

ANOTHER DRAW.

LUTON FAIL TO BEAT WATFORD.

Scrappy Game.

By Crusader.

LUTON TOWN 2 goals
WATFORD 2 goals

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

WATFORD.—Yates; Slade, Prior; Morris, Leaver, Woodward; Stephenson, Warner, G. Wilkinson, Foster, Roberts.

Referee: W. Musther, London.

Luton Town came nearer losing their unbeaten home record on Saturday than in any previous game this season, and yet, on the run of the play, they deserved to have won by a very large margin. Watford put up one of the most unscientific displays we have seen this season; they had so little of the play that for long spells on end they only got the ball over the middle line by the big kicking of the halves and backs, and then their forwards could not get it. With the exception of Gillingham they have scored fewer goals than any club in the Division, and as we watched the crude efforts their position in the League was understood. One must not overlook the fact that in the second half they were without Warner, and for a few minutes were lacking the services of Leaver, but even making full allowance for this heap of misfortune, they were a very poor side.

WHY THE TOWN FAILED.

What the visitors lacked in skill, however, they made up in vigour and pluck. Their robust methods knocked the Town players off the game we have had during the last month. As soon as a Town player got the ball, an opponent barged into him, and the Watford players had pace and weight to commend them. I admired the ruggedness of their defensive play. Though clumsy, it was very effective, and that, after all, is the main thing. It was this factor, and the obvious inability of the players to time the lively ball that prevented the Town's long and incessant attacks bearing fruit. The Watford defenders were stoppers and spoilers; they had no other business than that, and their glee was evident as time passed, and they were keeping the Town under. If it were possible to reconcile or to blend defensive work of this kind with good constructive work, then Watford's position on the League table would be reversed.

A SCRAPPY GAME.

It was the scrappiest game we have seen on the Town ground this season. There was such a lot of effort, wild lunging, high kicking, dashing and tearing about, but so little combination and co-operation or attempt at it, that the crowd rightly held the view that the community singing, though that was by no means great, was the best part of the afternoon's entertainment.

In the first half the Town had very much the better of the exchanges, and in the second, well, twenty minutes had passed before there was a shot at the Luton goal. Watford had a lot of youth in their side, and their energy and dash surprised the Town in the early stages. Add to this the light ball and the hard ground, the referee's failure to award two penalty kicks to which Luton were entitled, and you have the reason why Watford took away a point.

SURPRISE GOAL.

The Town had been much the more aggressive side before a goal was scored, and then they had the chagrin of seeing the visitors get it. Rennie was penalised for a foul; Slade took the kick and dropped the ball well in the Town goal-mouth; Foster had his back to the goal when Graham headed the ball away, but it came to FOSTER, who turned as he trapped it and shot it into the net. There was a lot of pressure at the other end, and Yates made many fine saves before the equaliser came. Once Thompson was brought down when he broke through, although I thought he was very near an offside position, and Pointon was certainly in the penalty area when upset, but the linesman was appealed to, and as a result the official placed the ball dead on the line for the free kick. Yates made three thrilling saves when he tipped hot shots over the bar, and there were corner kicks galore.

HAGGLING.

The equaliser came through Yates carrying the ball too far in his efforts to dodge the rushes of the home forwards after he had made a clinking save. The free kick was awarded about ten yards from goal. The Watford players crowded round the ball, in spite of the efforts of the referee to make them get ten yards away. It was difficult to see how they could be the regulation distance away and yet cover their goal, and they were still haggling when Clark suddenly touched the ball, and BLACK shot it into the net. In a way it was an unsatisfactory goal, and yet the Watford players were to blame, for, had they fallen back on their goal-line instead of trying to "sit on the ball," it is most improbable there would have been a score. Misapplied eagerness was their undoing.

