

SIX SCORED IN FIRST HALF.

Millwall Trounce Luton Town.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Not since that eventful day when equipped with a brand-new defence, they went to Swindon and returned defeated by nine goals to one, in the opening match of season 1920-21, have Luton Town suffered such an ignominious reverse as that sustained at the hands of Millwall Athletic on Saturday. It was the "Lions" day, and their first victory over Luton since 1919 was won largely by merit, but in some degree that merit was supported by the good fortune that came to them in the guise of a referee's errors.

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In another place I have given versions of the principal mistakes made, and, at the very least, two goals from penalty kicks were very bad decisions. In each case Graham was the alleged culprit, and in each he had the sympathy of fair-minded spectators. Behind the Press seats were a strong body of Millwall supporters, including a former Millwall player, and frequently they were criticising the decisions of the referee against Luton, and both penalty kicks were broadly condemned as bad.

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Moreover, if the character of the game as played by the home side had been against some Luton teams we have had since the war, there would have been a very rough house indeed, for many fouls were allowed to pass unnoticed, and there were occasions when the home side used their vastly superior strength in a way that was worse than dangerous. To many of the Luton people who saw the game the referee was simply a shuttlecock beaten hither and thither by the whim and cry of the partisans among the Millwall crowd.

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Before the game had been in progress five minutes the Luton players were pretty convinced that the odds against them did not consist wholly in the superior physique and skill of the home players. When an official allows to go unpunished such an impudent foul as was perpetrated upon Love by the Millwall back, Fort, who charged Love in the back so violently that the latter's face was bashed into the ground with such force that he was carried off unconscious, and did not fully recover until after the game, it is no encouragement to a visiting team.

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Moreover, the official adjudged that Graham had handled when the ball simply struck him, and he made no attempt whatever to handle or hit the ball; and when he awarded a penalty kick because in a shoulder to shoulder charge a home player bit the dust, it appeared that not only the Luton players, but the Millwall team also were disgusted, for Amos, who took both penalty kicks, did not seem to trouble whether he scored or not, and Purdy made no attempt to prevent a goal. There were numerous foul charges and not a few trips, as well as some kicking, that the referee overlooked, though I do not say that the home players were always the wrong-doers.

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If Luton Town's play was spineless the official's display just about matched it. Millwall were out to win, and win they did, on their merits. LANDELLS scored a capital goal after fifteen minutes' play, and then came the penalty kick, AMOS sending into the net off the upright. Then LANDELLS scored again, and GORE followed with a rather lucky goal after a clever run. The fifth goal was the second penalty, and AMOS registered in the manner described, the ball gravelling slowly into the net, and after Shankly had hit the post at the other end, MOULE scored the sixth goal with a header from Chance's centre. So at the interval Millwall led by six goals to nil.

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In the second half Luton played better, and much of the improvement was due to Jim Thompson going centre-forward. Fox had a lot of work to do, and he made several very fine saves. So did Purdy, but he was once beaten by DILLIMORE, after a mistake by Till in dallying when he might have cleared. This was the only goal of the second half.

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The Town made several changes in the team, and the difference in the abilities of the players of the two sides was not so marked as the score suggests, although the home team were certainly a much stronger and better constructed side—quite the best Luton have met to date. A bigger defence does not figure in the League, and with fast and strong forwards, playing combining speed, vigour and craft, they have not yet finished with the race for promotion if they can reproduce this form. Probably, however, they cannot, and it is not likely they will be so fortunate again this season.

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That was frankly admitted by their best friends, many of whom sympathised with Luton. Truth to tell, however, the Town did not compare with the home side in the matter of combination any more than they did in that of stature. They were over-weighted and outplayed in the first half, and although doing a great deal better after the change of ends, they never gave the idea of being able to win a decent measure of success against the vigorous Millwall defence.

Purdy has done better; Till, except for his old tendency to hold on too long, did splendid work at times, and over and over again made timely tackles that saved his lines. Graham also played well, and Millar did useful work in the middle line, but this department was not capable of resisting the strong rushes of the home forwards. The Town forwards showed bright football only occasionally, with Norman Thomson the cleverest, and Jim Thompson the most persistent. Love suffered much through his injury.

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MILLWALL — Fox; Fort, Hill; Amos, Gorm, Bryant; Chance, Moule, Landells, Dillimore, Gore.

LUTON.—Purdy; Till, Graham; Anderson, Richards, Millar; Moffat, Thomson, Love, Shankly, Thompson.

MILLWALL ATHLETIC

LUTON TOWN

Referee: Mr. H. E. Gray, London.

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