

NOTHING SCORED

Luton Town Fail at Home.

SOUTHEND'S POINT.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Other attractions affected the "gate" on the Luton Town ground on Saturday, but it must be conceded that many who were content to remain at St. Albans and Leighton Buzzard would have come to Luton had the Town team been showing anything like the form of the corresponding period of last season. A good game will attract many spectators, irrespective of the result, but the average follower demands goals, and at Luton he has become tired of watching the team play good football, but fail in the vital element. That accounted for the attendance dropping to 4,000 on Saturday, and in the next two games, which are at Gillingham and Norwich respectively, there will have to be something better than we have had since Christmas Day, or the attendance will continue nearer that figure than the 10,000 we would all like to see. One may criticise the follower who cuts off his support because his team fails, but he knows what he wants to see, and if he pays to see goals and doesn't get value for money, then he is likely to try elsewhere. I have been told that there were some 3,000 spectators from Luton and district at St. Albans on Saturday, and I would not dispute that for a moment.

SOUTHEND'S FAILURE.

Southend have not done many wonderful things this season, and it was reasonably felt that the Town would manage to open a winning account. On the respective merits of the teams those expectations should have been fulfilled, but the woeful inability of the forwards to turn to good account opportunities, dashed hopes to the ground, and unless the two journeys immediately ahead provide a victory, there will be two months without a solitary success.

Southend were never in the same class as a side in the matter of combination and constructive work, but were in regard to excellence in defence, and were equally poor in attack. They failed just as badly as the Town in finishing. The Town team could make openings again and again, but were utterly hopeless in front of goal. Over and over again they baffled the Southend halves, and then baffled themselves, for they either dabbled or shot badly, and much hard and useful work by their colleagues was spoilt by the feeble finishing of the inside forwards. Southend, of course, were quite content to keep out the Town forwards, and, in the second half especially, they were just a lot of disorganised scramblers, though they maintained their pluck and grit in defence.

TRIERS.

A supporter told me that he was quite ready to concede that every player tried hard, but they had not the ability necessary, and that this off the position fairly well, and it all comes to the old, old story—poor shooting. It is all very well to be wise after the event, and I admit that, on paper, the inside formation appeared to me as likely to get goals, but I should have more hope if the line as at Merthyr had remained intact, for if Thompson did nothing very great, he made the one goal that was scored, and he had the Merthyr backs in serious trouble, by reason of his strength and persistence. The Southend backs were generally equal to the task on Saturday, and they got better as the game proceeded. If there had been a bit more thrustfulness and weight in the Town forward line it is probable that a goal or two would have rewarded efforts that, up to the point of shooting, deserved reward.

MIDFIELD INTEREST.

There is no need to enter into close detail of the game. Of incident there was plenty, and the midfield play was quite as good as any of us could expect. But for the bright play of Beaumont and Jewhurst, the visiting halves, the pressure on the Southend goal scarcely ever would have been relaxed, for the passing and dribbling of the Town forwards was clever. It was astonishing that they could pass almost to an inch, but could not shoot to a yard. The tax on the Southend halves was one of the reasons that their forwards got so little support, but when they did the Town defenders were too close for them, with the result that Harper was not often called upon.

His goal had two or three narrow escapes, and Hick and Brayshaw between them missed the simplest possible opening late in the second half, but the bulk of the play was waged in the vicinity of Moore. He made many good saves, but was not troubled as much as he should have been. It was a relief to the spectators when the whistle sounded the end.

THE TEAMS.

All the Town defenders played well—backs and halves, and it was good to find Rennie in such fine fettle again. Perhaps he lost something in comparison with Beaumont, and there were flaws in his play, but he improved the middle line, and both Millar and Gordon justified their inclusion.

The wing forwards did fairly good work, too, and more than held their own with the opposition, and, apart from weakness in front of

goal, the inside forwards won praise for the speed and evenness with which they attacked.

Southend's defence was strong and reliable, and in addition to the halves mentioned, their backs and goalkeeper were good, while Morris was a nippy winger.

LUTON TOWN	0
SOUTHEND UNITED	0

LUTON. — Harper, Graham, Till; Gordon, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Black, Reid, Yardley, Clark.

SOUTHEND.—Moore; Hogg, Bell; Jewhurst, Beaumont, Andrews; Morris, Brayshaw, Hick, Donovan, Smith.