

LUCKLESS LUTON.

IMPROVED DISPLAY, THOUGH DEFEATED, AT NORWICH.

Woods' Return.

By Crusader.

NORWICH CITY 3 goals
LUTON TOWN 2 goals
NORWICH CITY. — Dennington,
Hannah, Campbell; Duffus, Richmond,
McGrac; Cousins, Cropper, Gilgun,
Duthie, Aitken.

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

Referee. Mr. P. E. Elphes, Maidstone.
It may as well be admitted at once that no home whatever was attaching the referee or linemen in this game. They were all delighted with one of the friendliest yet most whole-hearted tussles at which they officiated. It was, indeed, one of the pleasantest games in which the Town have taken part; there was the utmost goodwill among the players, practically no dirty play at all, and though there were hard knocks and jars, these had no harmful intention, and if any player were damaged the responsible opponent was usually first aid. When one reads that the most highly paid professionals and not a few notable amateurs are pilloried for ill-temper and unsportsmanlike conduct, it may be expected that the lesser lights of Norwich and Luton should develop the traits that detract from the worth of human nature, consequently this immunity from reproach merits special mention. It was a good, clean struggle, in which

THE BETTER TEAM LOST.

My second note is also of satisfaction. At some risk of unpopularity I have insisted over and over again that Luton were failing because of poor marksmanship. Some who saw this game might yet argue that the same fault was noticeable at the "Nest," but to be candid, had the score made by the Reserves been achieved by the first eleven, it would more accurately describe the play. It was an amazing result, and Norwich players and officials called in the Town team's dressing room at the finish to commiserate. The shooting of the Town forwards, and Thompson in particular, was one of the most refreshing improvements I have seen for months. Thompson's shooting opportunities came through co-operation all round, it is true, but he made a lot, and against a less skilful custodian than Dennington would have registered a hat trick at least.

WHY DEFEAT.

Why, then, were the Town defeated? The reason, I believe, was the failure of the Town flank halves to maintain for ten minutes later in the game a high standard achieved during 75 of the 90 minutes, but I am loth to say so because of the splendid spirit shown by the whole side and because of the fine play of the middle line generally. The failures of the Town this season have been remarkable, but they have won many matches in which they have not had a quarter of the advantage they had in this. They were far and away the better side on the general run of the play, so much so that I will dare to say that promotion would have been their fortune had they played as well all through the season as during the greater part of this struggle. In the first half they were not held their own, and in the second half, for 30 minutes they played more effective football than in any game this season.

"CANARIES" LUCK.

When play opened with the "Canaries" having the advantage of the slope one wondered how long it would be before they asserted their superiority for which they are notorious when playing downhill. The ground is small, and it is the custom of the "Canaries" to adopt rushing tactics. They tried their utmost to get going, but the Town played a very open game, and there was only one period in the first half when the "Canaries" made a really strong and sustained attack. They almost seemed to score in that onslaught, for Duthie hit the bar with a fine effort, and several shots went close. The home team then got their goal, and a very lucky goal, too. Some thought that Harper should have saved it. A free kick was given; McGrac fired hard, the ball struck GILGUN on top of the head and was sent Harper a fish. The deflection was too close and too sharp for the goalkeeper.

GETTING UP STEAM.

Then the Town got up steam. They had never, Dennington more work than Harper had been required to do, and had played coolly and with nice understanding. Now they brought to bear a little extra nip. There was a cohesion that has not been seen for a long time, and the ball was frequently distributed along the whole line of attack, with the home forwards in desperate chase. Moreover, there were frequent shots at goal, and we saw evidence of the capabilities of Dennington to place him in the highest class of goalkeepers. He "killed" really fine centres by canny anticipation and his splendid right, and took everything with clean hands and steady nerve. Once Thompson hit the upright with a sharp shot, and Pointon saved the bar. The scheme of play, in which Woods was the chief inspiration, and the Town halves were splendid supports, relieved the Town's defence of a lot of work, with the result that the home backs were constantly in difficulty. Many corners were forced,

