

SOUTHEND SNATCH SUCCESS

LUTON'S ILL-LUCK IN OPENING MATCH.

Only Goal Scored on Time.

(By CRUSADER).

SOUTHEND UNITED 1 Goal
LUTON TOWN Nil

SOUTHEND. — Boyce; Rosier, Bell; Dixon, Frew, Plum; Horne, Bailey, Hick, Donovan, Fell.

LUTON.—Abbott; Richards, Till; Black, Bennie, Millar; Pointon, Reid (S.), Galloway, Woods, Dennis

Referee: Mr. G. T. Gould, London.

If LUTON TOWN receive proportionately as much support in their home games as they received in their opening match at SOUTHEND on Saturday, then the club will have a very prosperous season. For a special reason, it was gratifying to me that so many supporters—estimated at 2,000—went, for there are individuals who absolutely refuse to believe that Luton could ever, by any sort of possibility, deserve to win or be unlucky to lose. I do not mean the people who followed the club to Southend, for those are usually, in the main, the wholehearted supporters of the club, who do think it is possible for a team to be worthy of the Town Club's long history.

DESERVED A POINT.

They, on Saturday, while by no means boastful of the exhibition given by the team, could fully understand that it was dire misfortune to have an apparently good goal disallowed, and then see the home team gallop away and score a goal that was appealed against, for the very reason that Luton's was—offside. Referee Gould did his best, and gave an honest opinion about the goal Luton scored, no less than about the one that counted, and with that we must be content, but there were few Lutonians, and not a few Southenders were with them, but thought that the decisions might well have operated the other way. They all agreed that on the run of the game the Town deserved at least one point, if not by their own brilliance, at least from the fact that they had quite as much of the play, and were often more dangerous than the home side.

TILL SPARKLES.

Facing a strong breeze and slope, the Town managed to hold their own, though the home side were attacking the more frequently, and it was quite on the cards that the Town would win in the second half, when they had the advantages. Apart from two very fine shots by Donovan, magnificently raved by Abbott, the home team seldom could get in an aimed effort, for the defenders were in sparkling form, and Till was simply brilliant. At the other end, Boyce was not often in trouble, though once very lucky to get the ball away, thanks to the bustle of Galloway and the hustle of Woods. Generally, the football was fast rather than attractive, for the ball was in the air most of the time, the middle men booting hard like full backs, and many attempted passes went astray.

GOAL PACKERS.

The second half had not been in progress many minutes before the Town set up fierce attacks, and it seemed as if the goal must fall, but the home players defended desperately, and the backs were reinforced by the forwards as well as the halves, and though shots from all the forwards went very close, most were too high, and in the several scrambles that took place in the goal-mouth, the goal was packed very tight. Nearly all the danger came from the Town left wing, because that pair got more of the ball than the others, and neither Pointon nor Reid had many opportunities to shine. They usually caused trouble on those occasions, and two or three times were applauded for clever work. Dennis made good headway with passes from Woods and Rennie, but shot several times when he should have slipped the ball into the middle and thus have given the centre-forward a chance.

WOODS' HEADER.

The home halves and backs did not stand on ceremony, and Dixon, Frew and Rosier were all spoken to by the referee for fouling. It was from a bad trip on Reid that the free kick came to create controversy. Black placed the ball beautifully, and Woods, who was standing with the backs, shot forward as the ball came over, and headed a lovely goal. However, the backs had stepped forward as soon as the ball came across, and appealed loudly, and Mr. Gould adjudged Woods offside. The peculiar thing was that the whistle did not sound until the ball was in the net, whereas if Woods were offside when the kick was taken, it should have been blown immediately, because the ball went direct to him.

THE GOAL.

The game was about 85 minutes old then, and Southend profited by the escape. They came down the field, and Hick seized upon a miskick. He was hampered, and so sent out a slanting forward pass to Horne, who was well on the far side of Millar. An appeal was raised at once, but it was not allowed, and Horne cut in, running round Millar, who took a short cut to meet him, and then the ball was tapped nicely in front. HICK just managed to get his foot to the ball and screw it away from Abbott. The goalkeeper went down full length, and just managed to tip the ball on to the upright, whence it crossed the line, the goalkeeper again making a great effort, but failing to get the ball out. The closing stages were safely played by the home team, and the game ended as above.

Abbott is a goalkeeper of the best class. A very pleasing feature was that he was left alone to do his own work, and he got room to operate, and a good view of the game. He will have much more work to do than he experienced in this game, but can be trusted to do it well.

Till quite outshone Richards as well as the other pair. He was wonderful in his judgment of position, and his kicking and tackling were alike deserving of the many bursts of applause received. Richards was quite at home in his position, and, without touching his best, was quite good enough for the opposition.

MIDDLE MEN.

The middle line will most assuredly play much better. Black was a long time settling down, and Rennie and Millar never had a grip of things to the extent we expect. The wind was a great trial to all of them, and they could not keep the ball under control. The defensive work was not bad, by any means, but it was in the support of the forwards that they so often fell short of expectations. Perhaps we expect too much of them in this way.

ATTACK.

The left wing was more often in the eye than the right, and this was largely due to the very keen and judicious play of Woods, who played a great game throughout. Dennis was fleet and got the better of many tussles with Bosier, but he spoiled some chances by trying to get the goal himself. On the right wing, Pointon and Reid were often on the waiting list, and must get better help if they are to be the factors in attack they were last season. Both worked well when they got the chance.

Galloway did not shine, and I fear he got a little criticism that was not deserved. He gave a few nice passes, and shot well, but was slow on the turn and in harassing the opposition. It must be remembered, however, that he got very few passes through the middle or from the wings, and if he is to get goals there will have to be better feeding. Pace he must acquire, however, for it is regarded in these days as of greater importance than dazzling trickery. Perhaps by the time these lines are printed, he will have established the confidence of the supporters. I hope so.

There were about 12,000 spectators.