

LUTON LOSE

After Giving Their Best Performance.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Sometimes when Luton Town play away and I have to tell the story of defeat I am told: "Ah, it is all very well for you to say they did not deserve to lose, but we were not there to see." I was reminded of this on Saturday evening when the game was over. There were just a few Lutonians present, and they were unanimously of the view, as were the home supporters, that the Town should have got at the very least one point. There was in their play a brightness that we have not seen equalled this season. Even the second half play at Bristol in the first half of the season was not comparable with the skill that was generally maintained at Somerton Park. Newport played

VERY GOOD FOOTBALL,

and clean withal, but the play of the Town was a revelation to me, and I have seen all their games this season. There has been respectable combination at times, with the shooting poor, and I cannot say there was any great improvement in marksmanship in this game, but for understanding between the middle and forward lines, and rapid advance, with the ball on the carpet, the Town have shown nothing to equal their latest. Certainly I have not seen them play a game this season where the halves and forwards got the ball on the ground so well. It gave us great hopes of bringing away

A BRACE OF POINTS,

and with one or two amendments, and the maintenance of this style of play, there is no need to fear anything for the future, and reason to hope for the best.

One of the main reasons for the Town's better play was the condition of the ground. The rain had not touched Newport until Thursday, and then for two days did not cease, and the turf was yielding just enough to enable players to keep the ball well under control.

The fault for the defeat was inefficient refereeing, and the Town got less than their due. The players were easy to control, and got on extremely well.

INFRINGEMENTS WERE RARE

and not of a serious character. The crowd, however, while never stinting their admiration for good efforts by the Town players as well as their own, never lost an opportunity of claiming an advantage, and as they became more insistent, Mr. Collins seemed the more disposed to heed the appeals. It was regrettable, for he began well, but there could be no excuse for the goal he disallowed when Thomson netted, and in the last minute the Town should have had a penalty-kick. When Newport got the winning goal Gittins received from Bowsher, but the ball bounced, and to secure control the inside-right palpably

USED HIS HAND,

but the referee was then awkwardly placed, and the blame lay with the linesman.

There was no advantage in the fall of the coin, and play opened evenly, but the Town were the more aggressive before a goal was scored. Their marksmanship was poor, however, and Newport got first blood. This was due to Pugh knocking Mingay over the goal-line when the goalkeeper was holding the ball, and from the flag-kick GITTINS scored with his third shot, the ball hitting the bar to fall into the net. Luton were the better team after this, and

MACHINE-LIKE

combination took the ball through over and over again. One of these line attacks ended with Dennis passing to WOODS, and the ex-Arsenal player took the ball as it met the ground, and a lightning shot equalised the scores. Then Reid's forceful work and desperate attempts to score brought down the goalkeeper, who was well out, and from the latter the ball went goalwards, and Thomson ran in and netted. The referee turned to the centre, but the home players appealed, and he then turned round and gave a free-kick. Still, the Town were in a happy mood, and following more pleasing work, REID got a pass.

OVERCAME BOTH BACKS

as they tried to bring him down, and then crashed the ball into the rigging.

Mingay had some warm work after this, but the Town were playing with confidence, and deserved their lead at the change of ends.

They did not make a good resumption, and Newport, with a re-arranged attack, were aggressive for a while, but the Town got moving again, and after a nice effort by Reid and a pass to Dennis, the latter should have done better than hit the rails. Newport were very thrustful, however, and from a nice effort by Johnson Mingay beat the ball down to the feet of JAMES after the latter had headed in, and it was at once

RAMMED HOME.

Much good play followed, though not of the quantity of the first half, and we had made up our minds that a point would come to Luton when Gittins brought the ball down with his hand and passed to JOHNSON, who shot instantly, and Mingay was well beaten with a swerving low cross-shot. The Town appealed for hands against Gittins and offside against Johnson, but without effect. In the closing stages the home backs were glad to find touch often, but another chance came a minute from the end, when the Town defenders were well beaten. Clark ran in and seemed certain to score when he was

PUSHED RIGHT OVER

by one of the home backs, and fell face foremost into the goal. Maidment gathered the ball and lay on it while the Town players were appealing for a penalty-kick, and then the referee made the players stand aside while Maidment got up and sent the ball clear.

That was the closing thrill of a game that was good enough in every respect except the result and the handling of it.

For the Town, Mingay made good saves, though he still hangs on too long. Graham and Richards were splendid backs, and with a few more games the latter would surprise the Town followers. He is safe without being showy, and his powerful form was a great asset when the home forwards got too exuberant at close quarters. The middle men were better than in any previous game, though Rennie tired in the second half. Their all-round play and combination with the attack were

DELIGHTFUL FACTORS.

and all three kept the ball down splendidly. Reid was a tireless leader, and made many good efforts, and deserved more than one goal. On his right and left respectively Thomson and Woods were artists of the highest class, dribbling and passing, and drawing the defence with remarkable skill. Dennis responded well in the first half, but Clark was not nearly so good as usual, and on the whole he had a poor afternoon.

Newport's best were Smith, Bowsher, Forward, and Johnson.

NEWPORT COUNTY 3
LUTON TOWN 2

NEWPORT.—Maidment; Hinton, Smith Nairn, Bowsher, Carney; Johnson, James Pugh, Gittins, Forward.

LUTON. — Mingay; Graham, Richards Gordon, Rennie, Millar; Clark Thomson Reid, Woods, Dennis.