but there was no equaliser, and the interval came with the score:—

NORWICH CITY 1
LUTON TOWN 0

When the second half opened the Town soon asserted complete mastery. The home goal was peppered. Graham and Till were on the half-way line, and halves and forwards were running through the opposition with remarkable ease. Dennington had saved half-a-score shots, and often the ball sailed very close. Twice Thompson hustled through, and the home backs were glad to kick anywhere for safety. Occasionally the home forwards got a move on, but Gilgun spoiled chances by fouls, though not of a violent character. The steady pressure of the Town was rewarded after six minutes had been ticked off, when the Town right wing received from the left, Thompson and Pointon were the thrustful factors, but the home defenders appeared to be so packed that there was little likelihood of a goal. However, Thompson eluded two or three rushes, and from the goal-line turned the ball in front for REID to crash hard and low into goal. Dennington got down and managed to handle, but the pace was too hot.

THE LEAD.

The "Canaries" made a furious assault from the kick-off, and seemed to have been nettled by the reverse, but the Town remained steady and unfurried, and within a couple of minutes the home goal was under fire again. Woods' strategy had a wonderful effect, and the co-operation of forward and middle lines was something to write since my job was so pleasurable, and every man from backs to attack, played splendid football. People around me in the stand were marvelling that Luton were not on the top of the League, and admitting that their side had never been so hopelessly at sea as during this half-hour. Goals should have come, and would have come, but for the fine work of Dennington. Thompson was shooting like a machine gun, and the ball was crossed beautifully by the wingers, so much so that the home penalty area was crowded with defenders. The lead was only a matter of time, as everyone could see.

POINTON'S POINTER.

It came because the home backs were misled by crowding on the Town inside forwards. Rennie sent the ball well up for Thompson to slip between a couple of opponents and send the ball out to Clark; as the defenders closed on the latter he swung the ball right across, over the heads of Woods and several defenders who expected a pass to the latter; Thompson ran as if to head, and Campbell followed close up, but the ball was too high for either; POINTON sized up the situation cleverly, and rushed in to hit the ball as it met the ground, and Dennington had not the ghost of a chance, for the ball went into the net right away from him. Norwich now appeared to be a beaten side. The Town forwards were playing with great confidence, and Dennington saved again and again, and seldom did the home players get anywhere near Harper. Thompson was playing with his whole resources of courage, and shooting harder than ever, and Rennie, Reid and Woods kept banging at goal, too.

THE FALL-OFF.

Once the home defence was completely flabbergasted when practically everyone of the Town halves and forwards worked in an attack, and Reid darted through to give Thompson a golden chance. The centre-forward shot hard, but Dennington was there, and the ball struck his arm, bounced against his jaw, and came out. It was a lucky escape. For ten minutes the method of attack was always promising success, but Dennington bewildered, and saved his charge. Then came a rush by the home forwards; it was beaten off, and the ball came to Rennie, who lunged and sent it out of play. The ball was thrown in, and DUFFUS took an apparently wild kick toward goal. The ball came high up, and Harper failed to reach it as it dropped and curled just inside the post. It was another lucky escape, and for much more than that, it was foreseen. It was a tonic to the home forwards; their wingers and halves swung the ball about, and the Town wing halves seemed to fall off all at once.

"CANARIES" CHIRP AGAIN.

Cousins and Aitken were the danger spots, and their speed was too much for the Town flank halves. Aitken being very accurate, Cousins got through and dropped the ball into the middle. AITKEN closed in, and trapped the ball, it seemed to be a very long time about it, and had to turn round, and in that time should have been covered, but was not, and he shot into the net and gave Norwich the lead. These tactics were continued, and the Town defence had its warmest period of the game, for the home players kept kicking the ball as hard as they could towards the Luton goal, and they were not the same prospect, tackling as had hitherto marked the Town defensive play. Aitken missed

from close range before the Town tried to pull the game out of the fire. Pointon was prominent with clever runs, and once Thompson shot from an almost impossible angle, and Dennington saved close to the post at the second attempt, but the whistle came without further score.

HARD LUCK.

