

SECOND SUCCESS AWAY.

Why Luton Town Won At Exeter.

BRILLIANT DEFENCE.

(By "CRUSADER.")

At Exeter:—
LUTON TOWN 2
EXETER CITY 1

Exeter:—Randall; Pollard, Charlton; Pullan, Pool, Garratt; Purcell, McDevitt, Blackmore, Walker, Compton.

Luton:—Mingay; Graham, Till; Richards, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Thompson, Agnew, Clark.

Referee:—E. C. Sandbrook, Swansea.

The indications are that Luton are likely to receive a set-back at St. James' Park, to-day, from the best team Exeter City have fielded in post-war soccer.

This was written in an Exeter sports paper by one of the most sportsmanlike writers in the country. The match over, he shook hands and congratulated Luton on their success. I had to admit that the Town had been blessed with some luck. Although Exeter were defeated, I believe that the side they fielded on Saturday is the best-balanced eleven they have ever turned out against Luton. Town once the way, and could well understand their success at Southend. In some respects, the game was not unlike the Town's game with Swindon, for Exeter did more attacking. Their constructive work was the neater, for they kept the ball down nicely, and passed with remarkable precision, especially in the first half. Their failure was due less to their faults than to the brilliance of the Town defence. In the second half the Town

LASTED BETTER.

and had there been another half-hour to go, there would have been a bigger margin in their favour.

The conditions were all against the bigger of the Town players, for the heat was oppressive, the ground like cast-iron, and the ball light. Time after time the players were beaten by the speed of the ball. Exeter controlled better, so did the more attacking, but there were long and dreary spells of midfield play, and mix-ups that led to fractious tempers, and unpleasant incidents. In the second half the referee had to address a section of the crowd, and two policemen were called to patrol the rails. A pair and a piece of clinker were aimed at Richards, and one missile found the mark. Cautions were administered, but worse incidents were referred to, for they took place after the referee's back was to the goal. Just before the finish Agnew, for instance, was standing in the middle of the field, cautious for

THE RETENTION OF THE LEAD.

the play far away near the corner flag, when he received a crack across the ankle that was heard in the stand. There was not the slightest provocation, and if the incident had been observed by the referee the offender must have had marching orders on the spot.

Generally, however, these marring effects were restricted to four or five players, and the majority took their gruel without offence.

The distance to Exeter is reckoned to be 280 miles from Luton, and the journey occupied nearly five hours. It is too much to expect players to play sprightly football immediately after such a ride, and when Richards guessed wrongly the fall of the coin, and the Town had to face a little breeze and a lot of the sun, I anticipated

A GRUELING TIME

for them. Taking the half all through, they got it, but did far better in the first half hour than we could expect. Indeed, had Pointon been able to cope with the tricky ball, Luton might well have been better than their hosts, but pass after pass, if accepted, was not turned to good account, when the Exeter defenders were scattered. These raids were generally engineered by Norman Thomson, who was "spotted" by the crowd as soon as the game started. The thrills were at the Luton side, however, and there was a tremendous cheer from all round the ground when Mingay brought off two extraordinary saves at close quarters—first from Compton, and then from McDevitt, when he alone was left to guard the breach. His feats did the Town players good, but there was a lack of speed among the Town forwards, and apart from

A TERRIFIC SHOT

from Jim Thompson that skimmed the bar, Randall was not in serious difficulty. Still, the Town had got over the journey to some extent, and were giving more trouble to Pollard and Charlton, and when Agnew cleverly fed Clark, the latter dropped the ball in the middle. Jim Thompson hooked it to the right, and Norman Thomson and Pointon went for it, with Charlton in pursuit. The winger lobbed the ball across, and Charlton shot up his hand and brought it down. There was no argle-bargle about the penalty, except from a few of the spectators. GRAHAM was called up for the kick. He made no mistake, and the Town were ahead ten minutes before the interval.

It was the first time this season they had drawn

FIRST BLOOD.

Exeter swept down from the kick-off, and were replete. They came again on the left. Compton, running, as is his wont, with head and body well forward of his legs, as a man anxious to break the tape in a sprint, got going, and shot as Graham brought him down. Mingay had let the ball go out, but the whistle went for a penalty kick, and CHARLTON equalised from the spot. The Town players were not satisfied that it was an offence, but I should have given a penalty kick, though recognising that the curious manner in which Compton runs is always likely to lead to free kicks when he is tackled. The remaining play before the change of ends, was vigorous, but the only incident of note was when Mingay again effected a great save by dashing out and turning aside a shot from Blackmore, who was right through.

EXETER 1
LUTON 1

The second half was not so good a spectacle as the first half. The ball was in midfield for long stretches, and all the defenders on the alert. Mingay had not so many calls to answer, but his backs were always at full pressure, and it was good to see the way they got the ball out of danger. Once Jim Thompson, who was always worrying the backs, had a tussle when he nudged both backs out of the way, and then compelled Randall to drop the ball. Helly gave the Town centre-forward possession, and he sent the ball gently into the goal-mouth, but there was no one near enough to put into the empty net. Norman Thomson managed to catch it before it went out of play, and his centre brought more lusty work in the home goal area, but the ball was eventually headed clear.

Again the Town goal had

A NARROW ESCAPE.

