

Crusader Comments

ON LUTON'S SURPRISING SUCCESS.

SATURDAY'S victory was surprising to most of the LUTON TOWN supporters, for they could hardly credit that a side such as COVENTRY CITY, with far larger resources, would have to taste the bitterness of defeat for a third time in succession before their own crowd. Before the game the City officials told me that if their team were as good at home as away they would be getting crowds of 20,000. They were confident, however, that they would win this match, and were fielding what they thought was their best team.

For our part we were hoping that there would be a repetition by the Town of the splendid form shown against Fulham, and then we could not see how they could lose, but there was always the feeling that they rose above their average in that game, and in all the circumstances we should have been satisfied with a point. Before we started out that was definitely said by the officials, but I pinned my faith to the fact that there was such good spirit in the team that they might well rise superior to anything the City could show.

On the run of the game it could not be said that their general play deserved more goals than Coventry's, save that the City forwards could not penetrate the defence in such a way as to provide really comfortable openings. Rarely was there a gap in the rearguard, and if a City forward did manage to wriggle into position for a shot he was usually barred just when he felt that the moment was ripe for a shot. This was mainly evident in the first twenty minutes in each half, and largely due to the fact that the Town halves were puzzled by the width of the ground, and the affection the City wingers showed for the touch-line.

Still, one could count the narrow escapes of the Town goal on one hand, and the best shots came from well out. On the other hand, the Town forwards worked into the danger zone, and every forward was able to drive at goal from a range that would have been disastrous but for the very fine defence of Crown and Tilford. The former so arranged his forces that there was usually a stout barrier in front of goal, and in the second half, when the Town were giving of their very best, the City forwards and halves had to fall back into the penalty area to assist.

The players never spared themselves, and the game might have taken an unpleasant turn had the referee not been very quick to deal with infringements. Now and then he erred, and this was the case when he gave the free kick against Kingham, from which PICK opened the scoring with a grand shot. Kingham was playing the ball, trying to head it, in fact, when an opponent ran backwards into him, and the Town players appealed for a free kick, but the award went to the City.

So far from discouraging the Town, however, it only made them play better, and after the City goal had narrowly escaped from Bryce's corner, and shots from Rennie, Dent and M'Nestry had rattled within inches, Heslop had the hardest luck with a glorious first time shot that thundered against the bar and rose high in the air to fall the wrong side. The goal came as a result of neat work between Heslop and Rennie. The latter gave the winger a pass, and without trying to do any fancy work the winger returned it when he had drawn the opposition; RENNIE ran round Tilford with consummate ease, the ball beautifully controlled, and as Allen dashed out the centre-forward shot hard and low into the net.

Equality at the interval was a fair reflex of the merits of the teams. The City had shown better understanding forward, but the Town the sterner and more intelligent defence. Moreover, the movements of the Town had been notable because they kept the ball on the carpet the better, and the City had relied to a great extent upon the speed of Pick, who had responded well, and was always a source of trouble.