

LUTON GO DOWN.

WATFORD DESERVED THEIR VICTORY.

An Exciting Game.

By Crusader.

THERE must have been 7,000 supporters of LUTON TOWN at WATFORD on Saturday to see the team lose for the first time this season. Defeat is always a disappointment, but it was bound to happen some time, and the Town and their followers may well be proud of the magnificent run of success at the start of this season. This was the eleventh game, and the Town were the last English team in the Football League to succumb. Only one other of the clubs in the four compartments of the League lasted as long, and they also suffered defeat in their eleventh game—the Welsh club, Wrexham.

Watford were bemoaning the suspension of their captain and centre-half, the famous Barson, and also the mishap to their centre-forward, McPherson, who was nursing a damaged leg, but afterwards everywhere there was an admission that the team had never played with such spirit and skill. On the other hand the Town have never played this season with such lack of cohesion, and general listlessness, and they were far below the form that has placed them in their proud position. Though they suffered defeat, they are still at the head of the League table, and their nearest rivals all failed at home.

A BIG CROWD.

Twenty thousand people saw the struggle, and there has never been such a following for the Town in any game away from home as in this. In addition to full special trains, it appeared as though every possible road vehicle had been engaged, and there was a never-ending stream of motor conveyances between Watford and the various surrounding towns and villages as far as Luton and beyond. The display of favours by the Town supporters also surpassed anything ever seen before in the meetings of the teams, and excitement was intense almost from start to finish of the game.

Watford were the better side on the day's play, and deserved their success. Though praise is chiefly accorded by the critics to the nippy and youthful forward line, the real strength of the side was in the middle division, for while the Town forwards were knocked off their game, the home forwards received consistently clever support. The distribution of the Watford halves, and the often brilliant manner in which they initiated attack, kept the Town rearguard continually at work.

ELEMENTS OF LUCK.

In spite of this superiority there was an element of luck in the game that affected the result, though the Town defenders could hardly complain on that score. The first goal came after 11 minutes, when Chapman, one of the young recruits secured by Manager Pagnam this season, was provided with a wide pass from Sheppard, and having plenty of ground in which to operate, he got the ball across nicely while the Town defenders were spread-eagled, and HOLLAND headed past the hapless Abbott to open the score.

The Town had the better of the exchanges until they got the equaliser, and Millar was responsible for the deft pass that enabled Woods to run through and send the ball across at the right moment. YARDLEY was in the right place, and dashing in at the correct moment, shot the ball into the net. The Town threatened to take the lead on several occasions after this, but it was to be at the other end, and came in a very simple way. I shall not concede that HOLLAND, the scorer, was not offside. He was well beyond the Town backs, who were rather wide apart, when Fuller pushed the ball up the middle, and the centre-forward shot as Abbott advanced a few paces from his goal.

Very soon after this Davison, almost under the nose of the referee, beat the ball down from above his head by using both hands, but a clear case for a penalty kick was missed. Play was keen and often exciting, but the quick, swinging advances we have become accustomed to from the Town were missing, and though the ball was often in the Watford goal area, the home backs and halves defended well, and the interval came without further score.

The second half was more in favour of Watford. They played the right game, their wings being plied splendidly, and showing how to control the ball and to centre at the right moment, but most of the initiatory work was from the middle line, whose co-operation was bright and enterprising. Watford had a goal disallowed for offside, but they scored again through SHEPPARD, who shot from the rim of the penalty area, along the ground, and the Luton goalkeeper evidently thought the ball was going out of play, for he made no attempt to get at it, and it struck the upright and rolled into the goal.

Luton could not get going. Daly and Bedford were playing well, but there was little support from the middle men, who found the pace and skill of the opposition all too hot. The last goal came from BEDFORD, who accepted a pass from Rennie, broke right through as he veered inwards from the left wing, and as Hewett ran out the little winger shot the ball into the net.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Had there been a colleague in the right place a minute or two later the equalising goal might have come from the pass Bedford gave to the right when the defence was drawn, but there was nobody up on the right or centre, and Hewett was able to run out and clear. In the closing stages one or two desultory attacks were made, and almost in the last minute of the game Rennie's name was taken, as he kicked Hewett when lunging at the ball as the goalkeeper dodged past him.

A foul for dangerous play would have been the right decision, and perhaps that was what the referee intended. The fact remains that Rennie has the unenviable distinction of being the first Luton player to be named this season.

The points were well earned by the winners, and they need have little fear of their position in the League if they can maintain such a standard of play.

PLAYERS.

Abbott had not a great deal to do, but while he took the ball well, was not at his best. Possibly that most unlucky experience last season on the same ground, when the only goal of the match came through the ball hitting a tuft of turf and going right away from him into the net, recurred to his mind. Kingham was the finest back on view, and Richards played better than against Coventry, but the middle men did not reach the highest standard by a long, long way. The flank halves could not keep pace with Watford's fleet wingers, and Fulton was not a match for the wifful and quick-footed inside forwards.

The attack suffered through this, and at no time did they give a really good line movement. Now and then there were clever little skirmishes by either wing, but Rennie got few chances of shooting. Practically the only opportunity he had was in the first half, when Hewett came out of goal and managed to divert a fast low drive.

The team generally, however, seemed to lose sense of the value of position, and the work was lacking in intelligence.

Watford had a fine goalkeeper in Hewett: their backs were lusty kickers, and never stood on ceremony. The half-backs played well, being a level lot, with Fuller showing much skill in nursing his forwards. There was evidence that he, at least, has learned something from Barson. The forwards were a fast and enterprising line, unselfish, too, and playing for each other, and they carried on the work of the middle men to fruition.

WATFORD.—Hewett; Prior, Davison; Smith, Fuller, Jewett; Chapman, Barnett, Holland, Sheppard, Daniels.

LUTON.—Abbott; Kingham, Richards; Black, Fulton, Millar; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Woods, Bedford.

Referee.—Mr. J. Emerson, London.

WATFORD 2 goals
LUTON 1 goal

WATFORD 3
LUTON TOWN 2