

A POINT FROM SOUTHEND.

LUTON TOWN'S IMPROVEMENT.

By Crusader.

IF Luton Town's display at Southend on Saturday may be accepted as an indication of their intentions for the New Year, the Club will have a much happier time in the second half of the season. It was not that there was any sudden accession of skill, but there seemed to be an understanding and a determination that we have had reason to associate with other teams rather than with the Town of late. The net result was that they were a better side all round, and were unfortunate not to bring home both points.

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They had by no means the better of the luck that was going, for after winning the toss and taking advantage of the sun at the start, the weather conditions changed, so that in the second half they were facing the first brew of the storm, and wind and rain made their task far more arduous than that of the United had been before the change of ends. Moreover, the trend of play could be gathered from the number of shots the Town had, and several others besides that by Yardley might well have taken effect.

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This goal came after a series of attacks which had been beaten off or had failed to mature, through marksmanship that was by no means poor, even though off the mark. Had the Town led by three or four goals to one at half-time their superiority would not have been exaggerated. They were more incisive in attack, and the United owed a good deal to the certainty of their backs. The goal came from a scrimmage following a corner-kick taken by McKinnis, YARDLEY putting on the final touch.

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The United came near to equalising before the change of ends, but equally the Town came close to increasing their lead, and the end of a hard-fought 45 minutes found the score:—

LUTON	1
SOUTHEND	nil

After furious endeavours for the equalising goal had failed, the Town took up the pressure again, and McKenna had quite as much anxiety as Banes.

There was one period in which the Southend goal had many escapes, and after all the other forwards had narrowly failed to gain the lead, McKinnis headed into the net, but was given offside. Some of the Town players held that the ball went to McKinnis off an opponent, but the referee held otherwise and disallowed the point. Then came the United's equalising goal, less than a quarter of an hour before the close.

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Fraser had stopped an attempt to get away by the United right, and might have slammed the ball into the stand, but preferred to try and give his forwards a chance, and he endeavoured to pass to the middle, but the ball struck Johnson and rebounded. There was a quick dash, and Baron had a shot; Banes tried to turn the ball round the post, but he could only push it to JONES, who promptly netted.

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THE Town continued to hold their own, and each winger came close to restoring the lead. The draw was a minimum reward of their bright game, which was more enterprising and combinative than usual. Banes was good enough in goal, and Richards and Smith put up a powerful game at back, the latter especially doing well. Clark surprised everybody by his strong pivotal work, Fraser excelled as usual, and Fulton again showed signs of settling down as a flank half.

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In the attack the changes worked well. If Drinnan and McKinnis were the cleverer wing, Boylen and Birch were the more dangerous, and did forceful work. The left flank played prettily rather than powerfully, and in the leadership Yardley was always prominent, and not far from being the best forward on the field.

There were 6,000 spectators.

SOUTHEND UNITED	1
LUTON TOWN	1

SOUTHEND.—McKenna; French, Robinson; Johnson, Ward, Lloyd; Barnett, Bailey, Baron, Jones, Borland.

LUTON.—Banes; Richards, Smith; Fulton, Clark, Fraser; Boylen, Birch, Yardley, Drinnan, McKinnis.

Referee:—M. G. T. Gould, London.