In the remaining play the Town again had the upper hand, but failed to beat Yates, and the interval came with the score:—

LUTON 1
WATFORD 1

The second half was a wearisome business. Warner had strained himself and could not turn out, and from the restart Luton took command. They spent most of the next twenty minutes in the Wat-

ford penalty area, and had many shots at goal. Flag-kicks were taken with monotonous frequency, and there were sultry scrimmages in front of Yates. Many times he saved splendidly, many times he should have been beaten, but the Town forwards were either too wide or too high with their efforts, and he was very alert and very agile. Once Thompson beat him, but was given offside, a doubtful decision, because it appeared as though the Watford backs moved up too late. The Watford backs and halves applied plenty of boot, and the ball was often soaring skyward, but for the determination of Slade and Prior one could not accord too much praise.

WATFORD LEAD AGAIN.

Then Stephenson got away. He did not appear to be dangerous, but hit the ball hard across, and it was well for Luton that Richards made a timely intervention with his head. Leaver was hurt in a collision with Reid as they were heading the ball, and from a gash over the eye blood streamed down his face, and he had to be led off the field. During his absence there was another foray on the Watford right wing, and again the ball was middled. There was a lot of poor kicking by the Town defence hereabouts, though Graham was not in it, for an accident had sent him to outside right, with Black at back and Pointon at half. The ball was never properly cleared, and eventually it was sent out to ROBERTS, who was unmarked. He ran a few paces and then fired home a shot that seemed to beat Harper too easily. Prior to this Harper had not once handled for any purpose.

NOT QUITE.

Though the Town took up the aggressive again and kept the Watford defence busy, they seemed to have little prospect of equalising, and we had visions of that long-threatened home defeat we have not seen since September, 1925. Many corner kicks were forced, but the Town players were holding on too long, as a rule, and were thwarted time and again by the speedy rushes of the Watford backs. But the defeat was not to be—quite. From a corner kick, well placed by Clark, who had been as active as any forward on the field, THOMPSON, somewhat luckily, caught the ball as it fell and turned it into the net, the ball striking the post in transit. It was not a clean-cut effort, but in keeping with the general trend of the game, in which most of the thrilling things just happened. The Town maintained the pressure to the end without success, though once a storming shot by Thompson frizzled the bar.

THE PLAYERS.

Harper had no chance with the first goal. I could not properly see what chance he stood with the second, though it seemed to me that he has saved many more dangerous shots. He had very little to do. Graham and Richards were sound enough in tackling, but the latter flicked rather weakly at times. Black played a sterling game at half, and was the best middle man on view. He controlled much better than the others, and there was more idea of construction about his work. Rennie did pretty well, and little was seen of young Wilkinson, but the Town centre-half was prone to fire wildly when a pass or a well-directed shot was wanted. Millar has seldom been so badly off colour, and could not time the ball. Perhaps it was well for him that Warner was an absentee after the interval. The line did not move so well as usual for the support of

THE ATTACK.

In the front line Thompson was quite the most dangerous of the quintette. He did not get the customary support either from Reid or Woods, for the inside wingers wanted more time than the Watford halves were disposed to allow, but buckled into it as usual, and made many good efforts as well as a lot of poor ones. Reid was too deliberate and gave Pointon very little work, and Woods was not up to the standard of craft he has shown in other matches since his rest. Pointon now and then did skilful work, and Clark, though he did not settle down quickly, was a hard worker, and middled the ball more often than all the other wingers put together. The attack was not up to the level of the last five or six games, however, and often beaten by failure to "kill" the ball or to reach it from "upstairs."

WATFORD.

Yates kept goal splendidly, and the bulk of the credit must be accorded to him and his backs for their very gallant fight. They bore the brunt of the struggle, and seemed as if they enjoyed it, too. Not only were they quick in tackling and hefty in kicking, but many times worked the offside trick cleverly. Leaver played a useful game as pivot until he got hurt, but his colleagues were just hustlers. They had no idea of passing for the advantage of the forwards, and the latter were given little chance to earn their money. Foster was the pick, for he was always on the look-out, and did several nice things, and Roberts was dangerous now and then. Stephenson must have sighed for some of the helpings he used to get, for he got none in this game, and Wilkinson seemed almost forgotten in the fray.