

LUTON'S REVERSE

another Drubbing at Merthyr.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Luton Town had a bad time again on Saturday, when they visited Merthyr Town and sustained defeat by four goals to one. The party had an adventurous journey, especially between Cardiff and Merthyr, owing to the inadequate conveyance, and did not catch the scheduled train from Cardiff on Saturday night—thus having to travel on Sunday, and reaching home about 6 p.m.

The Merthyr ground had been unfit on the two previous Saturdays, and grave doubts were expressed whether it would be playable on this occasion. It was certainly in bad condition, and stormy weather prevailed throughout the game. The Town had the good fortune to win the toss and take first the advantage of playing with the wind and rain at their backs, and they certainly had a fair share of the game, though it must be conceded that for an hour the home side had only ten men, Page, the right-back, being hurt in a rather forceful effort to obstruct Pointon.

There were many opportunities missed by the inside forwards after really good work in constructing attack, and the only difference in favour of Merthyr was the fact that they never hesitated to shoot at goal when within respectable range.

More than any other, perhaps, this factor won the game for the home side, as their two goals in the first half came from shots taken on the impulse—hard, almost unstoppable, drives from respectable range. WOODWARDS, the home right-half, notched the first after twelve minutes' play, but prior to that the woodwork at each end had been hit by shots which had the respective goalkeepers well beaten.

Each of the goals came during quick raids by the home wingers, and a centre that was taken on the run, but Murphy's was the initiatory work that gave Mitchell the chance to drop the ball in the middle each time. The Town's best attempts came from Thompson and Reid, while Graham rattled the bar with a great shot from a free kick. Davies and Sutherland each struck the Luton framework, but for the most part the play was in the home half, and it was the skill and fleetness of the home forwards in raiding that enabled them to succeed, and, most of all, their readiness to shoot. This was the most contrastive feature of the play, and had the Town forwards shown like enterprise they would not have been in arrears when the interval arrived.

In the second half the Town re-started well, and there were several scenes in the home goal area. Once Clark received from Thompson, and had Lindon at his mercy, but in an endeavour to do it emphatically he managed to lift the ball on to the bar, and the chance was lost. A goal might have changed the run of the game, and Merthyr showed their appreciation of the escape by a strong and lengthy attack on the home goal. Harper was often called upon, and the skill of Murphy was a factor that made for success. The goal came from the left wing, however, Davies and Sutherland combining cleverly, and the latter centreing off the line for PHILLIPS to score at close quarters. Before the Town had got over this another shock came. Delightful play by Murphy gave Mitchell the opportunity to centre, and SUTHERLAND headed a fine goal.

goal.

The Town made determined efforts, and time after time they beat the home defenders, but were so slow in taking a chance. Thompson frequently looked a likely scorer, for determined rushes carried him through several times. Once he was brought down heavily, and I thought he should have had a penalty kick. Then he was clean through, and Lindon came out and knocked him off his feet. From him, however, came the work that brought the goal, and in all save the kicking of the ball into a blank goal the effort was Thompson's. However, REID got the credit, for he lapped the ball into the net when Thompson had carried it all but over the line.

There was no further goal, but Merthyr would have scored but for the vigilance of Harper, who saved well in the closing stages.

The Town lost only because they could not shoot so well as Merthyr, but there was a lack of team spirit, and until this is remedied matches will not be won against teams that are otherwise inferior.

Harper kept goal well, considering the condition of the goals; Graham was superb at back, and the understanding between him and Gordon was one of the best features of the play.

The former, however, was disposed to take risks. It was a laudable desire to try and put some life into the attack and the middle line, but it left a burden for Till and Harper. Till did many clever things, but was not at home in the mud, and Murphy and Mitchell gave him and Millar a rare lot of running about. The middle line was far from efficient, and Gordon probably took the honours. He played a steady and intelligent game, and gave Pointon plenty of work. Richards is not a centre-half, and nippy inside-forwards led him a merry dance. The Luton player, however, was playing with a very bad wound on the shin, and was plucky to turn out. Millar was not up to his usual standard in defence, although he took part in many attacks in the second half.

The forwards were good enough in the middle, and it must be admitted that Thompson was the most effective forward we had when it came to a tussle with the defence. He played with his old enthusiasm, and the only flaw was his weakness in front of goal. In that respect, however, he was not one whit worse than any other, and he did the most work that brought the goal. If any man earned his place, he did. Reid did very well at inside left, and with a little luck would have scored more goals. He got on well with Clark, and the latter is now doing very well indeed, and has no serious competitor for his position. On the other flank Yardley was clever betimes, and it was chiefly his touches that enabled Jim Thompson to go through so often, but he was apt to hang back when his shooting boots would have been valuable. Pointon was good in parts, and especially in the second half he middled the ball well.

As a whole, however, there was not such good co-operation between rank and rank as would command success.

Merthyr played fast, sporting football. They were quicker in action than our team, and deserved all they got.

MERTHYR TOWN 4

LUTON TOWN 1

MERTHYR. — Lindon; Page, Pedler; Crewe, Bishop, Woodward; Mitchell, Murphy, Phillips, Sutherland, Davies.

LUTON.—Harper; Graham, Till; Gordon, Richards, Millar; Pointon, Yardley, Thompson, Reid, Clark.

Referee.—Capt. A. Prince Cox, Barnes.