and strong as ever. Moffat and Shankly were the best wing in the game, doing many clever things, but Littlewood did not get going as well as we would have liked. Rogers played nicely at inside left, but Robinson was good only in parts.

SPORTS CHAT.

(By "CRUSADER").

ROGERS.

Luton Town have to pay £50 for the privilege of putting Bert Rogers on the professional list. That is the decision of The League, and in the opinion of most of us it is an unjust decision, and the club responsible, West Ham United, might have shown a little more charity to a struggling club. Luton Town gave Rogers a place in the Southern League team last season, and on the strength of his performances put him on the retained list of that League. Meanwhile, West Ham United hear good reports of him, send down a man and get Rogers to sign a League form and promise him a place in a trial game. Luton, requiring players at the beginning of the season, find that Rogers wishes to be a professional, and as he does well in a practice game, they make him a professional. West Ham report Luton to the League, and the latter's management committee, on which Luton have no voice, ordered Luton to pay £25 as a transfer fee and £25 fine. They find "extenuating circumstances," which is another way of saying that West Ham tried to poach Luton's preserves, but found the game locked up. West Ham "did not want the money," so gave the transfer fee to the League Benevolent Fund. And there you are.

It would be interesting to know what could have happened had Rogers signed for Kettering or Peterborough, who have no connection with the League, and if it would not have been illegal for one of those clubs to engage him, why should it be illegal for Luton? I do not know what the Town directors think of it, but I am certain that the followers of the Town will wish for nothing better than that West Ham United should have to come to Luton in the Football Cup Competition—and get beaten.

NEW SEASON: NEW RULE.

The football season opened last Saturday, and the new offside rule has given an interest that is going to make the game more attractive to the spectator who wants excitement—and who doesn't? Faster and more strenuous play, and certainly more goals, will accrue, and that is what the followers of the game pay for. Disappointing as was the result at Merthyr, the game on Monday night at Luton wiped out the sting, and if the team can maintain the standard of fitness and speed shown in the second half of Monday's game, there will be happy results from every point of view.

TEAMS FOR SATURDAY.

Glendale team to meet Silver Stars (selected from): S. Andrews, S. Ray, W. Cooper, H. Denton, W. Ray, T. Philip, H. Cook, J. Sears, J. Murphy, W. R. Solomon, D. Fisher, S. Lake.

West End O.B. team to entertain Norton Rangers on West Ward Recreation Ground: H. Owen, S. Smith, E. Smith; L. Barton, C. Walker, D. Russ; H. Lambert, T. Streeton, M. Mullins, C. Gliddings, W. Norris.

Reserves: D. Giles and H. Cullinane.

FOOTBALL
ON THE TOWN GROUND.
SATURDAY, SEPT. 5th,
(The League, Div. III.)
LUTON
v.
NEWPORT COUNTY
Kick-off 3.30

DOW
No pipe maker can produce
a better pipe for the money
2/6 SPECIAL
You can rely on that.
19a, Manchester St., Luton