

REID THE RAIDER.

LUTON TOWN THRASH MERTHYR.

First Half Fury.

(By CRUSADER).

LUTON TOWN 5 goals
MERTHYR TOWN 1 goal
LUTON. — Abbott; Kingham, Graham;
Black, Rennie, Fraser; Pointon, Yardley,
Reid (S.), Woods, Dennis.
MERTHYR. — Lindon; Page, Pedler;
Crewe, Bishop, Lewis; Lawley, Jones,
Astley, Livingstone, Ford.
Referee.—S. H. Burton, Leicester.

Perhaps the best summary of LUTON TOWN'S play against MERTHYR TOWN on Saturday was that of the supporter who said, "I was nearly sick in the first half because they got so many goals; and was just as queer in the second because they played as if they had no idea of getting on."

There was much truth in that. The best feature of the game was the winning spirit that ran away with the game in the first 25 minutes; and the worst the old fault of several players pulling up as if they had no further joy in the game, and the supporters were beneath consideration. Some players need instruction in the source of income to the Club, how it is kept going, and it all boils down to one thing—goals. There can never be too many goals to satisfy the average supporter, and for players to withhold their best because they think the game is won is unwise. The first half display roused the supporters to great enthusiasm, and in the second half the disinclination of some members of the team was irritating to a degree.

"In my playing days," said Mr. John McCartney last week, "I never could bear the slowing-up. Anybody who knew me will admit, whatever my faults, that I played just as hard in the last five minutes as in the first five, and it makes me cross when I see fellows slowing up, not because they are tired, but because they think they have done enough."

Every supporter of the Town will hope that the Town players will get a lesson from their chief in this respect.

NOW THEY WON.

Having expressed that complaint, and not nearly so forcibly as some of the supporters would wish, it is a pleasure to compliment the players on the manner they went about their job at the outset. It was in keeping with the recent revival. The speed and accuracy, the co-operation from rearguard to van, warmed up the supporters, and made them forget the dismal conditions. Quickness in taking possession, and thrustfulness, upset the visiting halves and backs, who could not get the hang of things.

Several times the Merthyr goal came near downfall in the first ten minutes, Woods saving very hard luck with a nice header, and once it appeared as though a penalty kick were merited. Jones was the lively spark of the visitors, and invariably made progress when he received. In consequence Abbott had something to do, but play was usually in Merthyr territory. The eleventh minute brought success. A natty pass found Dennis, and he pushed the ball past Page to REID, who had taken up position cleverly. Though the centre-forward was temporarily held up by Pedler, he recovered and crashed the ball into the net.

The Town then took command, and with all the team playing intelligently, there was plenty of work for the Merthyr backs. The Merthyr forwards made a few skirmishes, and Abbott had one or two awkward shots to deal with, but the Town replied furiously.

A PENALTY KICK.

Pointon was not comfortable, and two or three times failed to do his part on receiving nice passes, but in a further advance he gave Yardley a chance to rush through. There were two or three attempts to bring down the inside-right, and eventually his feet were swept from under him, and the referee promptly awarded a penalty kick. DENNIS took the kick, and netted. Lindon expected the shot on his left, but it went to his right, rather slowly, for the mud took a lot of speed off the ball.

Merthyr made a plucky but fruitless effort, and then the Town left wing got through. Woods passed over to Yardley, who headed back across goal to REID, and the latter headed past Lindon.

Merthyr's grit was unabated, and they kept the Town defence busy for a while, but when the home forwards came again Woods plied REID with a lovely pass. The visitors' backs foiled the centre-forward, but Woods was at hand, and tipped the ball through for the centre-forward to shoot past Lindon at close quarters.

Two minutes later the Town left wing again made the pace, and Woods once more fed REID. The latter this time did not bother to dribble, but drove in a glorious left-foot shot, that beat Lindon all the way for the fifth goal.

From this point the Town team slackened, and Merthyr gave Abbott and his backs a fair amount of work, but there was no further score before the change of ends.

