

WATFORD'S WIZARD.

WILLIAMS AGAIN CASTS SPELL OVER LUTON.

BEFORE the players had reached the dressing-room a gentleman hastened down the stand and called for "Crusader." He had a most important communication to make. It was this: "Well, Crusader, we only want three men to have a good side—centre-half, outside-right and inside-left. And that's after following them regularly, that is!" For some hours I had been practically voiceless, but in any event such an authoritative statement would have left me speechless. I did so want to invite him to repeat the announcement to the officials; some of them would have shed tears of joy. For years they have been accustomed to hearing about the "rotten team," that the mere knowledge of eight good men would have been a delightful blow. Here and there among the thousands that went from Luton might be found one who would not agree about all the positions he mentioned, but they would not have been "following regularly." He did not say whether he meant "following regularly" to Watford for the annual game, or following every game, but that is of little account. The utterance will be sufficient, and the Town directors, Mr. Green, Manager Thompson and Trainer Barr, should sleep soundly now. Eight-elevenths is a good percentage; it is a pass certificate anywhere.

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I do not know how much football the gentleman has played, or how much he has seen, but I found a one-time notable player disagreed from him, for he wrote of the inside-left: "Reid, the Luton inside-left, was the most successful forward on view. A real worker and a strategist, this man." Long before this, however, there had been Luton enthusiasts differing from the stand authority. We had come over in a vehicle which was not feeling so well as it might have done, and when we wanted to return home there were two or three surgeons tinkering at its vitals. When the laymen got tired of watching the surgery they fell atalking of the game, and three were unanimous that the failure was in a position not mentioned by the other critic. When they read this they will perhaps be alarmed. They will also be somewhat annoyed to learn that, as predicted, they had barely turned the corner on the hunt for victuals when the aforesaid vitals found their spark, and we were soon bowling merrily along to Luton.

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It is customary to overlook faults when the team wins, and to see all when defeated. Undoubtedly the Town should have won on the balance of the play, but they failed to make the most of their opportunities, and that was the main reason for the defeat. In these days goalless games are few, and Luton will not escape goals against, so it is to be largely on the merits of the forwards that the results will be decided. That does not mean that the defence is to be of no account; there will have to be a tightening up, and if the reserve halves the Town possess play up to their practice form they will soon get a chance with the first eleven if things do not go so well. Unlucky at Merthyr, only a little less so at Bournemouth, and at Watford there were enough supporters to know very clearly that the home team were lucky to get a point, to say nothing of a brace.

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There was the usual invasion from Luton, and the Watford crowd also gave a deal of praise to the Town team. There were few incidents distasteful, although in the second half the crowd appeared to affect the officials, and there were some curious decisions. In one instance a home player was fouled just over the half-way line. The referee allowed him to go, and he had a shot at goal, but missed. Then the official gave a free kick where the offence was committed. The limit of official powers is surely that a man should have his chance and have finished with it, or the whistle should stop the game at once. There were also several instances of offside that were allowed to pass unnoticed. The new rule does not mean that a player cannot be offside. The players and spectators alike are to be complimented upon the good spirit in which the match was fought and watched.

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Watford started the better, and they were dangerous for quite a time, the Town players being worried by the uneven turf and the much wider dimensions of the ground. Mingay was soon at work, and he made several thrilling saves in the first half, notably when he went out and flung himself at the feet of Swan and Foeter in turn, and got the ball away. When Williams was called upon he was equally clever, and the veteran seems likely to go on for ever. When the time comes that he has to be placed on the superannuation list, Watford will still want to bring him out for the Luton match. He cannot fail to do well, it appears, against the Town. He had gorgeous good fortune on two or three occasions, but he made some magnificent saves. The most notable efforts by the forwards in the first half were by Shankly, Reid and Thompson on the one side, and Swan and Foster on the other.

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SWAN scored for Watford three minutes after the restart, and it was a soft sort of a goal, for, following errors by the Town defenders, Mummery slipped the ball in front of goal, and with hesitation on the part of backs and goalkeeper as to who should take the man and who should take the ball, Watford's latest acquisition nipped in and turned the ball into the net. The Town hammered away for long periods after this, and only sterling work by the home backs and Williams kept them at bay. Many chances came their way, but the shooting was wild and there was a general lack of steadiness in front of goal. After all this came another blunder by a Town defender, and FOSTER scored a clever goal two minutes before the final whistle.

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The Town goalkeeper could not be held responsible for either goal. The initial blame was in the slackness of the middle line, where there was not the fire and speed shown in previous games. It is not improbable that the players were feeling the strain of the hard game and the long journey to Bournemouth on Wednesday, for every game under the new conditions makes a heavier toll on a man's physique than ever before. Millar was not well, and, to make matters worse, he got in the wars. Nevertheless, all three worked hard against a hefty and thrustful attack. Graham was again a very fine back, and after a moderate start Anderson came out of the ordeal with flying colours. In the second half he was wonderful, and several times he and Graham made rapid rushes that brought danger to the home goal when the ball was released.

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Shankly once more played delightful football forward, but the whole of the players in this department showed a tendency to hug the ball too long, instead of swinging it about. The wings should have been used much more, and there is a tendency to selfishness among the inside men. All are strong shots, but Thompson was usually well off the mark in this game. Reid and Shankly putting in the most telling drives. Moffat, though not so good as at Bournemouth, played quite well, and Dennis was good enough to have deserved a great deal more work. Watford's salvation was in Williams more than anyone else, but his backs were strong kickers, and never stood on ceremony in tackling. The halves played well, too, and were better than the Town's as a line, with Frank Smith, the erstwhile forward, the pick of the six middle men. Forward, Watford's most dangerous men were on the right wing, and in Foeter they have discovered a very fine player.

WATFORD 2
LUTON TOWN 0

WATFORD. — Williams; Prior, Gregory; Smith (F.), Smith (E.), Strain; Stephenson, Foster, Swan, Mummery, Papworth.

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

CRUSADER.