CHRISTMAS SPIRIT MISSING

ROUGH REVENGE BY MILLWALL

RESERVES' FOUR POINTS. PANTHER'S PLAY.

(By "*CRUSADER.*")

It is recorded that in the early days of football Lord Kinnaird and C. M. Alcock, who were destined to hold the highest offices of the Football Association, were once captains of opposing sides. Just before the game Alcock asked Kinnaird if hacking were to be permitted. "By all means," Kinnaird is said to have answered.

Thus the game of football became a profession; when laws were not laid down with such emphasis as to-day; when there was no two-guinea or three-guinea fee for a referee and a guinea fee for each linesman to see that the laws were enforced.

Even allowing that hacking was a most undesirable thing even in those days. I am certain that the games could not have been more brutal than those in which Luton Town have taken part this holiday, and the amazing thing about it is that men who rely upon strenuousness of limb for their livelihood had not the slightest respect for either the laws of the game as dictated by the F.A., or the elementary principles of sportsmanship.

I have been in Luton nearly twelve years, and during the time it has been my duty to record the doings of the Town Football Club there has never been such praiseworthy efforts to interpret the laws of football from the sportsman's aspect as this year.

I am bound to say that, speaking generally, there have been teams during the post-war years that could teach Luton lessons something of the true spirit of sport, though in every season we have come up against many clubs that deemed the winning of points the first essential, so long as they did not be done. This cannot, however, be said of the Luton side, which has proved a sore thorn in the side of the Town players.

For some time I have wondered how long it would be before opponents were found who would take mean advantage of this failure of the Town's play. By the irony of things it came in the season of goodwill, for on Christmas Day the Millwall Athletic could not take defeat as sportsmen should, and several of their players were guilty of the meanest tricks we have witnessed. In spite of their unsportsmanship victory was never their lot, and the Town players, who insisted upon literal interpretation of the rules. Alas! The same official could not take the return match at New Cross on Monday, and from the kick-off it was clear that several of the Millwall players were out to win by means without any qualification of fairness at all. There were exceptions, but the others provided the dirtiest play we have seen since Millwall were at Luton last season.

At Northampton on Tuesday I do not think there was quite the same amount of deliberate intent to injure, but there was the same disregard of the spirit of sportsmanship on the part of the majority of the home players. It is no exaggeration, taking the two games together, to say that we saw almost every conceivable kind of assault.

Kicking, hacking, brutal charging, knee-ing, elbow banging, and in two cases blows—such was the so-called play, and there were not one of the thirteen players required by the Town that did not show more or less severe damage on his body on Tuesday night.

It is true that some of the Town players retaliated, and while I do not agree that they were right in doing so, I will not blame them, because I know the experience of serious football I have never seen a team suffer to the extent that Luton has suffered this holiday and take it so meekly.

When Richards was knocked out at Northampton—the first time in his career—scores of the home supporters applauded and wished their players to do it. Why? Richards had injured Watson, the Luton goalkeeper, a few minutes together, and the latter just managed to forestall the Luton player, with the result that a ligament of the foot was torn. Richards helped to pick up Watson, and was sympathetic, but that did not weigh with either the home players or a section of the crowd.

When returning from Northampton one of the Luton players said, "If one of us happens to play a bit rough at Luton our crowd start cheering the other side, and shout for the offender to be turned off; other crowds, when one of us is injured, do the same. We have to do it again." That was the experience both at New Cross and Northampton, and it was a disgrace to the name of sport. One hears a good deal about the behaviour and the callousness of followers of boxing, but, from the two boxing matches at Luton this last two or three months I can honestly say that the crowds showed more sportsmanship among the two or three hundred rockeys-on than was shown by the 20,000 Millwall and Northampton football followers combined.

In closing this forward of the holiday games, I hope that the Town players will not allow their experience to interfere with their enjoyment of the game as it should be played, and I hope that the Luton authorities will take such steps can be taken to bring to the attention of the F.A. the state of things existing—both in regard to official control and the behaviour of players who would rather cripple opponents than lose the match—then the sooner such steps are taken the better for the game.

At Luton on Christmas Day:—

LUTON TOWN	.....	6
MILLWALL ATHLETIC	.....	0

LUTON:—Harper, Graham, Till; Black, Bennie, Hillier; Chance, Mouncher, Reid, Woods, Thompson.

