

THIRD CONSECUTIVE DEFEAT

LUTON TOWN LUCKLESS AT SHEPHERD'S BUSH.

By Crusader.

ONE is considerably fortified in claiming that Luton Town should have won at Shepherd's Bush on Saturday, for the London writers were almost unanimous in that opinion. It is not often they are so magnanimous towards the Town. On the other hand, an experienced follower of the Town expressed the view that both teams were so poor that they each deserved to lose. I do not subscribe to that, though the play was so patchy that it was almost justified.

Before the game I had a chat with Bernard Harris, and he said the ground, though it appeared quite nice compared with former settings, was really treacherous, and it would be difficult to gauge the run of the ball when it was on the ground. There were several occasions when his statement was corroborated, and possibly that was the reason most of the players preferred to see the ball in the air so much.

The Rangers had slightly the better of the first half play, when they were putting in all they knew, but they were very hard pressed afterwards, and their middle line seemed almost worn out when the second period was half run. Had the Town forwards risen to the occasion then there would have been little question about the result, for they frequently overwhelmed the Rangers, beating them for speed and combination.

The state of the ground was not the only perturbing factor, for there was a gusty breeze that was more apparent to the players than to the spectators, and the ball swirled and fitted in troublesome fashion. That the Town had some cause for complaint in the manner in which the game was controlled there could be little doubt, for the referee, making his debut in this class, on two occasions whistled the forwards up when a goal was almost certain. He paid more attention to the position of the player when the ball was received rather than to the position when the ball was passed.

The worst mistake, however, was due to a linesman, who flagged Daly offside when the winger gave Rennie an easy chance of which full advantage was taken. Curiously enough Daly himself thought he was just offside, but he was not in as good a position to see as we were. Over at the other side of the field were two Rangers nearer their own goal than Daly. The player could be excused owing to his attention being focussed on the ball, but not so the linesman, who should be able to see from one side to the other.

Against that, however, had to be placed a decision that deprived the Rangers of a goal when Goddard was given offside. Again, as a curious feature, Harford did not think the scorer was offside, but he thought the ball went straight from the left-winger, who centred from the goal-line, to Goddard, but that was not so; it was received by Rounce, and pushed forward to Goddard. Still, even then I did not think Goddard was offside. The difference between the Daly incident and this, however, was that Daly's occurred before a goal had been scored, and the whole run of the game might well have been altered had the Rennie goal been allowed.

The only legitimate goal of the match came 20 minutes after the kick-off, when the Rangers' inside forwards burst through the middle, and GODDARD was left with a simple task to beat Harford at close quarters. The Town goal had a very narrow escape when Harford, punching away a free-kick by Neil, sent the ball

against the post; it rebounded across goal, and Richards happened to be in the right spot to kick away.

Harford made several good saves, notably from Goddard, but all that he did was eclipsed by saves by Cunningham. The Rangers' goalkeeper had one stroke of luck, similar to that of Harford, for he flung himself in manner twisted round the post. Once Cunningham cleverly tipped over the bar a drive by Rennie; again he leapt across goal, and diverted with the tips of his fingers a flashing drive from the Town centre-forward, who had hard luck with two mighty drives that struck defenders when on their way for the net with Cunningham out of place.

In a fierce rally shortly before the interval, Woods missed the easiest chance of the match. The ball travelled across the Rangers' goal-mouth three or four times, and they could not get it clear. Eventually Daly crossed it on the ground not more than three or four yards out, and Woods met it, but failed to steer it correctly, and the ball travelled across goal again, and out by the farthest post. Bedford also missed a fair chance from a centre by Daly, and the Town were unfortunate to cross over in arrears.

The early stages of the second half were even, the ball travelling rapidly from end to end, but the Town were the more aggressive, and with better finishing they might soon have been on level terms. The good work of Kingham won admiration frequently; Harford's charge had a narrow escape when a beautiful effort by Rounce completely beat him, but the ball struck the upright, and came out, and play then became keener than ever.

The Rangers' halves were now beginning to falter, and there were many thrills at Cunningham's end. Daly broke through time after time, but could not get the ball across either to his own or to any other Town player's satisfaction. Rennie showed up prominently, and Yardley slogged away, but there was not much "bite" in the work at close quarters. One of the best movements of the game began with Kingham, who dribbled and passed to Clark; the pivot transferred to Woods, and Rennie and Bedford took a hand until finally Bedford skimmed the bar.

A terrific drive from Rennie was tipped over by Cunningham, and one from Fraser was too hot for Cunningham to hold, but he managed to get the ball before Woods could rush him. To the end the Town had the better of the game, and but for the stout resistance of Pollard and Pierce, and the alertness of Cunningham, they must have equalised.

The Town defence was reasonably safe in all the circumstances, and Kingham played a great game. Fulton was the pick of the middle line, and has never played better at flank half than on this occasion, but the forwards have not yet got to the level of their best of last season. Rennie was the most dangerous of the line, and with ordinary fortune would have won the match.

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS 1
LUTON TOWN 0

RANGERS. — Cunningham; Pollard, Pierce; McNab, Cockburn, Neil; Moffat, J. O. Burns, Goddard, Rounce, Young.

TOWN.—Harford; Kingham, Richards; Fulton, Clark, Fraser; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Woods, Bedford.

Referee:—Mr. J. M. Wiltshire, Sherborne.