Mingay, Graham and Till all got in the way of hot shots, and when Rennie fell back and clear-did the danger was lifted. Exeter came again, and Blackmore hit the foot of the post with a good shot. That was practically the end of the "Greens" serious efforts, for thereafter the game went in favour of the Town, and the last quarter of an hour not only brought the winning goal, but several efforts that deserved goals. Till and Graham each had shots, and the home halves and backs began to falter under pressure. Garratt used his hands to stop Pointon, and from this free kick came the winning goal. Richards gauged the distance beautifully, the ball struck the bar and Randall's hand, fell to the feet of JIM THOMPSON, in the thick of it, as usual, and he hustled it into the net.

In the nine minutes that remained, Exeter's goal had

THRILLING SCENES.

Rennie, after once shooting yards too high, crashed in a beauty, but Randall saved cleverly. Then Agnew missed the target by inches, with a shot scarcely seen in its passage. Thrice the ball travelled across goal from centres by Clark, and then Pointon took it on the run, and a lightning effort scraped the bar. He would have scored had his aim been inches lower. The Town backs and halves hit the half first time and kept it in the home half until the whistle announced the end.

It was not a game in which the Town played as skillfully as they can, and I am bound to say that even now they have not attained that mastery and understanding we saw at the back-end of last season.

THE SECRET

of their success lay in pluck, perseverance, and whole-hearted endeavour. They never showed a sign of "letting up." If beaten they turned round as slick as possible, went after the man in possession, and every foot of ground was challenged. Moreover, they showed better understanding, and played to each other far better than in the Swindon match.



H. MINGAY.

To the defence must be the great need of praise. Mingay was magnificent, and the generous applause he received from the crowd at half-time, and again at the finish, was merited. I want to see nothing better. Graham again excelled at back, being sure of foot and accurate in positioning, while his head work was as good as any seen this season. Till, when he alighted from the train, was feeling far from well, and had to be doctored. Had there been a reserve player, Till would probably have been a spectator, but he turned out, and played like

A CHAMPION.

"The old man," as the spectators wrongly called him, was as fleet of foot as his opponents, and when it came to a tussle at close quarters, his brains were always best.

At half there was an appreciable improvement. Richards and his right wing were the more often in evidence, and occasionally treated us to pretty triangular play. In defence, the Town Captain had a hot hand in Compton, and a sour-dispositioned player in Walker, consequently there was hectic work on that flank, but the big fellow was capable of taking it on, and in the second half he was a powerful factor. Rennie also gave something better than against Swindon, though he found a trying trio in opposition. He was allowed to play his own game more and more, though still lacking the robustness necessary to deal with a centre-forward as big as Blackmore.

STUCK TO HIS GUNS.

Millar played right up to his best form again, and had no superior in his department.

We have not yet seen the best of Pointon and Clark. Neither was unduly prominent. The pace of the ball beat them many times in the first half, and splendid passes went astray, especially on the right. After the change of ends both did better, and took part in warm attacks. Norman Thomson served up brilliant football, and those not disposed to take my word may accept the verdict of that wonder player of old, James Blessington. He said that Thomson was the best forward in the game. That was after a few minutes' play, and at the end the judgment was warmly confirmed. His foot-work last season at Exeter puzzled the opposition immensely, and

THE CROWD REMEMBERED.

More need not be said. Agnew was an entirely different player from the inside left that always defeated Swindon, and was not only a point force in all advances, but when the Town had got the lead, he showed more wisdom than some of the others in lifting the ball out of danger, though not out of play. It was this, probably, that brought the injury he received just before the end. Jim Thompson made more chances than he received, for he passed out to his wings very nicely, without getting the return. Always tackling the backs, and never disconcerted both Pollard and Charlton. Once he bundled Randall into the net, just as the goalkeeper threw the ball away, and late in the second half Randall was lucky to see the ball rebound past the upright, as the clearance kick struck Thompson. The home side played

THEIR BEST FOOTBALL.

in the first half. It will be a good side that takes points from Exeter. Randall did not seem too comfortable, but was well protected by Pollard and Charlton. I have not seen the right back play better though Charlton has given more polished displays. Pullan was the outstanding player at half, though all three did good work, and had nice understanding with the forwards. Pool seemed to tire in the second half. The forwards were fast and clever. Much was made of Walker, but in my opinion, the brains of the attack lay in McDevitt. He was always scheming, and his passing was very fine. Walker was clever, without being so effective. Purcell has pace, and a nice centre in his boot, and Compton's skill still makes one

WONDER WHY?

Bristol City allowed him to go. Blackmore has good points, is big and speedy, but did not make up his mind very quickly when shooting opportunities came.

Mr. Sanbrook could not be blamed for incidents he did not see. He kept up with the game, and was quite impartial, as was one of the linesmen. The other flag-man seemed to allow the crowd to affect him in the second half, and one or two of his decisions, to say the least, were incorrect.

There were 8,000 spectators.

NORTHANTS LEAGUE

WATERLOW'S WIN.

At Wellingborough on Saturday, Waterlow's Athletic accomplished a fine performance in defeating Wellingborough Town by the odd goal of seven. In the first half, BIRDBALL got through twice for Waterlow's, and H. LOASBY and E. LOASBY for the home team. H. LOASBY gave Wellingborough the lead in the second half, but Birdball equalised. On the stroke of time, TOMPKINS scored the winning goal for the "Printers."

WATERLOW'S 7
WELLINGBOROUGH 0