

DEFEAT.

Luton Town Humbled at Southend.

Middle Line Failings and Defensive Blunders.

(By "CRUSADER.")

SOUTHEND UNITED 2
LUTON TOWN 1

Southend: Moore; French, Bell, Jewhurst, Purdy, Bayliss; Dennis, Brayshaw, Hick, Donovan, Smith.

Luton: Mingay; Graham, Till; Richards, Moir, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Thompson, Woods, Dennis.

Referee: R. Steel, London.

At the seventh hurdle Luton Town fell for the first time this season. It was an obstacle they should have surmounted, even allowing for the spell of success the "Seasiders" are enjoying after a poor start. For the first time this season we saw fatal hesitation in the Town defence, and Southend goals were due to faltering. It may seem a hard thing to say, in view of the splendid consistency of the Town backs, but neither of the Southend goals should have been scored, though there were occasions when the Town goal was fortunate to escape. The Town made a very much better start than in any previous match, and the home halves could not hold them. Then, with practically

THEIR FIRST ESSAY

at the end of nine minutes, the home side scored. Tackled by Graham, Smith kicked the ball on to the Town full back, and it rebounded over the goal-line. Smith placed the flag kick rather wide of the rack, and DONOVAN, the smallest player on the field, headed goalwards. It seemed as if at least three Town players moved aside to let the ball go to Mingay, but it was well away from him, and bounced into the net.

The home team were warned by this unexpected success, and for a time the play was slightly in their favour, though Moore had trying moments. After 24 minutes came a further downfall. Donovan put the ball forward, Graham and Till were going for it, but each appeared to leave it to the other; HICK slipped in, and a gentle lob dropped the ball just under the bar.

From that moment until the interval the Town were

ON TOP.

They set about their work with rare zest, and within three minutes succeeded. Pointon and Norman Thomson made the advance with neat passing, and the latter, after drawing the opposition, passed cleverly to JIM THOMPSON, who coolly stopped the ball before driving it hard and low into the net, Moore having no chance.

With increasing pressure, the Town fairly penned in the home side, as the interval neared, and the forward work at this period was the best combination they have given this season. The ball was kept low, the passing was snappy and accurate, and only the desperate packing of the goal and some good saves by Moore, averted the equaliser. Once Woods, with a first-class individual movement, just missed the target with a lovely shot, but the reinforced defence managed to hold out until the whistle sounded the halt.

SOUTHEND 2
LUTON 1

In the first half, Southend had the advantage of a strong breeze, but towards the interval this slackened, and my attention was drawn to the fact that the flags were quite motionless when the players returned. Whether the turn of the tide had anything to do with it, I do not know, but afterwards it was a choppy wind, and the Town certainly did not get the same advantage as the home side. Nevertheless they began as if things were soon to be straightened out, and the home goal had a gruelling time. The scoring shot could not be pulled out, however, and although half-a-dozen good efforts were put in, there was always someone in the way.

As in the first half, Southend took heart, and gave the Town defence a lot of work, but Mingay and his backs came through well. Most of the onslaughts of the home forwards came by way of the right winger, Dennis, who was getting a lot

TOO MUCH SCOPE.

The excellence of Till prevented a lot of damage. In the last ten minutes the Town made great efforts to get level, and the home goal had lucky escapes. Moore made good saves, and all the Town inside men had hard drives blocked or saved. The luck was against them, however, and the climax came when, three minutes from the end, George Dennis took a pass from Jim Thompson and drove in a lovely shot. "Goal!" was in everybody's mouth, as the ball beat Moore, but it struck the farther post, ran back across the goal-line, and although the Town players appealed for a goal, the ball was scrambled away. A fusillade followed without effect, and the game ended with the score as above.

It was not a great game. There are few and far between nowadays. There was plenty of earnestness and determination, and now and then

ELEMENTS OF ROUGHNESS.

Bayliss and Norman Thomson got at loggerheads consequent upon the Southend half-back tripping, and it was not until a word of caution had been given that the trouble abated. At the finish they walked off together friendly enough.

The fall of the Town may have been due to the misunderstandings in defence, but there was another department that failed—the middle line. Not one of the three played at his best. Grounds are not heavy enough, I know; but nobody knows when they will be. Most attention was commanded by Moir. Opinions differed as to his quality. Disappointed that he did not bring

MORE VIGOUR

into his work, I yet should be in the mood to persevere with him. It was but his second match in the position, and none should expect marvels in that time. It was noteworthy that the forwards did better constructive work than in any previous game, and I attribute much of this to his keeping of the ball on the carpet. He did not get the ball out to his wings often enough, though Dennis had one or two nice passes. Richards was again slow off the mark, and Millar not up to the high standard we have seen in previous games. The outside men of Southend had too much freedom, but all the halves did good supporting work at times. It was in speed of recovery that they were lacking most. Richards got his chin gashed, and the doctor had to stitch it after the match.

Till had

NO EQUAL

as a defender, and his clever tackling was too much for Dennis and Brayshaw. Graham was also good, though not quite so conspicuous as hitherto, probably because he had less work. Mingay never seemed quite comfortable in his fielding, and the home centre-forward made a point of rushing at every opportunity. The Town goalkeeper made three or four fine saves. Once in the first half he saved on his knees at close quarters when a goal seemed bound to come, and again in the second, when Dennis got right through.

A pleasing feature of the Town display was the better combination of the forwards. One writer says they depended upon weight to get through. The idea is ridiculous.

FINE PASSING MOVEMENTS

were seen, especially in the first half, and a lot of ground was made without the home defenders being able to intercept. The shooting was open to improvement, though several shots came very near the right billet. Pointon played his best game to date. He got into it, and sent the ball into the middle much better. On this form he is likely to do good service and to improve a lot. Dennis had not enough work. Late in each half he was a dangerous factor, and had very hard luck when he hit the upright.

Norman Thomson was clever as usual, and Pointon got his chances chiefly through the intelligence of his partner. Woods was equally clever without being quite so fast on the ball. Jim Thompson had

A ROUGH HOUSE

to the extent that he was usually taken care of by a couple of opponents, and his chances of shooting were minimised. His goal was something like his old style, and now we look for more of the kind.

Southend have a fairly good side, the strength of which was in their left back, Bell, who played cleverly throughout; Jewhurst, who is a grand wing half; Purdy, who played a fine game as pivot; and a forward line that does not cut capers, but knows the right cut for goal. We should finish well above them in the League, for I imagine that they will be much of a "home" team.

The appointed referee did not turn up, but Bob Steel, the old 'Spur, who was appointed linesman, handled the game very well indeed, though missing a few offside incidents.

There were upwards of 8,000 spectators, including about 500 from Luton.

FOOTBALL
ON THE TOWN GROUND.

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