

DESPERATE DEFENCE AT LUTON.

HOW WATFORD MANAGED TO GET A LUCKY POINT.

Effect of a Penalty Kick.

By Crusader.

LUTON TOWN 2
WATFORD 2

LUTON.—Banes; Richards, Harris; Clark, Fulton, Millar; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Vaughan, Bedford.

WATFORD.—Hewett; Davison, Brelsford; Brown, McBain, Woodward; Chapman, Barnett, McPherson, Sheppard, Daniels.

Referee.—Mr. J. Emmerson, East Finchley.

WELL, Watford once more came to Luton and frustrated the hopes and intentions of the Town. They were lucky in the extreme. They themselves admitted it. One of the players said they had never picked up such a point before, and it would be a long time before they got another so luckily; their officials went to the length of sympathising with the Town officials, and I myself heard one gentleman of importance in the Herts club minimising the glee of his friend by remarking, "Yes, but don't forget that we did not deserve it; we were a very, very fortunate team."

POOR MARKSMEN.

Once more there was a penalty kick against the Town, but there was so much criticism of the referee from the crowd that I will not add to it. I am bound to say, however, that in the first half Brelsford deflected a shot with his hand when the goalkeeper would have been beaten, and in the second half he practically caught the ball within three or four yards of goal, dropped it and kicked away. Even these incidents, however, were mild in comparison with the number of times the Town forwards were right in front of Hewett, only three or four yards away, and sometimes not so many feet, and yet they could not steer the ball through. More than the misfortunes that spectators of both sides readily credited to the official in charge, the loss of another home point was due to the lack of punch at close quarters.

HEWETT'S FEATS.

The first half found the Town having quite eighty per cent. of the play. Now and then the Watford wingers made raids, and there was always trouble for the defence when they did get a move on, but in the main the Town were attacking persistently, and the Watford defenders were in such sore straits that for minutes together they were packing their goal, and shots were rebounding. Hewett did marvellous feats, but his goal escaped even when he was not there, and shots from all quarters rattled about the woodwork.

EXCITING SCENES.

The penalty area defended by Watford was very soft and slippery, and within five minutes of the start there was a terrific onslaught on the Watford goal. Three or four shots from as many yards' range struck defenders, and Vaughan should have scored. He was not more than a couple of yards away, and the goal was almost asking for the ball, but when he tapped it a leg obtruded, and the ball glanced wide. Even more exciting scenes followed in the next quarter of an hour, and in that period the visitors only made about three efforts worthy of notice.

RELENTLESS PRESSURE.

Then came a relentless pressure, and shots rained in, during the course of which Brelsford handled close to his goal post. Yardley hit the bar, and Hewett saved in extraordinary fashion from Rennie, who also missed at point blank range when the goal yawned in front of him. Banes had very little to do, and the Watford forwards saw little of the ball unless they went into their own penalty area to get it. And so the game went to the interval, and, if no other, the Watford goalkeeper and his backs must have heaved a sigh of relief for the respite.

LUTON TOWN 0
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THE FIRST GOAL.

On the resumption the Town made things hum around Hewett, and he was again doing excellent business. Rennie and Vaughan were offside when a long pass came up the middle, but wisely they did not attempt to play it, and Yardley then dashed past the backs, but the referee seemed bound to whistle somebody, and so Yardley was pulled up for offside. There was a beautiful dribble by Chapman, but Harris and Richards cleared, and then the Town attacked more fiercely than ever, and Hewett was beaten. Yardley gave Daly a lovely pass, and the winger went through to lift the ball across; a defender managed to thwart Rennie and Vaughan, but the ball went to BEDFORD, who closed in and shot hard into the net.

THE SECOND.

The cheering was still echoing when Yardley again brought the ball through, the left wing dashed in. Bedford seemed certain to score, but Hewett made a grand save by turning the ball round the post. Bedford placed the flag-kick well, and VAUGHAN leaped into the air and deftly nodded the ball past the custodian. The two goals had come in the fifth and seventh minute respectively, and placed the Town in a happy position,

but less than three more minutes had elapsed when the visitors had rubbed off one mark.

THE PENALTY KICK.

Clark was playing rather too far in the middle, with the result that Daniels occasionally had wide areas to himself, and from one of these openings he dashed away. Richards managed to challenge him when he was not more than four yards from goal, but he did not attempt to shoot. He tapped the ball back to McPherson, who gathered it and was steadying himself when Clark came full tilt and knocked him clean off his feet. The referee gave a penalty kick, and refused to consult the linesmen when requested by the Town players, who protested strongly. The crowd set up a fierce howl, and kept it up for a long time after McPHERSON had scored from the spot kick.