MILLWALL:—Lansdale; Fort, Hill; Amos, W. I. Bryant, Graham; Chance, Mouncher, Bennie, Woods, Reid.

Referee: Mr. W. Evans, Barry.

Of the match on Christmas Day it may be said that the play of the Town was a revelation. They were superior throughout a game that was just as clean as it could be, for they had to resort to unfair tactics on many occasions before they could get to cope with the speed and skill of the Town forwards and backs. One cannot overlook the fine play of Graham and Till, but it was a pity that the understanding between the Town and Millwall forwards was the most potent factor in the Town's success. It was a revelation to see the Town pass right and generally to the Millwall goal, and quietly placed. Harry Woods has been playing well for the Town, but he has been remarked in these columns that he showed lack of nerve, and there was much fault in this game, and all the forwards played with dash, skill and coolness that was far too much for good. "Lions" Comment:—

BLACK had the privilege of opening the scoring, after 10 minutes, by taking advantage of a Millwall mistake. Bennie, Hillier, Thomson hit the upright before then, and Thompson was a general to a goal. However, Black, who was the principal goal scorer, he changed from a centre from Jas. Thompson, and REID made it a second goal on receiving from Black. The second half was a repeat, more the pity, for goal after goal there were times when they toyed with the Millwallers, and it was not a case of individual brilliance, but combined play, and really brilliant combination. One of these shots of Bennie's landed REID to score the fourth goal from Wood's pass, and the Millwallers were completely at sixes and sevens. Bennie, middle by Bennie gave REID the chance to make it half-a-dozen, and he completed the flag-kick by Thompson enabled WOODS to make it.

Apart from two fine efforts by Parker in each half, and a glorious opportunity in the first 30 minutes for Millwall to level the end, the "Lions" forwards had a poor time of it. The Millwallers tried on, and left no field eventually, his once being dangerous, but the Town had prepared for that, however, it was the breakdown of the "Lions" middle that enabled the Town to win in such easy fashion, and the Town's play was a revelation to the visiting supporters not less than to the "Lions" team.

The ball was kept on the ground, the training and passing being high-class, and every man played for his side.

Millwall Athletic's defence has not had such a rough time of it since the Cup tie, 1922, when Queen's Park Rangers won by 6—1. The feed defeat inflicted by the Town on Christmas Day was the heaviest sustained by the "Lions" since the war, and it was prompt to avenge the defeat the Town suffered at New Cross last season.

The last time the Town scored six goals in a League game was on March 14th, 1925, when they beat Merthyr Town by 6—0.

At New Cross on Monday:—

MILLWALL ATHLETIC	.....	7
LUTON TOWN	.....	0

MILLWALL:—Lansdale; Fort, Hill; Amos, W. I. Bryant, Graham; Chance, Bennie, Parker, Phillips, Black.

LUTON:—Harper; Graham, Till; Black, Bennie, Hillier; Pointon, Thomson, Reid, Woods, Thompson.

Referee: Mr. J. Stoll, London.

At New Cross on Monday the game was but a few minutes old when Reid and Black had been badly fouled, and the "Lions" were going to make a manner as made quite clear that they intended to be somebodies. Several of the Town players had suffered hard and unfair treatment before once once the scoring at the end of 16 minutes, and very soon afterwards, following a bashing scrimmage, PHILLIPS rushed the ball through. Reid was assisted by the Black and the Town players were then more intent upon avoiding injury than in scoring. GOAL and BLACK added goals before the interval, which ended with the "Lions" leading by four goals to nil.

Five minutes after the restart PARKER added a fifth goal, and the conditions still unchanged so far as the tactics of the Millwallers were concerned. Six and the sixth, and just before the close PHILLIPS added the seventh goal.

The nature of the game was such that it would be unless to criticise the players individually.

Stewart Littlewood led the Port Vale at Hanley on Saturday, and he was a good stiffer for both goals which enabled the "Villas" to win. In both cases a tender kicked the ball on to Littlewood, and it rebounded into the net. The ex-Luton player was praised for his leadership of the line.

