

TOWN TOPPLE AT COVENTRY.

Poor Finishing and Defensive Play.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Luton Town were accompanied to Coventry by a crowd numbering about 700, all eager to see a repetition of the play of the previous Saturday. They returned disappointed, for the Town sustained their most serious reverse to date. The record of Coventry had given no indication of the merit of the team as exhibited on Saturday, and, once more, the result was nothing like a true reflex of the run of the play. Luton had as much of the ball, and were in the Coventry half quite as much as the "Bantams" were in the Luton ground, but there was a difference in the methods, and it was the skill of the home halves and the go-ahead speedy play of the home vanguard which made all the difference between what was seen on the field and what appeared in the list of results.

MORE CORNERS.

I do not want to detract one iota from the display given by the home side. They worked hard for all they got, and in their style was much skill like to that we had seen from Luton the previous week—clever nursing of the ball by one player while another took up position. Where they improved upon the Town, however, was in the fact that when they shot at goal they were seldom many inches out of their reckoning. Luton had more shots at goal, had a lot more corners—Clark took more flag-kicks than all the other players together—but they dallied and hesitated so much that the home defenders were able to dispossess them over and over again when a sharp shot seemed certain to score.

EVERYONE SHOOTING.

In the second half Luton attacked so often that every player in the team except Harper had shots at goal, and the failure to penetrate made one wonder if they get any shooting practice at all. It cannot be argued that the conditions were against them. They had what advantage there was, for they won the toss and had the aid of a stiff breeze that drove the rain into the faces of the home side at the beginning. That soon ceased and thereafter conditions were fairly equal. The home players, however, adapted themselves far better, and on the sloppy pitch there was good combination between the middle and the attacking lines, and as the shooting was good, Harper had much more ticklish work than Newton.

FIRST HALF GOALS.

Still, there was more than a simple element of luck about each of the home team's three goals by which they led when the game was 20 minutes' old. The first came when Harper had the misfortune to see a strong kick rebound from the rushing HERBERT and enter the net. The second, when the referee gave a free kick for an alleged offence when Richards jumped high above Heathcote and headed the ball clear. RAMAGE took the kick, and from 25 yards sent in a great shot that slithered through the mud and evaded Harper's attempt to catch ere it entered the net. The third was due to a faulty kick by Richards, who attempted to place the ball back to Harper but sent it only about a third of the necessary distance, and HERBERT was on it like a flash and completed the discomfiture of the Town custodian.

GALLANT PEGGING AWAY.

The Town had suffered somewhat from an injury to Jim Thompson, who had gone to the extreme left, but pegged away gallantly and after fine work on the right wing, Woods shot in for CLARK to deflect the ball past the home goalkeeper. There were many attacks afterwards, but Thompson missed two or three good chances through inability to move easily, and Newton managed to divert the pile-drivers that came from Reid, though once he saved grandly from Clark, and the ball grazed the bar and went over.

This was the state of things at the change of ends, and the "Bantams" practically assured the result when they scored a clever goal. A rush through the middle had left the Town defenders standing, and DUNN netted with a shot that gave Harper no chance.

We saw the best of the Town after this, and, though three goals down, they had enough opportunities to have equalised and won. The slowness in finishing was the deterrent, and it was painful at times to see the forwards slow up when almost under the bar, and then fall to the quick recovery of the home halves.

FAULT OF THE FORWARDS.

As a team there was not nearly the skill and combination that we saw against the Palace. Callender was given a hectic time in that match, but the Coventry goalkeeper was rarely extended. Skilfully enough many attacks were conceived and carried up to a certain point, both by halves and forwards, and from that aspect there was little room for complaint. The fault of the forwards was weakness in finishing power, and of the halves the inability to fathom the intentions of the home attack. The middle line's defensive work was very poor indeed, and not comparable to that of the home trio. Black was a long time before finding his stride; Rennie was flustered by rapid interchange of passes, and Millar did not show his accustomed virility until the game was lost.

NOT SO SAFE.

The backs, too, were not so safe as usual, and on the soft ground could not recover quickly enough to frustrate the dashing tactics of the home quintette. Harper did very well in goal, and, apart from the free kick, had little chance with any scoring shot.

Coventry's strength lay in the dominating qualities of Ramage, their new centre-half from the Hearts. He was the finest player on view, and in attack and defence alike all-powerful. He was ably backed by his colleagues, and all three took a lot of work off their backs. The forwards were exceedingly fast and tricky, and their positioning and general understanding better than that of the Town, but it was the sharper finishing that counted most.

The crowd did not touch the 5,000 mark.

COVENTRY CITY 4 goals

LUTON TOWN 1 goal

COVENTRY. — Newton; Houldey, Gay; Brown, Ramage, Gardiner; Hopper, Dunn, Heathcote, Herbert, Ferguson.

LUTON.—Harper; Richards, Till; Black, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Woods, Thompson, Reid, Clark.