It was a game that really deserved the phrase "hard luck" for the Town. They were worthy of the points, and that was the unanimous opinion of the home players, officials and everybody concerned. Because all did so well, I do not like to give a reason for defeat, but must—that the Town middle line became unbalanced after the home side had scored their second goal. Harper was not so much at home as in the game with Gillingham. That was evident, but whether to blame him for the second goal or not depends upon the way of summing up a goalkeeper's capabilities. It is all very well to expect from Harper the same skill as from Dennington, but he is built differently. Had he been as tall as the home goalkeeper he would have saved the second goal, I am sure. I could not agree that he was to blame for the first. Still, he did not field so steadily as is his wont, and it appeared as if the eager Gilgun upset him when in the first half he passed the Town goalkeeper off the ball when he had "all out." Graham and Till played well all through, and the latter showed not a trace of unfitness. Their burden was not heavy until the later stages.

MIDDLE MEN.

So splendidly did the middle line play for 75 minutes that it was a great disappointment they failed to hold the home forwards in the ten minutes that ensued. In the first half and for the greater part of the second they were masters of the opposition, though Millar had great difficulty in holding Cousins, chiefly because the latter was so well fed by Cropper. Black played a great game against the best forward of the home side, Aitken. Rennie was also fine, and his cool work thwarted many attacks. The best of their play, however, was the co-operation with the forwards, whom they nursed and supported cleverly. In this phase all three accomplished admirable work. The fact remains that they did not keep up the pace just at the moment it was most required, and when, to all intents and purposes, Norwich were beaten.

FORWARDS.

The return of Woods stabilised the attack, his cunning drawing of opponents away from passing, whether through the middle to Thompson or to Clark, making all the difference to those players and to the line. Clark showed appreciation by his skilful centres, and Thompson did more shooting than any two players on the field. There was great power behind his drives, too, and his thrustful shoulders and unfaltering courage against odds made him a dangerous factor. He has never led the line better, for he passed well both to the wingers and to his immediate colleagues. Reid did not give such assistance to his halves as Woods gave, but his chief asset is shooting ability, and he did good service, passing nicely to Pointon, though the wing did not get so much work as the left. Pointon was not as conspicuous as the previous week, but he, McGrac and Campbell a merry dance, though he should have sent the ball across a little sooner. Of the team as a whole, however, their display leads one to hope for a revival, and it would be doubtful wisdom to meddle with it.

NORWICH.

The brunt of the responsibility fell upon the home defence. Dennington was a great goalkeeper; his back was always working valiantly, and the middle men were triers to a man, with Richmond a fine pivot. Apart from Aitken their attack was not great, though Cousins had rather too much rope. Aitken, however, is a very fine player, and to him more than to any other forward the home team owed their success. There were 7,000 spectators.

SCHOOL NETBALL.

DIVISION I.

Walworth 9, St. Saviour's 9,
Stevenage 14, Hitchin St. Mary's 13.

LEAGUE TABLES.

DIVISION I.

	P	W	L	D	Pts
Pixmore	9	7	2	0	14
Norton Road	7	6	1	0	12
Walworth (G.)	6	4	1	1	9
Hitchin St. Mary's	5	2	3	0	4
Hitchin British (G.)	7	2	5	0	4
St. Saviour's	6	1	4	1	3
Stevenage	6	0	6	0	0

DIVISION II.

	P	W	L	D	Pts
Norton Road	9	8	1	0	16
St. Ippolytus	7	6	1	0	12
Walworth (G.)	7	5	2	0	10
Pixmore	8	4	3	1	9
Pitton C.O.	7	2	4	1	5
Norton G. of E.	6	1	4	3	5
St. Christopher	8	1	6	1	3

A receiving order in bankruptcy has been granted in the Luton Court against P. F. Perry, coal merchant, Black Diamond, Norton-way, Letchworth.

SPORT NOTICE.

HITCHIN UNITED CRICKET CLUB require away fixtures for the coming season, with good class clubs. — Apply Hon. Sec., 15, Barker's Cottages, Hitchin.