THE LEAGUE; LUTON III. (South).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Points
Swindon Town	21	14	3	4	41	25	31
Brighton & Hove	19	13	3	4	41	25	29
Bristol City	20	12	3	5	53	29	29
Bristol Rovers	21	12	3	6	47	32	27
Plymouth Argyle	21	10	6	5	42	27	26
Newport County	21	11	2	8	26	31	25
LUTON TOWN	20	9	6	5	34	27	24
Brentford	19	9	6	4	44	30	22
Southend Utd.	20	10	2	4	41	35	22
Exeter City	21	9	4	8	40	35	22
Crystal Palace	19	7	6	6	34	32	19
Watford	20	7	10	3	29	33	19
Bristol City	21	7	5	9	34	40	19
Merthyr Town	20	7	10	3	30	33	17
Bournemouth	19	6	8	5	32	36	17
Bristol Rovers	19	6	8	5	32	36	17
Queen's Pk. R.	21	6	12	3	36	50	15
Northampton Town	21	7	7	7	36	52	15
Gillingham	20	5	8	7	25	36	18
Charlton Athletic	18	5	9	4	23	30	14
Northampton	22	5	13	4	30	47	14
Aberdare Athletic	21	3	11	7	25	56	13

RAMBLERS' NOTES.

(By "FOX.")

Our Boxing Day fixture with Hamlet United (Rotherhithe) promised to be one of the best sporting games of the season. Although heavily, the visiting team were scrupulously fair. The "Rams" team comprised five seniors and six juniors, and undoubtedly the outstanding player was Burgess at centre-half.

Taking the game as a whole, the first quarter-of-an-hour was fairly even, but before half-time we had asserted ourselves and overwhelmed six times, MINNEY (2), NEWTON, STRATTON, and TOWLEY being the scorers, and the "Rams" had the game well in hand. Chuter had occasion to show his prowess, and he anticipated a goal from the centre-forward at close quarters.

In the second half the Hamlet goalkeeper played brilliantly, and was so well supported by the backs that only TOWLEY and STRATTON were able to find the net. The last goal was rather unlucky in that neither side wanted it, but the referee gave a goal to the home side in accordance with the visitors' wishes. It is hoped that we shall have the pleasure of another game with the Hamlet United visitors. This week we return to a strenuous league programme, and Ashford Town are engaged. The following will represent the Ramblers:—1st Eleven: Goal, Chuter; R. B., Mann, J. C. Scrutton; Centre, R. B. Burgess, H. Hillidell; W. H. Haycock, L. G. Burgess, H. Stratton; Outside Left, P. G. Minney; W. C. H. Nell, E. D. Day, E. W. Worboys. Reserves Library at 1.30.

2nd XI.: Dunstable Young Liberals—R. Ford; J. Ford, J. Ford; Centre, J. Wilson; L. R. Holmes, H. Hawkins, J. Young; E. G. Nell, Wells, F. Pulfrey; L. Chapman, J. Hughes, Chief End, Pulfrey.

2nd XI. v. Crusaders Juniors—R. F. Day; C. G. Anderson; R. Ford, H. Dryver; J. Nell, S. W. G. Hughes; H. Franklin, S. J. Wells, C. Chapman; E. G. Stratton, W. Mitchell, Pope's Meadow, 2.15.

HARPENDEN FOOTBALL.

HARPENDEN TOWN unexpectedly dropped two points to LONDON COLNEY before a fair crowd on the Recreation on Christmas Day. The ground was rather treacherous, and the visitors a slight and lively team, well organised, adapted themselves better to the conditions. Both sides scored in the first half, and the London Colney took the lead in the second. Harpenden again equalised, and with the run of the play in their favour ought to have won. Several good chances were missed, and close on time the visitors added their third. BENTLEY scored both goals for Harpenden.

BATFORD OLD BOYS had one of their best matches of the season on Christmas Day, when they had a friendly visit from H.M. Forces at Bury, Albyns. The game was fast and exciting, and finished in a win for Batford by six goals to four. Both sides scored twice. Batford—Beamer; Grant, Catling; Swain, F. Hough, F. Hough; Cooper, Conquest, A. Hough, Travers W. Gough.

