

JUST HOME.

LUTON HAD TO STRUGGLE HARD TO WIN.

ABERDARE'S PLUCKY FIGHT.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 2

ABERDARE ATHLETIC 1

LUTON.—Purdy; Granam, Till; Neal, Rennie, Millar; Moffat, Thomson, Thompson, Agnew, Dennis.

ABERDARE.—Brown; Walsh, Brophy; Miller, Harwood, Igeot; Sheldon, Martin, Smith, James, Taylor.

Referee.—Mr. B. M. Neville, London.

We had the nicest day and the worst game of this year on Saturday. Save for the still breeze the weather was delightful, the sun shone brightly, and the turf was in such splendid condition that we looked forward to a sparkling game. Long before it came we were eager for the end, I find difficulty in attributing the disappointing play to the pangs of the wind, but they had a good deal to do with the lack of ball control. It is an elementary principle, however, that the ball should be kept on the carpet, and doubly necessary is this method when the wind is as strong as on Saturday. Yet over and over again the Town halves, and the forwards, too, at times, appeared to vie with each other in an attempt to explore the clouds. The co-operation between the middle line and the attack of the Town team, which has been such a fine feature of the games this year, was missing, and the players badly needed someone to pull them together and make a team. As the game progressed there was deterioration, and if Aberdare had awakened to the circumstances earlier the result might have been different. Since Christmas we have fancied the Town as strong finishers in

THE MATTER OF STAMINA.

yet one or two players have obviously tired at the end of an hour, and herein has lain the danger of defeat. Whatever the ability of Trainer Barr, he must be puzzled to account for these flaws, unless, indeed, he has some special knowledge of the difference in the physical attributes of his charges. It must be patent to players themselves at this period of the year that they are under close scrutiny for re-engagement. While sentiment may have some part in the considerations of the directors, they will not please supporters if they do not strive to repair the deficiencies now apparent.

In Saturday's game

THE MAIN WEAKNESS

was in the middle line. The three have been doing so well that the retention of the line in its present form has been almost unanimously approved. After playing against the wind in this game, and supporting the forwards really well, they fell away badly in the second half, and long before the end were so worried that they were kicking wildly, and tackling had become hard labour. Possibly the change from heavy grounds was not relished by the Town. The effect was seen in the straggling forward play, and the crowd urged Graham and Till to put some ginger into the game because the halves were wilting under the courageous revival of the Welshmen. In the last quarter of an hour the Aberdare intermediate line improved, and

THE STRONG BID

made by the visitors in this period was due to the determination of the trio.

Playing against the wind, the Town opened

very well, and they deserved to score when NORMAN THOMPSON got his goal after a scrimmage when the ball seemed to go anywhere except in the right direction. Brown got so badly hurt by a kick on the face that he had to be helped off, and he did not take any further part until after the interval. Aberdare were lucky to have such an able deputy as James to keep goal. Not a big fellow, he undertook the custody of the goal with a confidence and skill that surprised all of us. I have seen him play in most forward positions and at half-back, and he has never yet let down his side, but I had no idea that he could also keep goal. Brown could not have done better, and he thoroughly

DESERVED THE PLAUDITS

he received when he retired at the interval. The Town had done the more attacking, but Aberdare defended gamely, and they thought themselves unlucky to be down at the change of ends, as they considered that the Town goal should have been disallowed owing to Brown's injury.

