

# LUTON WIN AGAIN.

## CAPITAL DISPLAY IN FIRST HALF.

### Walsall's Bid.

By Crusader.

**L**UTON TOWN gained their victory over WALSALL by a convincing display in the first half. They had hard work to hold their own after the interval, when the visitors made a desperate rally, but the effect of the first half was too strong to be nullified, and the Midlanders were always fighting an uphill battle. They did so in a fine sporting spirit, and the game was on a par with the best we have seen this season in the matter of freedom from ugly incidents and dirty play. The referee had plenty of running about, but his whistle was not required nearly as much as has been his experience with other games this season. Such fouls as were committed were of a mild character, and were the result of exuberance rather than intent.

#### AN EARLY GOAL.

Though they lost the toss and had to face a slight breeze, the Town were quickly off the mark, and after two rapid assaults had been frustrated a sharp dash by RENNIE through the middle gave him the opportunity to open the scoring with a clever shot from a somewhat awkward angle to the right of the goal. There was a speed and dash in the movements of the Town that had the visitors on the defensive for long periods; though when the Walsall forwards got moving they gave no small amount of trouble to the Town backs, without making serious calls upon Abbott, Moffat and Thomson were the chief source of worry, but Dennis and Harris played well, and though the little winger made tricky runs and one or two nice centres, the inside forwards seldom had a chance to shoot unhampered.

At the other end the Town forwards frequently moved in almost perfect unison, and both wings were kept going, the halves feeding with well judged passes, and Rennie also distributing evenly, and then being nicely in position for a shot. Some of the advances were a positive delight, and the Walsall halves and backs had a harassing time. Wait, however, was a fine goalkeeper, and made several grand saves, notably from Rennie, though the centre-forward might reasonably have scored on at least three occasions.

#### WOODS' GREAT SHOT.

The Town's second goal was the reward of promptitude in front of goal, and it was a magnificent shot of WOODS, a real first-time effort, that crashed into the roof of the net, Wait making a plucky but unavailing attempt to turn the ball over the bar. These two goals represented half an hour's interesting play, with the Town having by far the better of the exchanges, and fully deserving their strong lead.

Many other attempts were nearly fruitful before the interval, while at the other end Abbott could not retain a terrific shot from a free kick, and the ball was cleared only after a desperate scuffle in the goal area. The interval was signalled with the score:—

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| LUTON TOWN ..... | 2 |
| WALSALL .....    | 0 |

For nearly a quarter of an hour after the re-start the Town were still on top, and twice Rennie missed good chances. Yardley presented him with a pass in front of an open goal, but the ball was too high to be kicked, and Rennie failed to take it on his breast. A little later he was given a pass in his favourite position, but the ball spun off his foot and travelled a yard wide.

#### WALSALL'S BID.

Then Walsall got together, and with Moffat and Smith showing rare speed, and a lot of trickery, play was in the Town half for an extended period. The home halves quite failed to retain command of the opposition, and their positioning and kicking was poor, so that the backs were overburdened. However, both Kingham and Harris played finely, and Abbott had not a great deal to do. Nevertheless, he made two wonderful saves, once running out to foil Lane when that crack marksman had a great chance, and again flinging himself at a fast shot by Moffat and turning away the ball when it seemed certain to find the correct billet.

The visitors played cleverly in midfield, and often the Town halves were hopelessly out of position, but a little encouragement began to mend matters, and when the third goal arrived the issue was beyond doubt.

#### RENNIE AGAIN

A raid on the Walsall right had been broken by Harris, who sent the ball forward to RENNIE, and before the Walsall backs could counter, the centre-forward had slipped through and lifted the ball over Wait's head as the goalkeeper ran out to intercept.

The Town appeared to score another good goal as a result of further pressure before the end. Bedford gathered a

pass, and, though tackled immediately, managed to dribble along to the goal line. He then ran round his man to cut in and beat Wait with a fast shot as the custodian ran out. The referee pointed to the centre, but the Walsall players appealed to him, and he went over to the linesman, and as a result Bedford was given offside, this being the official version, hardly understandable in view of the fact that Bedford beat an opponent for possession. Still, Capt. Prince-Cox is one of the referees who believe in allowing the man with the flag a real interest in his job, and had to accept his verdict.

Walsall pegged away to the end, and their efforts brought a goal with the last kick of the game. Smith, who had been very active in the second half, got past Kingham and Black, and centred almost from the line. LANE received unmarked in front of goal, and managed to tap the ball past Abbott, appeals for offside being negatived. Before the game could be re-started the whistle sounded the end.

#### DEFENCE STRENGTHENED.

Much satisfaction was expressed over the play of Harris, the new player. The rearguard appeared to be strengthened by his inclusion, for he showed skill in interception, and a nice length kick. Now and then he did not get the ball fairly on the instep, but the feature of his play was his coolness and the co-operation with Dennis, while he never overshot his forwards. He was speedy, too, and quick in recovery. Kingham maintained his splendid form, and gets stronger and surer with every match. His positioning was the secret of successful tackling, his kicking is improving rapidly, and he should soon be equal to any back the Town have had for a football generation. Abbott was safer, and inspired more confidence than at Watford, and his two saves in the second half "brought down the house."

#### MIDDLE MEN.

The middle men gave a very fine exhibition in the first half, and though not holding the visitors completely in check, they were difficult obstacles to overcome, while their work with the forwards was a big factor in the heavy pressure. In the second half they had a bad time for a period of twenty minutes, but recovered again before the end. Dennis was as good as, if not better than, any half-back in the game. He had the good sense to keep a close eye on Moffat, who was certainly the most dangerous of the visiting forwards. Fulton and Black were much better in the first half than in the second, both tending their wings to good purpose, and helping along the many fierce onslaughts.

#### THE ATTACK.

The forwards, while they had the support, were a very live attack. It was good to see the way the ball was swung about, though there were times when both Daly and Bedford hung on too long, with the result that the tacklers were able to block the centres or passes. They both showed good speed, and could not complain about the nursing they received, for their partners and the halves behind pushed the ball through nicely. Woods was at his best again, and Yardley was more pushful than in his average match this season, while Rennie was seldom out of position when the ball came his way. He deserves more of the through ground pass, for he is not without the faculty of beating an opponent provided the ball comes to him in such a manner that it can be collected. The three inside men were well on the mark, and a less capable custodian than Wait would have been beaten many more times.

#### WALSALL.

Walsall have a better side than last season. There is more football in it, and especially in the forward line, while the backs seemed safer than last season's pair. Wait was in grand form, and in Walters there are distinct possibilities of a class full back. Houldey also did well. The halves were robust and rugged rather than clever, with Groves the pick, because he had a better appreciation of the dual job of defence and attack. Moffat and Thomson were the better wing, but Smith showed skill when he got the right pass. Lane did not live up to his reputation as a marksman.

Captain Prince-Cox handled the game with his customary tact, and the 10,500 spectators enjoyed the afternoon's entertainment.

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|------------------|---|
| LUTON TOWN ..... | 3 |
| WALSALL .....    | 1 |

LUTON. — Abbott; Kingham, Harris; Black, Fulton; Dennis; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Woods, Bedford.

WALSALL. — Wait; Walters, Houldey; Groves, Hunter, Lochhead; Moffat, Thomson, Lane, Bradford, Smith.

Referee.—Captain A. Prince-Cox, Barnes.