At Northampton on Tuesday:—

NORTHAMPTON TOWN	.....	1
LUTON TOWN	.....	1

NORTHAMPTON:—Hammond; Watson, Kelly; Allen, Malone; Bailey, H. Jones, Robinson, Brett, Cockle, Shaw.

LUTON:—Harper; Graham, Till; Black, Bennie, Hillier; Pointon, Thomson, Richards, Woods, Clark.

Referee: W. E. Greenland, London.

There was a magnificent following for the visitors, for crowds came by excursion train, charabanc, and car, and Luton got a tremendous reception when they appeared. They had two changes, Richards taking the centre-forward position, and they the injured Reid, and Clark coming in for Jim Thompson, who was absent owing to a Treasury sustaining a broken leg on Monday when playing against Brighton and Hove Albion. Richards rather impressed in the home team at inside-right.

In the first half there was a considerable amount of bickering between the teams. Luton had decidedly the better of the exchanges, pressing the home team hard, and Harper showed characteristic enterprise in his new position, as he was always strong attacks in passage, and once tested Hammond with a good ground drive.

An error of judgment at a penalty-kick was made against Black when he was alleged to have handled, but the referee decided to play on, proceed, but at the other end Richards was tripped by Jeffs in glaring fashion a few yards from the goal, and the referee ignored the appeal. Just in time Black cleared, and the home team then had had burst clean through and seemed certain to score, but Harper was there to save, and forced to kick the ball off the post opposite too. This was the prelude to a strong attack by the visitors, but Hammond saved his bacon were safe, and Brett twice made determined runs, and Bailey had a good bit of midfield play followed, and then Luton attacked again, the ball being changed in several times.

Eventually Jeffs headed away, and before the Luton goalkeeper could clear he had got it, and from 20 yards' range scored a beautiful goal. Immediately after the kick-off right wing was plied by Richards, and Pointon sent in a nice centre for Richards to shoot, but the ball was cleared, and there was playing good football at this time, Luton showing to better advantage, and one of the home team's rapid came from his centre-half.

In stopping a thrust by Richards, Watson was hurt and had to be carried off, and Richards, who had been injured earlier, Richards was knocked out in collision with Hammond, and the goalkeeper was injured twice shot with great power and tested Hammond, while the same player and Hammond were too high. Richards then got clean through, only to send high over the bar, and the game was getting rougher and there were many free-kicks, the Luton team being far the more numbers, but they could not use them to a vantage, the home team ever ready to clear, and the header from Black's free-kick, at the interval Luton deservedly led by a good two goals.

Brett went to his proper position as a full back when the game was resumed, and the home team pushed hard, the Luton team players were intent upon levelling the score, and there were many fierce rushes in which man and ball were taken together, and the home team, as they contested, the man was not missed. Only two minutes had elapsed when Ben Jones scored in the corner. Woods tried to collect the ball, but failed, and it went to Hoton, who shot, and Harper was beaten, but Black was promptly tackled, and SHAW kicked the ball into the Luton goal, and the net. The Luton players did not show the determined resistance that was expected, and with "the Cobblers" playing anyhow, men being clean out of position, but striking hard, all kicks and rushes, there was little football but plenty of excitement and an exceedingly rough game. Ben Jones Robinson was pulled up time after time, and was not participating in anything like the shape of free-kicks for infringements. The play was as scrappy as could be imagined, and the home team were always ready to take advantage of the home side. In an attack on the home side, Hammond fisted the ball out of the net. The Luton players did not show the determined resistance that was expected, and with "the Cobblers" playing anyhow, men being clean out of position, but striking hard, all kicks and rushes, there was little football but plenty of excitement and an exceedingly rough game. Ben Jones Robinson was pulled up time after time, and was not participating in anything like the shape of free-kicks for infringements. The play was as scrappy as could be imagined, and the home team were always ready to take advantage of the home side. In an attack on the home side, Hammond fisted the ball out of the net. The Luton players did not show the determined resistance that was expected, and with "the Cobblers" playing anyhow, men being clean out of position, but striking hard, all kicks and rushes, there was little football but plenty of excitement and an exceedingly rough game. Ben Jones Robinson was pulled up time after time, and was not participating in anything like the shape of free-kicks for infringements. The play was as scrappy as could be imagined, and the home team were always ready to take advantage of the home side. In an fierce assaults