

Crusader Comments

ON LUTON'S LATEST FAILURE.

YET another crushing blow befel LUTON TOWN on Saturday, when they sustained defeat at the hands of BOURNEMOUTH AND BOSCOMBE. By no stretch of imagination could it be said that the Town deserved to win. Their pluck in drawing level after being twice in arrears could be commended, but on the run of the play the visitors deserved their success, for they were stronger in every department and better as a team.

They opened out like a winning side, and the way they made the ball move, and their exhilarating speed and unflinching zeal, demonstrated that they would give the Town their hardest fight. In many ways they were similar to Gillingham, throwing themselves into the fray and challenging every foot of ground that the Town endeavoured to make. Once more the Town appeared to be slow on the ball, and lacking in mettle when compared with their opponents.

Many a whirlwind rush on the Town goal was made in the first half-hour, and such individual play as was seen was allied to a considerable degree of skill, but generally the Bournemouth advances were made by swinging passes that carried the ball ahead in the fewest number of moves and the shortest space of time. The Town did not have nearly so much of the game as they had at Gillingham, and, save for a few brief periods, were playing second fiddle.

Banes had made one or two good saves, and several shots had whizzed very close to the Town goal before a goal was scored. The Town also had chances, but failed to take them. SCOTT opened the visitors' account with a praiseworthy effort after twenty-five minutes' play. Moralee swung the ball over from the flank, and the inside-right was on it quickly, and burst through a little gap to shoot past Banes.

The Town played up after this, and after one or two narrow escapes the Bournemouth goal fell to RENNIE. Yardley centred right across goal, and after the ball had been touched out it went to the foot of the Town centre-forward, whose shot was well away from McSevich and travelling at a good pace. These were the goals before the change of ends, but the visitors' goal should have fallen at least twice before the retirement.

For a quarter of an hour after the restart the Town played as though they would win with something in hand, but they did not shoot well, and though there was a lot of pressure, it was not well planned. Most of the danger to Bournemouth came from free kicks, for the game was very rough, and several halts were called for repairs to players or while the referee spoke to offenders.

Bournemouth also caused some trouble, and a strict watch had to be kept on all the forwards, with Eyre the most dangerous of the inside men. The offences became so numerous that the referee deemed a conference advisable, and the players were called together in midfield, and the referee spoke to them for several minutes. It seemed to do some good, for there was less playing of the man. Bournemouth scored somewhat unexpectedly, for better chances had been missed. EYRE got the ball some eighteen yards from goal, and, though tackled strongly, refused to be dislodged, and kept possession until he could shoot and beat Banes with a fast drive.

We thought this was the last of the scoring, but the Town created a surprise. Good play on the left wing brought a speedy attack and Dent passed from the goal-line to RENNIE, who shot first time

and had the fortune to see the ball go away from McSevich and glance into the net off the post. A draw then seemed the likely result, but the Bournemouth forwards were always dangerous when they got away.

Russell led swift attacks, and, though beaten two or three times, got in several good centres. At last one sailed over the heads of the defenders, and SCOTT, who had taken position nicely, ran in and headed the ball past Banes, to complete the score and win the match. The Town made good efforts in the closing seconds, but were beaten back, and the game ended in the first defeat of the Town at home this season.

The Town team showed no better combination than in previous games, and, though their footwork, particularly forward, was as good as that of the visitors, the positioning was not equal, and the shooting was a very long way below that of Eyre and Company. Rennie was well watched by Forbes, and, though he did not harass the defenders as persistently as Eyre, the fact that he scored a couple of goals proved that he could find the net if given the right pass. Once he had wretched luck with a beautiful first time shot, taken from a most awkward position, the ball just rising over the bar when it seemed as though it must land in the net.

The others played well individually, but had not much in common, and frequently lost the ball through hanging on too long against a fierce and relentless middle line. I think this forward line would do well with better support though I am not certain it is the best available. The point of attack is not varied sufficiently, and such combination as is attempted is restricted to wings rather than distributed all along the line.

The halves were not good enough for the fiery opposition. Each did odd bits of good work, but there was nothing like consistency, and the tackling was lacking in speed and determination. All were workers and stuck to their guns to the end, but were never able to gain mastery over the Bournemouth attack. Neither could the backs, and here, just as much as in the forward line, there was need of better understanding with the middle men. Kingham and Richards had a lot of work, and their play was not notable for confidence. Banes kept goal well, and dealt with some difficult stuff.

The crowd were disposed to blame the referee for a spoiled match, and he certainly did not show sufficient firmness in the early stages. There were heavy charges and a good deal of ankle-rapping and tripping, and more than once the knee and the elbow were brought into unfair prominence when there was a tussle. Still, this was Mr. Perks' first game since he was put on the list, though not his first League game, for he had acted as deputy in the Newcastle v. Liverpool match. He told me that he enjoyed that experience, but he either had a different type of player in charge, or he showed more decision, for in this game he allowed things to go too far. Still, every official has a bad day, and perhaps Mr. Perks will improve upon this.

BOURNEMOUTH 3
LUTON TOWN 2

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

BOURNEMOUTH.—McSevich; Hayward, Brown; Halliwell, Forbes, Moralee; S. M. Beswick, Scott, Eyre, Whitehouse, Russell.

Referee.—Mr. J. H. Perks, West Bromwich.