Interval score:

LUTON TOWN 1

ABERDARE 0

Brown turned out after the interval and figured at outside-left. For half an hour the Town and nearly all the game, and Purdy was seldom called upon. James and his backs were safe, however, and occasionally there was a quick raid by the visitors, and Taylor and Martin were

EVER ON THE ALERT

to break through, while Smith was an active personality in front of goal. More than once the crowd sensed danger, and when Brown returned to keep goal and James came comparatively fresh into the forward line, the visitors seemed to take a new lease of life. Brown had to save one or two efforts, and the spectators heaved a sigh of relief when JIM THOMPSON scored the second goal. In an attack on the Town left wing one of the visitors handled, and the referee promptly gave a free-kick. Jim Thompson took it and Brown was well beaten by a shot that traveled like a dash into the rigging. But Aberdare were not dismayed. They worked

HARDER THAN EVER.

and combining much better than the Town, they had the satisfaction of scoring through TAYLOR. Play had been on the right, and Martin suddenly whipped the ball over to the left wing, where Taylor was unmarked, and he dashed in and easily beat Purdy. Immediately afterwards the Town goalkeeper made a fine save at full length, but dalties in clearing and Smith forced him to carry the ball over the goal-line, but the referee penalised the visiting centre-forward—a rather lucky escape for the Town.

If ever we were glad to hear the whistle it was when Mr. Neville ended this game. The Town were on tenterhooks and the visitors were

GOING STRONGLY.

The uncertainty seemed to have caught the Town defence and there were often two or three players in each other's way. Purdy had not much work. He made one very fine save, but the persistence of the visitors seemed to hurry him. Graham and Till again played splendidly, although the former's kicking was not always well directed. They tackled grandly, and had more to do than usual in the late stages. The halves I have referred to already. Their play in the first half left little room for complaint, but was lacking later. Millar was generally too good for Sheldon, but Martin gave a lot of trouble, and is still a very fine, brainy player. Rennie and Neal were capital before the change of ends, and for some time afterwards, but the latter found Taylor and James

A DIFFICULT PAIR

to counter when they got working together, and they were on top in the concluding portion. Rennie held Smith very well, but his passing was not so good as hitherto. Moffat was as lively as ever, but was inclined to do too much solo work instead of finding a colleague better placed. Norman Thomson was once more the artist of the line, and time after time he initiated attacks by delightful footwork, and neither Harwood nor Nicol could divine his intentions. Jim Thompson worked tremendously hard without distributing as nicely as usual; Agnew had no superior as a hard grafter, and he and Norman Thomson did a lot of half-back work between them. Dennis maintained his good form, and should have had more work in the second half, for he had been

A GRAVE DANGER SPOT

to the visitors before the interval.

For Aberdare, Brown and James both kept goal finely, and Walsh is a greatly improved back, while Brophy was a tireless worker. Harwood played a splendid game as pivot, and Miller and Nichol were sturdy workers. Taylor was the pick forward, with Martin just about as good, and either of these or James would do any club good.

There were 8,000 spectators, which proves that the followers are appreciating the improvement the team has shown since Christmas.

RUGBY.

BEDFORD SCHOOLS' RECORD.

With the Eton match, Bedford School ended their 1925-26 season with a 33 points—18 points win. They have now an excellent—and perhaps unique—record, for they have not lost a school match for three seasons. They have only lost two such matches in five years.

They have beaten regularly Dulwich College, St. Paul's School, Oundle School, and Leys School, on five successive occasions each, and Eton have not yet beaten Bedford. This season they have played 18, lost 5, scored 338 points against 147, an excellent record made against some of the best public schools, London clubs, and Cambridge Colleges.



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AT LORD JOHN
SANGER'S
CIRCUS

See the

INDIAN WHIRLWIND RIDERS. GIANT ELEPHANTS. DANCING HORSES OF ALL NATIONS. COMICAL KANGAROOS. SUPER-HUMAN SEA LIONS. DEADLY SNAKES. DARING FEATS IN MID-AIR. ROYAL CREAMS. COMEDY RODEO. 20 STAR TURNS. BRITAIN HAS NEVER SEEN SUCH A SHOW. LUTON—Powdrill's Field, near the Laundry. Dunstable-road, Wednesday, March 17th. WATFORD—Fisher's Field, Water Lane, Monday, March 15th. ST ALBANS—Jail Meadow, Tuesday, March 16th. HITCHIN—The Butts Close, Thursday, March 18th.

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