

A WHIPPING AT HOVE.

Luton Lose to Brighton Albion.

Lack of Thrust in Attack.

(By CRUSADER).

BRIGHTON AND HOVE ALBION 4
LUTON TOWN 1

BRIGHTON. — Webb; Marsden, Curran; Wilkinson, Williams, Dutton; Farrell, Kirkwood, Vallance, Smith (P.), Wilson. LUTON. — Harford; Richards, Smith; Clark, Fulton, Fraser; Daly, Birch, Yardley, Drinnan, Bedford.

Referee.—Mr. A. A. Dawes, London.

TO the small party of supporters of LUTON TOWN who made their way to the Goldstone-road Ground, Hove, on Saturday, the game was a trying experience. Reports that the Town were outplayed are absurd. Their football was so good that on the general run of the play they should have scored as many goals as Brighton and Hove Albion. When the Town had the advantage of the weather conditions, play was rather more in favour of the home side, but the second half, when all four goals were scored, found the Town much more dangerous, and their general play the better. The all-important difference was in finishing power. In no other phase had the Albion the better of the game. Had the Town inside forwards been able to consummate skilful approach work they would not have lost. It was just lack of thrustfulness and shooting ability; more height and weight were wanted against vigorous defenders, and would have compensated for the less effective middle line play. Any of the few who wanted the Town to succeed would concur in that view. At half-time the prospects did not seem rosy, but the Town put up a really

THE TEMPEST.

It appeared likely that there would be the same experience as befell the Town Reserves the previous week at Hove, for before the game rain and sleet and hail came down with almost blinding force, and there was all round the ground, just outside the rails, about a foot depth of water, while there were pools on the ground, and in the goal areas the ground was very heavy. It made a remarkable recovery, however, in spite of being swept by a sheet of rain. The players were in a pitiable plight at the interval, and as the Albion had done so well when facing the elements, I thought the Town were in for a severe battering. They rose to the task splendidly, however, and were a better side than in the first portion. Their control against the wind was of a high quality, and time after time, chiefly by using the wing men, they outwitted the home halves, but failed badly in front of goal. On the other hand, the Albion attacking line showed great determination when within range, and that pulled them through.

The Town began well, but the home halves were watchful in defence, and then Wilson came into the picture with clever runs and well-placed centres. He was the chief point of danger for a long time. Following a rally by the Town right wing, Drinnan dodged a couple of defenders and seemed certain to score, but his hard shot went straight, and Webb punched away to Bedford, who, essaying a first-time shot, found the ball skid off his boot. Backed by a clever and stalwart middle line, the Albion forwards showed fine understanding, and Farrell and Wilson gave a lot of trouble, while the inside men shot at goal when anything like a chance presented. Harford had a lot to do for this reason, but got through with credit, one particularly fine save being made as the result of a swift dive to the foot of the post. The first goal came when Smith handled just outside the penalty area in stopping a centre from Farrell. The latter took the kick, lifted the ball among the ruck of players, and it was deflected by VALLANCE'S head just out of the reach of Harford. Play was very fast, considering the conditions, but continued much on the same lines, with the Town having as much of the midfield play, but being checked within range.

A CONFERENCE.

The Town improved, Drinnan being conspicuous for dainty footwork, and the home goal had narrow escapes from corner kicks taken by Daly. Then Bedford got in a hot drive which Webb managed to hold, but he was tackled by Yardley as he ran out. Williams fouled Yardley very badly, and everybody expected a penalty kick, but the referee gave a free kick against the goalkeeper for carrying. There was a little fracas as a result of this, and when the kick was taken there was another scramble, the Albion players encroaching. The referee deemed it advisable to hold a conference which lasted a full minute, but when Bedford took the kick a second time he tamely lauded the ball into Webb's hands. The crowd did not like the gradual improvement of the Town, and were very un-spotsmanlike. This made little difference to the players, however, and at one period there were three corners within a couple of minutes. Webb had his work cut out to save on several occasions, but a really good shot did not materialise, and at the interval the Albion retained their lead.

ALBION 1
LUTON TOWN 0

Misgivings seemed justified when the Albion rushed away in the first minute after the restart, and Smith had an easy chance, but failed badly, the ball travelling across goal and out of play. The Town rearguard had a hustling time for some minutes, and Harford did well to get rid of two or three shots before the Town took a hand. There was even play for a while, and then the Town halves showed up in much better light, and the forwards worked cleverly together. Bedford and Daly often showed their heels to the home halves and backs, and got the ball across squarely, but the Albion packed their goal well. Webb was lucky to get the ball just under the bar from a header by Yardley, following a well-placed flag kick by Daly. When this onslaught had been staved off there was an occasional spasm at each end, and then the Town gave the home defence a warm period.

without, however, troubling Webb. Bedford and Daly in turn centred well, only for the inside forwards to be forestalled. Then Clark came along with a quick dribble, and pushed the ball forward for Birch to take in his stride. The youngster skilfully beat Curran, and was clean through when the international full-back whipped his feet from under him.