DERISIVE CHEERS.

Another bit of handling by Woodward enabled the visitors to make further progress immediately, and the Town goal was in jeopardy. The Town seemed to fall away after the penalty decision, and it was some minutes before they pulled together again, and they never did get properly into their stride as in the previous play. Still, a strong attack was worked up, and Hewett and his backs were working strenuously, but there should have been goals from the centres of Daly and Bedford. In the course of yet another tussle in the Watford goal-mouth Brelsford handled without being penalised, and when the Town did get a free kick or two the crowd set up derisive cheers.

THE EQUALISER.

Watford then came into the picture again, and, playing better than in any previous period, they gave the Town defence a tremendous lot of work. Their wing men were often getting the better of the Town halves, and there was no hesitation about the inside men in having a shot at goal. Banes made a few good saves, one at full length, and then a clever bit of work by McBain brought the ball into the middle, and there was a gap for the inside men. One of the Town defenders kicked away, but the ball struck SHEPPARD, and it was a rebound rather than a shot that sent the ball just inside the upright out of Banes' reach.

WATFORD'S BID.

Watford then made a great bid to pull off victory, and nearly succeeded. Banes saved magnificently at full length, and there were two or three scuffles in the Town goal-mouth, during which Watford seemed destined to take the lead. However, they were repelled, and then the Town burst away again, and from Bedford's centre Yardley took possession right in front, only to shoot yards over as Hewett made a desperate sally from goal. The closing stages were fought hard, but both teams had an eye to the referee's watch pocket, and the end came without further score.

PLAYERS PRAISED.

There were very few fouls considering the desperate character of the struggle, and both teams were deserving of high praise for the manner in which they played the game. There was but one unhappy incident. Brown badly fouled Rennie, and the latter retaliated, but while the players fought with all their strength and vigour, there was very little of that ugly ankle rapping and tripping, and nearly all the free kicks were given for handling. The teams came very near to that good spirit of the immediate post-war days, and it is to be hoped that there will never be any worse feeling among the players of the two camps than there is to-day, for that means many pleasant games.

BANES & CO.

The Town defence was very good indeed until the last quarter of an hour. Banes could not be blamed for either goal, and again won the plaudits of the crowd for his confident display. Richards, who was preferred to Graham at right back, played strongly, his big kicking and fine heading being a feature of the game. Harris played cleverly as usual, only made one serious mistake, and then recovered well. The halves worked with tremendous energy, and fed their forwards cleverly, especially in the first half, but lost some of their snap and virility before the end. The penalty kick took the heart out of them. With Richards at right back there was not a good understanding between him and Clark, for the latter played too far in the middle, just as is Millar's wont when Richards plays behind him. In consequence Daniels had a lot of rope, and from this quarter the main danger came. Millar and Harris had better knowledge of each other, and the back played well up to the half, so that Chapman usually found his way barred by one or both. Fulton again played in heroic fashion, and smashed many attacks, while his improvement in tending his forwards was obvious. All three played finely.

FORWARDS.

The forwards gave a splendid exhibition in approach work for an hour, and it was simply inexplicable how they should miss

so many chances after delightful combination. Every man took part in some of the onslaughts, and the ball was kept on the move in a manner that had the visiting halves guessing. Yardley was quite the best of the five and his skilful initiation was of a higher quality than ever. Daly has never had better passes, and the pair were the best wing on the field. Vaughan, making his first appearance, was evidently strange to the requirements and the moves of his colleagues. He was by no means a failure, and with a little more experience may do the Town a lot of good. He was a hard worker, and scored a capital goal. Bedford was not so prominent as usual, but received a lot of attention, while Rennie, in spite of the watchfulness of McBain and the backs, did much clever work. Unfortunately, he was not in his best shooting form, and should have scored three or four goals.

WATFORD.

Watford have a nicely balanced side. Hewett seems to have more than average skill, and if blest with such luck in every game, will be worth a small fortune to Watford. Davison was a fine back, and Brelsford was a good partner. McBain was a grand pivot, his work having the hallmark of class and he had a big burden thrust upon him, for Woodward and Brown were just useful and hard-working lads. The forwards did not get much work from the flank halves, but McBain fed them well. Chapman and Daniels were fast and clever, the former dribbling with delightful skill, while Barnett also was an artist in manipulation. Sheppard and McPherson were dangerous men always when they got going, and the line as a whole is a credit to the club.

The official figures of attendance were 15,199.