

F.A. CUP: FIRST ROUND.

SOUTHEND'S STRUGGLE

Unavailing Against Luton's Brilliant Attack

By Crusader.

THERE has been nothing tasteless in any of LUTON TOWN'S games this season, however considerable the margin of victory. When a team asserts definite superiority in match after match, even in home encounters, the supporters are apt to think the football has been poor. As a matter of fact, in spite of the continuous succession of victories the Luton supporters have seen, play has seldom been one-sided, and though SOUTHEND UNITED were thrashed severely at Luton on Saturday, the large crowd went away satisfied, not merely with the win, but with the game. Possibly the United would have made a better show had they been more strongly represented, though it is difficult to see how their defence could have been so improved as to prevent any of the five goals registered against them. **MOORE BEMUSED.**

We all expected that the rough wind would upset the calculations of the players, and that there would be a minimum of good football, but there was a lot of really clever play and when it comes to goal-scoring, which is a more artful business than many would assume since the change in the offside law, nothing better than the Town's attack could be desired. Indeed, but for the ravages of the wind, which was blowing half a gale, I believe that Rennie would have had almost double the number of goals. Many times in the first half he was beaten by the tricks of the wind when in position for a drive, and it is notable that before the interval his goals came from a penalty kick and a header, whereas the other two credited to his account came from characteristic shots that left the goalkeeper bemused by the pace and placing.

THE WINDY WAY.

With the wind behind them the Town were almost continuously aggressive, and when BEDFORD converted a typical centre from Daly, three minutes after the start, some of the confidence oozed from the Southend defenders. It was a well-earned point, and time after time in the next twenty minutes it seemed as if Moore must be beaten, but he kept goal well, his backs were vigilant, and though the wind carried the ball into the United's quarters time after time, it deluded the Town forwards, possibly with the exception of Daly, whenever they framed for a shot. However, when Rennie got in a drive that was blocked, he and Yardley were endeavouring to break through when the latter was fouled by Andrews, and the penalty kick was the only possible punishment. RENNIE fired into the net an unstoppable shot.

DALY'S RUN.

Two minutes later Daly accepted a pass from Fulton and slipped through, running right to the line and then lifting the ball cleverly into the middle, for RENNIE to head into the net right away from Moore.

Now and then Southend rallied with amazing energy. Both wings showed trickery and pace, and with Shankly boring in at every opportunity, the Town rearguard had to be constantly alert. The backs were bothered by the pranks of the wind, and Woolhouse, Shankly and Clenshaw all became dangerous, while Abbott made good saves. He was beaten unexpectedly by SHANKLY when the latter sent in a ground shot that was well directed, but as the goalkeeper went down the ball "jumped" over his hands and passed into the net. Both Abbott and the scorer were surprised by the success of the shot.

The Town came within an ace of scoring on two or three occasions, and Southend's defenders were very hard pressed; they were very fortunate to retire with no more than a deficit of two goals.

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Everybody was wondering if two goals would be sufficient advantage for the Town in the second half. Southend had shown pluck and skill, and took the field again in anything but a depressed mood. However, the Town went into the fray with such enthusiasm that they had scored a fourth goal within two minutes. Moore saved cleverly from Yardley when the Town went down from the kick-off, and the resultant corner kick was fruitless. A quick move on the left, and Rennie and Yardley outwitted the defence, the latter passing neatly for RENNIE to crash the ball into the net, Moore not having the slightest chance.

Though the United played hard, and

worked the ball well many times, the Town halves and backs were playing with fine judgment, and Abbott was quite at home to the shots that came his way. The Town invariably got to close quarters when the forwards received the ball, for the accurate passing generally found the man best positioned to carry on the good work. So it was that Bedford, after many fine runs, dropped the ball across goal, and Yardley nodded back to RENNIE, who quickly "killed" the ball, and then fired in a magnificent shot that left Moore agape.

ABBOTT'S SAVE.

The last half-hour found no faltering by the visitors, in spite of their big deficit, and with the Town defenders playing less earnestly than before, Abbott was given more excitement. One or two shots went very close, and Shankly blazed a little too high on two occasions. Now and then Abbott had to be spry to elude the rushes of the visiting forwards, and then he brought off a brilliant save when a fierce mass attack gave Clenshaw possession a few yards out. The goalkeeper could not hold the ball, but managed to get it away when a goal seemed certain. That was not the last effort the visitors made, and there were two occasions when they should have scored, but the end came with the Town goal still intact.

THE DEFENCE.

The Town defence was troubled more by the elements than by the Southend attack, but there was no depreciation of general value. Kingham and Harris gave Abbott sound protection, and there was better contact with the halves than usual. I would not blame Abbott for the goal: it was clear that the ball rose abruptly. Had it kept its course he would have saved. The middle men played surprisingly well, and finished quite strongly. All three got in the wars, but pluckily stuck to their guns. Fulton opened out better than in any other game this season, and, though he did not give Rennie the through pass so much wanted, wisely swished the ball out to the wings, and that always meant a gallop. Dennis and Graham played finely, and the latter showed appreciation of his job by trying to get his wings moving, instead of slogging the ball far ahead. Dennis co-operates well with his wing, and their movements were fraught with danger.

BRILLIANT ATTACK.

The attack gave a brilliant exposition, and every man seemed to be at the top of his form. I know that Harry Woods is very proud of his colleagues, and rightly are they proud of him. No man has had more to do with the shaping of Rennie, and though Harry is no gazelle for pace, his quick thinking and accurate passing are great factors in the continued efficiency of the line. Rennie is making strides towards greatness. Three months ago he could not head a ball, and had practically only one quality as a leader—his shooting. To-day he is much more than a magnificent shot—I do not think he has a superior in the kingdom as a marksman—he knows how to set his wings going with the slant pass, his positioning is admirable, while he is developing his head work, and showing facility for tricking an opponent. May he never be spoilt. Yardley is a twenty-five per cent. better player than he was last year. To his courage has been added craft, and now that he is getting wise to the needs of Daly they are making a fine wing. Their work on Saturday was most effective, and equalled that of the other flank, where Woods' brought out the best of Bedford, who is achieving at Luton a popularity comparable with that he won at Walsall. The speed and craftsmanship of the line is the mainspring of our hopes of promotion, and a long run in the Cup.

Southend had a fine goalkeeper in Moore, a grand back in Robinson, and Andrews was no novice; the middle line were resolute fellows, though Dixon and Frew were disposed to lose their tempers; Shankly was a splendid leader, always struggling, and Clenshaw was clever.

The attendance was 12,409, and the gate receipts £813 16s. 6d.

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

Shankly, Clenshaw, Woolhouse.