QUICK GOALS.

CLARK took the inevitable penalty kick, and a terrific shot, hip high, flashed past Webb. It was unfortunate for the right-half that he should be mainly responsible for the equality being so brief. The Albion made a rush on the right, and Wilson had closed up into the middle. Clark tried to play the ball when he might legitimately have held up the man, but the ball appeared to twist right away from him, and WILSON quickly got it under control, and with a fluky sort of shot beat Harford. The Town had the better of the exchanges for a long time after this, the Albion raiding intermittently. They were the more dangerous when they got going, but the Town should have scored again and again in the next quarter of an hour. Bedford and Daly, fed splendidly from behind, were too good for the opposition, and got over some fine centres. Webb once saved brilliantly from Bedford at the expense of a corner. Then Fraser dribbled through and fed Drinnan, who hoodwinked Wilkinson and pushed the ball forward to Yardley, who seemed bound to score, but Webb somehow managed to throw himself in the way of the ball and knock it to the right; Birch had quite as good a chance as Yardley, and shot hard enough, but the ball struck the upright and went behind. Next Yardley saw a fine header go right across goal, with Webb out of position, but the ball skidded just past the upright.

RIGHT AHEAD.

The Albion then took up the running, and after a miskick by Clark the ball went to Vallance, who had an easy opening, but missed badly. Then Farrell burst through, and from his centre VALLANCE easily scored. The Town were not out of it even then, but made well-organised attacks, the wingers doing clever things, and Yardley and Drinnan nearly scored, and a fast drive slithered just by the farther upright. Birch went close with a good shot, and Drinnan lifted the ball over the bar when a goal seemed certain. Another raid by the home left succeeded, Wilson making the pace, and VALLANCE getting another easy chance to beat Harford at close quarters. To the end the Town persevered unavailingly, and Webb was lucky to get the ball from shots by Yardley and Daly, but the end came with the score as stated.

DEFENCE.

Harford could not be blamed for the shots that beat him. Every goal came from close quarters. He made many fine saves, and his goal had some close shaves. Richards is not so good at right back as at left, but the reason for that, I think, is because the understanding with Clark is not clear. He kicked and tackled well. Smith also played strongly, and did not let the side down in any way. He was more effective when he played well up to Fraser in the second half. The middle line did not compare favourably with the home trio, but that may have been due to the fact that the home attack carried a lot more weight than the Town front line. Fraser was troubled by his knee in the first period, but gave a clever display in support of his forwards in the second. He does hang on a little too much at times, but some of his passes were responsible for the best attacks of the Town. Fulton had a stalwart opposition to meet, and was not so prominent as usual, but did useful work. Clark did not reach his best, either, for Wilson had too much rope, though when he used the shoulder legitimately the Town player was often pulled up wrongly.

FORWARDS.

The play from behind, however, was good enough for the forwards to have achieved much better results. The shooting was very poor, and there was not enough dash in meeting the challenge of the home backs. The wingers were the best part of the line, but owed that to the service received from halves and inside forwards, and it was unfortunate that the latter could not deliver the goods at the end. Both Daly and Bedford centred well. Drinnan was in a class by himself in artistry, and Birch's fault was the inexperience of youth. He can beat an opponent as neatly as anyone, but is not quick enough to realise on it. Yardley was not so forceful as usual, but was well watched, and not too handsomely treated by Williams, who will get into trouble with firmer referees than Mr. Dawes.

ALBION.

The Albion have a fine side, and deserved success because they took so many of the chances that came their way. Webb had paid for keeping, for this is his first season as the regular goalkeeper, and he has been with the Albion at least three seasons. Marsden is good enough to keep out of the side the Albion skipper, Smith, and Curran is again showing his best form. The middle men were clever, and the positioning with the forwards was above the average. They lost no time in getting the ball away from their goal, and then supported a virile attack. In the forward line Kirkwood was the brains inside, and both wingers played finely. Vallance is a worthy successor to Tom Cook, and this was his third match this season in which he scored three goals. He did not show any ability as a marksman in the ordinary sense of the word, but contrived to be in the right place when his colleagues put the ball there. There were 3,500 spectators.