LUTON TOWN 5 goals
MERTHYR TOWN Nil

The subsequent play was a tiresome affair. Before the interval the visiting halves and backs had shown signs of frayed tempers, and play had been rather vigorous. Many free kicks were given against them, and the Town players had been penalised for retaliation. In the second half, after a quiet beginning, there was a lot of dirty play, and the referee allowed many palpable offences to pass unnoticed. Towards the end the crowd got very angry with players of both sides, and the referee should have taken exemplary measures. There was too much ankle-rapping, and half-a-dozen players lost their tempers. Woods was hurt early on, and was absent for some minutes.

On returning he was a passenger at outside-left. Kingham was twice knocked out, and the second time had to leave the field altogether. Yardley was damaged; Pedler also had to retire from the field shortly before the end. Lawley was another to require attention, and there were other minor injuries. This sort of play tended to disgust the crowd, and they let the referee and the players know it.

MERTHYR'S GOAL.

The disposition of some of the Town players to take the opposition too cheaply not only kept the Town's score down, but gave Merthyr several chances, only one of which, however, was accepted. This came mid-way through the half. The light was failing, and from the Press Box it was impossible to see whether Jones or Lawley made the fine solo run that brought success. From near the centre-line he went right through in brilliant fashion, and turned the ball in front cleverly. FORD had closed in from the left, and promptly smashed the ball into the net.

For a time the Town players strove to make amends, and Dennis would have scored with a grand shot but for Lindon turning the ball round the post. Lindon made further fine saves in the next ten minutes, and the Town pressed heavily without success.

Remaining play was fairly even, but once Yardley went through and was brought down, but the appeal for a penalty kick was negatived.

THE PLAYERS.

Abbott is playing now as we had expected when he first came. His confidence is quite returned, and his recovery has given pleasure all round. Is Kingham getting a bit tired? Perhaps it is the heavy ground, but in the last two or three games he has not got into his stride so quickly. However, he has yet to play a poor game. His tackling on Saturday was clever as ever, though good length kicking was wanting. Graham again played strongly, and the full back is now doing as well as ever in his six years with the Town. His dash and recovery are features of every game. Black was the master hand of the middle men. He had the pull in praise because he kept up his game throughout. In the first half the whole line was magnificent in support of the forwards, and had a big share in the success of the forwards. Rennie is playing better than ever—when he likes. In the second half, however, he seemed to let things take their course, and this was the law on his game. Fraser's skill, especially in co-operation with his wing, was delightful, but here again, when the Town had a big lead, the player took the opposition too lightly, and, having beaten one, often two, and sometimes three players, wanted to beat the team instead of giving more chances to his attack. This fault eliminated Fraser is undoubtedly one of the finest half-backs in the south.

FORWARDS.

Against Clapton the right wing had a joy day, but against Merthyr Pointon was right off colour. Somehow the ball would not travel in accordance with his intentions. When Pointon has had a poor afternoon, it is customary for him to do something extraordinary in the next game. We shall expect his best on Saturday, and I hope we have heard the last of the barracking of the right winger. It was obvious on Saturday that he was off colour, but that was no excuse for the treatment he received from a section of the spectators. Yardley was as thrustful as ever, and got through an enormous amount of hard work, and held his own with robust opponents. The left wing played finely, and it was due to Woods and Dennis that Reid got so many goals. Both of them gave the centre-forward nice passes, and time after time they combined in attacks that evoked great enthusiasm. Woods being subtle and cool in his holding and passing, and Dennis fleet of foot and accurate in centreing. Reid got four goals and delighted everybody with his forceful work, his nice passing, and his marksmanship. Encouragement means a lot to the sturdy Sidney, and it pays the crowd to cheer him. He is now at his best, and we hope he will keep it up.

Merthyr were plucky always, and clever often. It was the opening fury that swept them into defeat. Lindon could not be blamed. He is still a fine goalkeeper, and deserves a compliment as manager for getting together such a useful side under depressing circumstances. Page and Pedler defended stubbornly, the latter especially, but they were not too particular. The middle men were lost in the first half, but did good work in the second. Jones was a little but a really clever forward, and his control and intelligence were remarkable. Lawley and Ford also did much good work.

Mr. Burton was a substitute referee. He has a lot to learn in the matter of control of men, though efficient in other respects.

There were fewer than 5,000 spectators.