

A FREAK GOAL.

WHY WATFORD WON THE LOCAL "DERBY."

Town Forwards Off Colour.

(By CRUSADER).

WATFORD 1 goal

LUTON TOWN Nil

WATFORD. — Yates; Slade, Davison; Smith, Leaver, Morris; Hills, Foster, Jewitt, Sheppard, Daniels.

LUTON. — Abbott; Kingham, Graham; Black, Fulton, Fraser; Pointon, Yardley, Reid (S.), Dennis, Nunn.

Referee. — Mr. T. J. Botham, Walsall.

IT is reported that an American wagered that Gene Tunney would not be knocked out, and, according to the official verdict, won his wager, which was for a considerable sum. He refused to collect the money, however, on the grounds that he considered Tunney was knocked out in the seventh round. Had the same gentleman wagered that WATFORD would beat LUTON TOWN last Saturday, he would probably have declined to accept his money, so unusual was the goal that won the match. It was a pure freak, due solely to the fact that the ground just in front of goal was uneven. Many of Luton's supporters were inclined to blame Abbott, but I cannot do it. He is under a cloud at the moment, and little seems to go right with him, but he would have been an exceptional custodian who could have expected the ball and the ground to play such a trick upon him.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Some years ago Luton were playing Portsmouth, and the goalkeeper was injured. Tom Parker went into the breach, and Luton were leading by two goals to one when a simple shot came in. Parker had it well covered, but the ball suddenly bounced off at a tangent, right away from the goalkeeper, and went into the net, thus enabling Pompey to share the points.

The only goal at Watford was exactly like that. SHEPPARD, the scorer, had not the faintest idea when he kicked the ball that there was a possibility of a goal. Indeed, the ball would have gone out of play, but Abbott had plenty of time to collect it after it bounced, and clear, and he was on the right of the goal-post as the ball slowly bounced in front of him. It struck a knur of turf, was diverted to his left hand, and slowly entered the net, to the consternation of the Town defenders. Why Sheppard was so eager to shake hands with everybody in the vicinity I do not know. It was a freak, not a feat.

SKY-BALL.

That goal won the match. Apart from it, there cannot be the slightest doubt that Luton were every bit as good, if not better, than the home side. Yates, as a matter of fact, had more and harder work than Abbott. If there had been one reliable marksman in the Town attack the points would have come to Luton, for there were more chances available for the Town forwards than fell to Watford's vanguard. That was not because the football was good. Many said that it was a good game, but that was chiefly because all the players were fighting hard all the time, and not because the quality of the play merited compliments. The ball was in the sky all too often, and, even allowing for the puzzling breeze, ball control generally was well below the average.

WATFORD'S ESCAPES.

The first half was in favour of the Town, and had Nunn taken his time a little after he had dribbled through, and placed his shot, he must have beaten Yates, but he banged hard, and though Yates was beaten, there was just too much altitude, and the ball rebounded from the bar. Another narrow escape for Watford was when Fraser shot in hard and low among a crowd of players gathered in the goal-mouth. Yates was at the other end of the goal, but Davison managed to push his foot out and get the ball away from the goal-line. Those were the only real thrills at the Watford end, though the crowd were always prepared to make the best of even moderate efforts to score.

At Luton's goal the closest shaves came when Leaver took a free kick, and Abbott did not appear to be quite clear whether the ball was going in or out, but it went out. Another was when Fraser headed away, and the ball struck Sheppard's head and rebounded past the upright. The one good shot put in by Watford crept round the post, but Abbott was in close attendance.

WITHOUT METHOD.

There was no goal at the cross-over, and the only goal, referred to above, came less than ten minutes after the restart. It was not worth calling an attack that Watford made, for they were held up well outside the penalty area, and Sheppard kicked the ball almost aimlessly when the all-provoking accident occurred to Abbott. The Watford goal had a few more narrow escapes in the next five minutes, and on the run of the game the Town held their own. There were hot struggles in the Watford goal area just afterwards, and Yates made some good saves. The lack of sustained and well-planned assault was absent, however. Reid could not find his feet quickly enough; the same could be said of Dennis; Pointon was almost starved, and Yardley was desperate enough, but unable to control. Nunn was capable of good things, but got little support.

KICK AND RUSH.

... was very much the same with Wat-

ford. Foster and Jewitt had changed places at half-time, but there was little sting in the attack, and nearly all the work worthy of mention came from Hills or Daniels, and chiefly the former. Two or three times, Abbott had to punch away, but he was never in such straits as was Yates. Such attempts as were made to keep the ball down were mainly by Black and Fraser on the one side, and Leaver on the other, but it was generally a kick and rush business. The Town inside forwards had several good openings, but could not beat Yates, although in the closing stages Pointon made one fine effort. His shot was met by the fists of the goalkeeper, and, while the ball was not cleared by Yates, it went out of danger after a scrimmage.

UNPLEASANT INCIDENTS.

Watford must have accounted themselves very fortunate to take the points. If either side deserved a goal it was Luton, but the exhibition was of such poor class that neither forward line seemed able to get the better of useful defenders. Play was not particularly rough, but there were a few unpleasant incidents, as when Graham brought down Hills, and Leaver fouled Yardley, but the referee was disposed to leniency.

For the home side Yates was safe. Slade and Davison were hard kickers, without much objective in their work except to get the ball as far away as possible. Leaver and Smith often did neat work at half, but could not sustain good intentions very long. The forwards were moderate, Hills being the best, with Daniels a good second.

TOWN TEAM.

Abbott still showed traces of nervousness, though he ought not to do so, since he positions well and fields nicely. Kingham played a fine game again, and was very sound in his tackling, though his kicking was rather erratic at times. Graham was better than in the previous game, fearless and hard-kicking, and used his head well. Fraser once more took the honours at half, and eleven like him would have won in a canter. He knows how to hold the ball, how to deliver, and much of the success of Nunn is due to his fine feeding. Black was poor in the first half, but did very well indeed in the last half-hour, especially in urging his forwards to the attack, and playing them with nice passes. He was back at his best in this period. Fulton was on form in the first half, but in a melee in the second had the senses knocked out of him, and was never himself again.

FORWARDS FAIL.

There were times when the forwards thoroughly outwitted the home middle and back divisions, but there were as many occasions when individual forwards tried to cut blindfold through a ruck of players without making any attempt to open out the game. Pointon was not used nearly as much as he might have been, though he did not shine very often when he had the chance. Yardley worked might and main with good intent, but was often out of position, and frequently on top of Reid. The latter seemed lost at times, and had little sense of leadership, while he scarcely got in a shot during the match. Dennis, too, was slow in front of goal, though doing a few nice things with Nunn, who was the best of the line again. All of them can do much better than this, and especially in front of goal:

There were 12,413 spectators, and the receipts were £771.