

Crusader Comments

ON LUTON'S FRUITLESS VISIT TO GILLINGHAM.

TWO seasons ago R. Hendrie was playing full back for Gillingham. He sustained a fractured leg, and though he resumed playing, he was not thoroughly sound. Offered the position of manager, which was vacant, he has made good. I do not remember seeing such a good side wearing the colours of the Kentish Club, as that which Luton Town met on Saturday, and when it is known that the players cost nothing, then Manager Hendrie has done his work splendidly. If he could increase the efficiency of the side as much again during the next twelve months, Gillingham would be a Second Division club in 1932.

Evidently the main consideration has been to find the biggest men possible, but with some claim to football skill, for Gillingham are the biggest team I have seen for years—bigger even than the Millwall, Southampton and Reading sides that won promotion. They were a week or two before they found their feet, but now there is any amount of enthusiasm and team spirit, and though the finer points are not obtrusive in their play, they keep plugging away bravely and stubbornly, and I would not be a whit surprised to see them bring off a few surprises in the Cup Competition.

These qualities of pluck and perseverance, notably in front of goal, enabled them to establish a margin of superiority over the Town. The prettiness was provided by the Town, and the effectiveness by Gillingham, and much though one might regret the defeat, and feel that the result flattered the winners, the points were well deserved, and we could not begrudge the victory when there was such splendid confidence and eagerness. Few teams, I fancy, will be able to hold the Gillingham forwards now that they are together, and the clubs that have gathered points at Gillingham may be thankful that they got in early.

Luton's skilful play was in almost violent contrast to their ineptitude against Newport County, and it was a real pleasure to watch some of their advances, the short passing being very clever. It was effective, too, up to a point, and if the forwards had been able to consummate their work when they got within striking distance, the whole-heartedness of the home team would not have been sufficient to win the game. Alas! just the most necessary quality was lacking, and there was not a successful shot at goal by any Luton player.

Neither goalkeeper was over-worked, but Banes had some difficult shots to deal with, whereas, with the exception of two or three stray efforts in the second half, Rutherford had a comfortable afternoon. The early goal by Loasby, came as the result of the dash of Loasby, and though it was a lucky chance that the ball went to the outside left, the grim fashion in which the centre-forward clung to the ball as he was harried and tackled, deserved some measure of reward. This was the only goal of the

first half, and had there been a reasonably good marksman on the Town side that would have been beaten.

In the second half the Town again began well, and nearly scored within a minute or two, but in Gillingham's first rush they succeeded. LOASBY was the marksman, and after a scrimmage had been cleared from the Town goal-mouth he took the ball as Beacham sent it forward, and with a deft movement he had beaten the defence, and the ball was sent into the net. For some minutes there was trouble in the Town goal-mouth, and more goals might have come had there been a little steadiness, but thereafter the Town pressed hotly for long periods, only to fail in shooting, and when Gillingham's third goal came the victory was established.

The home left wing had been doing most of the damage, and after Cheesmur had forced his way through he put the ball across the goal-mouth; Baines failed to reach it, and Bethell took possession. As the goalkeeper came out he coolly shot the ball over his head into the net. There was still another to come, and this came from a penalty kick given against Richards, after he had bowled over Bethell, and though the referee saw nothing wrong, the linesman notified an offence, and LOASBY scored from the "spot" with a slow ground shot.

Banes should have saved the third goal, and the penalty kick was a poor one, but then anyone should be able to score from such kicks. Kingham and Richards had plenty of work, and they were neither so reliable as could be desired. The chief burden fell upon Kingham, and he was opposed by a hefty pair who did not shrink from using their weight, and Death was disposed to be unfair. At half the control was far better than in the previous game, and the support to the forwards was good, but not the obstructive work.

The forwards showed individual and corporate skill in advance, but their finishing was exceedingly poor. There was a lack of thrust and dash and confidence, and though both Yardley and Dent played well in supporting Rennie, none of the three shot well. M'Nestry was not at his best, for he was suffering from a severe cold, but Slicer did fairly well, without ever mastering the strong opponents he had to meet. It was a clean and enjoyable game, and Gillingham were especially pleased with the "gate" of 7,000 spectators

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LUTON TOWN		0

GILLINGHAM.—Rutherford; Robertson, J. McGregor; Beacham, Collins, Ellis; Bethel, French, Loasby, Cheesmur, Death

LUTON TOWN.—Banes; Kingham, Richards; McGinnigle, Clark, Hale; M'Nestry, Yardley, Rennie, Dent, Slicer.

Referee.—Mr. R. G. Rudd, Kenton.