

FORWARDS FAIL AGAIN.

Luton Town's Home Draw with Exeter.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Luton Town directors have rung pretty nearly all the changes of which their complement of players is reasonably possible, but their latest efforts were no more successful than the previous. About the general play of the side there is little room for complaint, but it seems as though the Club cannot get a satisfactory combination at inside forward, and it was the failure in this department on Saturday that enabled Exeter City to take away a point—a reward that was not deserved on the balance of the play, though quite merited by the grit and perseverance of their defence.

EARLY SHOCK.

On the boglike ground the visitors made a splendid start, for within a couple of minutes they had opened their score. A strong raid brought a nice pass from Good to Blackmore, and the latter manœuvred quickly for position and shot hard. Harper was beaten, but the ball hit the post and came out for PHOENIX to tap it into the net. The visitors saw little of the ball afterwards, except in the possession of the Town, and their goal underwent a positive siege at times. Some of the movements of the home forwards and halves were conceived and executed at great speed, and with commendable skill, but, try as they would, the ball could be sent anywhere except in the right spot.

THE RECOVERY.

Once Agnew struck the upright with a mighty shot, and the ball came out to Panther, who shot instanter, but got too much elevation, and away went the ball into the terraces at the rear of Bailey. Clark and Pointon were well employed, much more than usual, and they got the ball in front of the Exeter goal many times, but the score was delayed until POINTON made a clever run and got right to the goal-line. From ten yards or so he hit the ball, and though Bailey and Lowton each appeared to have an opportunity of stopping it, between them they missed it, and it just turned off Bailey's hands and went into the net.

THE LEAD.

Apart from occasional sprints by the visiting wingers the Town practically monopolised the play, but the defenders stuck to their guns splendidly. Bailey made one or two good saves, but he should have been beaten several times by the home forwards. Once Fraser made a magnificent dribble, and wound up with a great shot that banged against the bar and went over. Every forward and half-back, along with Graham and Till, had shots at goal, but to no purpose, and the interval was at hand when Pool handled a centre from Pointon, and GRAHAM made no error with the penalty award, a terrific shot leaving Bailey helpless.

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The visitors had a little more of the game in the second half, but except when the home defenders were disposed to take liberties there was not much danger at Harper's end. He had to handle several times, but there was no sting behind the shots that went into the goal-mouth, and on most occasions he had to run out and pick the ball up. At Bailey's end there were several exciting scenes in the goal-mouth, and corners were earned time after time, but to no purpose, and eventually the visitors got away and Gordon was just in time to deprive Blackmore of an almost certain goal by kicking the ball off his toe. From the flag kick that followed the ball was sent out of the Town goal, but Potter took a chance shot, and GRAHAM, attempting to clear, had the ill-luck to turn the ball past Harper, and the scores were level again.

VAIN ATTACKS.

Of the subsequent play there need be little said except that it was almost wholly in the Town's favour. Once Compton got clear and should have scored, but he shot straight at Harper, who quickly got rid of the ball, but in the main the Town were doing the attacking, and every forward had chances to score. Pointon, who got through time after time, might have won the match almost handsomely had he been able to round off his clever work in mid-field with a decent shot, for he beat Charlton frequently, only to fail when at close quarters. So did the inside forwards from chances made by either the wing men or themselves, and many spectators left the field before the end, simply because they were tired of watching the feeble efforts of the Town in front of goal, and the game ended without further score.

MARKSMANSHIP.

It was the failure of the Town inside forwards that was primarily responsible for the loss of a point. The heavy, sticky mud in the shooting zone made accurate shooting a difficult matter, but they had so much the better of the game, and were so often in the visitors' goal-mouth, that they should have overcome the difficulty. The wingers played well, and, indeed, so did the inside forwards in all save the important feature of marksmanship. A little more energy at close quarters would have almost certainly won the match, for the ball was often put nicely in front of Bailey, and the old Town goalkeeper must have marvelled at the sequence of misses.

SUPPORT GOOD.

The middle men also did remarkably well, and Richards put up quite a useful game at centre-half, the heavy ground suiting him, and both Gordon and Fraser thoroughly justified their inclusion, both as supports for the attack and spoilers in defence. Indeed, the visiting forwards did not get very much of the ball, and when they did were not so dangerous as they might have been, for the simple reason that they were well held by the home halves. At back Graham played magnificently in spite of the fact that he gave the visitors the equalising goal off a ball that came to him at a very awkward angle and height. Till also put in some good work, but it seemed that he fell off during the latter stages, probably because of an injury at Bournemouth. Harper was not to blame in the slightest degree for either goal registered against him.

EXETER'S STRENGTH.

The strength of Exeter lay in their rear-guard. Bailey did very well after being beaten once, and his backs played grandly. If anything, Lowton, the reserve for Pollard, was better than Charlton, but both had plenty of pluck, strength and energy, and a lot of craft. The middle men were moderate by comparison, but there were some good forwards, and it was perhaps as well that they did not get more support. Parcell was fast and clever throughout, and took a lot of holding, while Compton did clever things, and Blackmore was a forceful leader who required a deal of stopping.

The attendance was just under 6,000.

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LUTON TOWN. — Harper; Graham, Till; Gordon, Richards, Fraser; Pointon, Yardley, Panther, Agnew, Clark.

EXETER CITY.—Bailey; Lowton, Pollard; Pool, Good, Potter; Parcell, Phoenix, Blackmore, Lievesley, Compton.

Referee: E. C. Sambrook, Swansea.