

AT THEIR BEST.

LUTON GIVE BOURNEMOUTH A THRASHING.

Unbeaten Home Record.

By Crusader.

LUTON TOWN 4
BOURNEMOUTH AND BOSCOMBE 0

LUTON.—Harper; Richards, Till; Black, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Reid, Thompson, Woods, Dennis.

BOURNEMOUTH.—Robson; Armstrong, Hayward; Halliwell, Miles, Smith; Clifford, Taylor, Eyre, Stringfellow, Maidment.

Referee.—A. W. Lamacraft, Exeter.

Ample recompense was taken by the Town for their defeat at Bournemouth, and they finished the home programme with a very fine victory after a splendid game. Considering the conditions, supposed to be all against the style of the team, for the ground was hard and the ball lively, the football was skilful and attractive. Though the visitors were not lacking in science or vitality, they must have wondered at the change in the quality of the football they had to face compared with that they met in January. Those who witnessed the anemic display of the Town at Bristol could only find one reason, and that was in the virility of the forward line.

NOT A ONE-MAN SHOW.

When one notes the vital difference the presence of Thompson makes, it does not mean that it is a one-man show. The fact of the matter is that the other players realise how much his strength and enthusiasm mean, and all play the better for it. Confidence means much, and there has never been a more striking example than in the last two games. Pluckily as Bournemouth played, and strenuously as they tried to break down the opposition, they were practically outclassed, and there were periods in the second half when the understanding between the Town forwards and halves simply flabbergasted the Bournemouth middle and back divisions. It will be a thousand pities if means cannot be found to keep the complement together for next season, though I am reliably informed that there is very little chance of the two lines in their entirety being re-signed.

PRELIMINARY SKIRMISHES.

In the first twenty minutes there were occasions when I thought the visitors were going to spring a surprise and tarnish the Town's unbeaten home record. Their right wing was very fast and clever, and neither Till nor Millar could subdue the fleet-footed Clifford, who was well fed by Taylor. Moreover, I thought they were entitled to a penalty kick in the first minute, when Richards brought Taylor down close to the goal-line. It may be that the full-back was too late in his effort to reach the ball, but Taylor was certainly brought off his understandings with a sweeping tackle. There was no further room for claim of this kind.

PRESSURE.

There was a steadily increasing pressure by the Town, as they took the measure of the opposing defenders. The ball was slipped out to the wings with remarkable accuracy, especially by Woods and Rennie, and Dennis got a lot of work. Moreover, Thompson was hustling the backs to some tune, and long before the first goal the Town had found Robson plenty of opportunity to prove his skill. Stringfellow made an unaccountable miss in front of Harper, and then the Town centre-forward failed with a like chance after battling until within a yard or two of goal. A series of corner kicks followed, and after two or three scrimmages, RENNIE received some 30 yards out, got the ball nicely under control, and shot with great force, the ball passing just inside the post as Robson vainly threw himself full length.

REID'S GEM.

A terrific onslaught brought an appeal for a goal when Thompson headed in a centre from Dennis, but the ball appeared to strike the net close to the bar and come out again. The referee was right to disallow if he thought there was any doubt. Clifford had a great chance to head a goal after a thrustful effort by Eyre, but Harper saved cleverly, and then there were fierce struggles around Robson. The goal fell, however, as the result of a delightful bit of work by Reid. Snapping up a pass, he moved as if to send out to Pointon, and three defenders endeavoured to bar his way, with Miles particularly attentive. REID, however, suddenly swerved inwards, just as suddenly shot with his left foot, the ball travelled like a streak of light, skimming the underside of the bar in its course, and Robson was hopelessly beaten. It was a gem of a goal.

There were strong attacks by the Town before the interval, which came with the score:

LUTON 2
BOURNEMOUTH 0

The second half found the visitors just as eager as at the start. They played splendidly for a time, and with the Town apparently content with their lead, there was a good deal of work for the home halves and rearguard. During this period we saw Clifford at his best, and he and Eyre were always dangerous, but the alertness of the home halves and backs, and the sureness of Harper, prevented a score. When the Town forwards began to take a keener interest in the proceedings, the result gradually became clearer. Robson

made fine saves before the third goal came. Reid got through a breach that was left because the visitors would give so much attention to Thompson. The inside right shot in hard and low, and Robson managed to get his hand to the ball and turn it aside. He grabbed it again, Woods charged him and caused him to lose his hold, and THOMPSON tapped the ball into the net.

FINE FOOTBALL.

Then we had a spell of football as good as anything we have seen this season. The Town halves were playing magnificently, the forwards co-operating brilliantly, time after time the ball was carried from centre to goal, and Robson was constantly employed. The right wing came in for as much applause as the left, and Black was putting in admirable work, deceiving the opposition time after time. From one of his moves, Reid got the chance to send across, and DENNIS headed in, Robson getting his hand to the ball by a great effort, but the referee thought it was well over the line, and promptly signalled a goal.

Now and then the visitors got away, but the Town had most of the play, and beyond one wonderful save by Harper when Eyre shot with all his might, the home defence was not seriously troubled by shots, though Clifford's activities required a lot of watching.

NO STALENESS.

There was no suggestion of staleness about the Town's display, or about that of the visitors. The latter had to work hard unless they wanted to return with the hottest hiding they had received for years. It was the heaviest defeat they have had this season. Once they have had six goals scored against them, but got a couple in reply. One could realise they would be a warm lot against a defence less resolute than was the Town's, and they now and then did clever work in attack and defence. It was not sustained, however, and there was not the team spirit and understanding that marked the Town's work. Harper made three fine saves, and was more confident than usual. His backs played well, Richards again proving a tower of strength, while Till, after a rather indifferent start, enjoyed himself.

MIDDLE MEN.

The Town middle line played grand football. Black was the most consistent, and some of his initiatory work was very high class. His control and disposition of the ball were excellent, and as Richards was the best back on view, Black was the best half. Rennie gave a bright and convincing display, and Millar, though he had to tackle a fine wing, held his own in defence, and fed his forwards with remarkable skill and judgment, especially in the second half.

Through their efforts the forwards were bound to play well. Thompson was the strong man of the line, and his intentness and challenging methods drew upon him a lot of roughness from Miles, but left his colleagues free to do damage. Moreover, he distributed well, and his enthusiasm and unselfishness elicited frequent applause.

Woods and Reid both played finely. The former's craft has made a lot of difference to Reid as well as to Thompson, and the former is quite good enough at inside right on such form. Pointon did not get as many chances as Dennis, and now and then his doubling back threw the attack out of gear, but he sprinted strongly and centred well. Dennis found the ball too lively at times in the first half, but is as good as ever, and his work in the second half was beyond reproach.

THE VISITORS.

Bournemouth have a clever goalkeeper in Robson, and Armstrong played strongly at back, and was the better of the pair. Miles was awkward at centre half, but got through a lot of hard work, and his colleagues were skilful when allowed time. Clifford and Eyre were the pick of the forwards.

There were about 6,000 spectators, but the game deserved thrice that attendance.