

SQUARE WITH COVENTRY.

LUTON TOWN BRING HOME A POINT

By Crusader.

LUTON TOWN supporters were satisfied with the point brought home from COVENTRY CITY—more so than the players, for the men who did the hardest work felt that they had been hardly dealt with when the City were awarded the penalty kick that enabled them to bring the scores level a quarter of an hour from the end. They had been the better side for at least an hour, but then had to put in their stiffest work in defence to retain the point.

After the match I sought the opinion of Referee Rudd, and he held that Millar tackled Starsmore unfairly, that he tackled as from the knee of his opponent, and thus took him off his balance. The situation was not clear from the Press-box, though we saw that before the City centre-forward went down the ball was kicked away from his toes. The Town players held that Starsmore himself made merry over the incident because he had rolled over in the penalty area when he lost the ball. In any case, he was well offside when he began the run that was so abruptly ended, and had Mr. Rudd been in a position to see, I am sure he would have whistled him up. However, he was convinced that the decision was just.

It was an interesting game, but play was never of the standard reached when the City visited and drew the match at Luton. Certainly the Town have played much better, as also have the City, according to their officials. Be that as it may, the Town were the better side, and consistent followers of the City admitted their favourites were fortunate to share the spoils. For fully an hour the Town played the more convincing football, but defenders of either side were not in the mood to stand on ceremony, and there were not a few hard, and sometimes unfair, knocks.

Luton were accompanied by a fairly good number of supporters, though the excursion train might have been better patronised. I doubt if more than 150 went by train, but there were a few motor-coaches and private cars that helped to swell the support, and colours were worn, though there was not the showing and enthusiasm we have been accustomed to see in these games. Still, these are hard times for most football followers, and to go by train meant losing a couple of hours' work.

The Luton team were in charge of Mr. Willie Ball, and it is interesting to know that he has never yet travelled in charge of the team when they have lost. He has been one of the party when they have gone down, but has never been actually in control when they have lost a game on opponents' ground. May the experience be long delayed. Among the others travelling were Messrs. Ernest Gibbs and Harry Smart, and Councillor C. Jeyes. It was a rather cold journey by the special train.

The Highfield-road ground was in excellent condition, and the City officials, as usual, gave the Luton party a cordial welcome. There was some little alarm when it was discovered that Bob Graham had arrived with David Richards' bag, for it meant that the outfit was too large for him. The other articles did not matter very much, but the boots of course, could not be made to fit, and a pair had to be borrowed from the City. Still, the players took the field in high spirits, and were confident of success. It is worth while to note that Banes has played in five games, and not yet been on the losing side. This was the fifth.

There can be no doubt that he has given no little confidence to the rest of the team ever since his first match, and, as in the past four games, the defence settled down immediately the game started. Harris captained the side, and guessed rightly the fall of the coin, but there was never any advantage to be gained apart from such influence as the mere fact of winning may give. The captain, after his long rest, showed that he had lost no confidence, and he and Graham settled down as though they had never been parted.

With the Town halves and forwards showing quickness on the ball, and real keenness to get to close quarters with Allen, play was in their favour from the start. The first dangerous assault came by way of the right wing, and Daly left Plunkett far behind and centred, but Yardley shooting hurriedly, did not get his foot properly to the ball, and it skidded wide of the upright. Clever offside tactics were employed by both pairs of backs, and then Banes made a neat save when Starsmore got through to shoot hard and low.

The Town had a fairly long spell of attack, and centres came from right and left wings, but Allen and his backs managed either to clear or to prevent the Town inside forwards shooting. Two good clearances by Millar were duly noted by the crowd, and also safe work by Graham and Harris, but for the most part the Town forwards were in the vicinity of Allen. They increased pressure as the game wore on, and the home rearguard was often in distress.

When Allen's goal fell it was a characteristic goal by the Town centre-forward. Yardley had beaten Higham, and passed gently to Bedford, who finessed for a moment, and then swung the ball into the middle some fifteen yards out. Roe blocked its progress, and the ball came to RENNIE, who let fly first time, and Allen never looked like saving as the ball, travelling at a great rate, swerved into the net. Play had then been going for twenty-nine minutes.

The City supporters had been rather quiet, and had good cause to be, for the goal was well deserved on the run of the play, and seemed to inspire the Town to greater things. Another good effort by the Town right would have been successful a minute later had the ball kept to the ground when Daly passed to Rennie, but it rose and hit his leg as he essayed to shoot, and went outside. Roe narrowly missed with a splendid header from corner kick by Daly, and Fulton also shot wide after another flag-kick. Just before the interval the City strove hard to make amends, but they were kept at bay, and the cross-over came with the score:—

LUTON 1
COVENTRY 0

The Town had the better of the play on the opening, and Roe was prominent with clever dribbling. He controlled well but was prone to hang on a moment too long when his colleagues were waiting for a pass, and good work was spoilt by this. Allen was often called upon, but usually the shots were from long range, and his backs protected him well. There was a big thrill following a fine dribble by Yardley, for he gave Bedford an opportunity to run right in, but the winger, trying to evade Allen's covering arms, put the ball just the farther upright.

Graham and Harris had to work hard, and Millar several times nipped in the bend the ans of Kirton and Toseland, although the latter's speed was a constant menace. Play continued fast and even, and the ball did a lot of travelling, being kept well on the ground, but position did not seem to count much with either side in attack. Great work was achieved by Fulton, and there were prospects of a victory for the Town when the equalising goal came.

A pass up midfield was taken by Starsmore when he was in an offside position, and the Town players promptly appealed, but without effect. Starsmore lost no time in getting into his stride, and Millar, Fulton and Harris went in chase. Just inside the penalty area this centre-forward was brought down as already described, and the penalty kick was converted by PICK with a fast high shot, and the scores were level.

The concluding stages favoured the home side, and Banes had quite a lot of work, for the Town forwards retreated, and thus the full force of the home side was brought to assist the attack. Banes made two or three splendid saves, his fine punching out of dangerous centres clearing his lines time after time, and the end came with the scores level.

Banes kept goal remarkably well again, and the wonder now is that he chose to remain in amateur football so long. He is quite happy at Luton, and is likely to make a name farther afield. He was well served by both backs, and it was good to find that Harris was at his best. He only made one mistake, and was then deserving of sympathy rather than censure, for the ball skidded off a knur of turf just as he was in the act of kicking. All the middle men played strongly, Fulton being a quick and powerful pivot, and Clark and Millar doing sterling work.

The forwards were not as well as we like to see, and though good in manipulation, their passing was not up to their best, and the finishing left a lot to be desired. They all worked hard, Daly and Bedford showing good speed and centring well, while Roe and Yardley were always dangerous. Rennie did not have as many opportunities of shooting as he had a right to expect, however, and should have received more passes, and more assistance, especially in the second half.

The City may not be a promotion side, but have the nucleus of a fine combination, and most of the players are on the youthful side. Crown was a grand defender, Dinsdale played well at half, and Toseland and Shone were the most troublesome of the attack. There were 15,000 spectators to see the Town get square with the City, who made a draw at Luton.

COVENTRY CITY 1
LUTON TOWN 1
COVENTRY CITY.—Allen; Crown, Plunkett; Higham, Dinsdale, Bell; Toseland, Kirton, Starsmore, Shone, Pick.
LUTON TOWN.—Banes; Graham, Harris; Clark, Fulton, Millar; Daly, Roe, Rennie, Yardley, Bedford.

Referee:—R. G. Rudd, London.