

Crusader Comments

ON LUTON'S DEFEAT.

ALL too often, perhaps, one hears the remark of a losing team: "It was all their own fault," and not enough regard is paid to the fact that there are opponents equal in number and determination. At Shepherd's Bush on Saturday I am sure that of the handful of LUTON TOWN supporters a majority would be disposed to say that the point of Luton's weakness was the strength of QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

For upwards of an hour the Town were the better side, and at the change of ends they should have held a commanding lead on the run of the play. They were the better side in all, save that important factor—marksmanship. At times they were so much superior that it seemed only a matter of moments before the Rangers' defence must break down, but the determination and resolution of the rearguard was fortified by the spirit and thrustfulness of the attack, and they struggled on to deserve no small share in the ultimate victory.

Possibly the one really big blunder of the referee affected the result to an extent that cannot be estimated. An early goal means much to a side, and the Town were playing so well that they deserved it. I understand that after the game the referee said that he disallowed the point because Dent, who was in an offside position, interfered with the play. That was a physical impossibility; in the movement that led to the goal neither Dent nor Bryce was immediately concerned.

Rennie and Heslop alone had their bit of passing before Rennie, almost in the inside right position, shot into the net. In its flight the ball touched a defender and was deflected from the direction that Cunningham anticipated. Dent and Bryce were right away from goal in the inside left position, and the Rangers were as much surprised as the Town over the decision. They could hardly believe their good fortune.

And the pendulum continued in the Rangers' favour, for after two or three sharp skirmishes at either end, Kingham miskicked; Howe was on the ball instantly, went through and centred for Burns to score, Banes having no chance. Thus far the game had been fairly even, with the Rangers having just that extra bit of good fortune that means so much.

The Town then almost took charge of the play, and the Rangers were ragged by comparison, although they could hit hard and quickly when they were allowed the slightest latitude, and their wingers especially were very fast and pushful. Banes had a handful now and then, but for the most part the Rangers' halves and backs were strenuously resisting the Town's movements, which were marked by clever footwork and good centres, and it was only the shooting that was at fault.

Still, Rennie had the hardest of luck with swift drives that just topped the bar or whizzed past the upright; Gale had a fine shot only inches too high, and there were several hot scuffles in the goal area, Cunningham being fortunate to escape being beaten. All the forwards had shots, but there was not a lot of powder behind them, though one effort by Bruce toppled over Pollard and necessitated trainer's attention for him. Still, the goal was intact to the change of ends.

RANGERS	1
TOWN	nil

The Town now had to face the breeze, and at first it appeared as if the Rangers would monopolise the play, but the boot was on the other leg. The Town quickly got to work, and within ten minutes the Rangers' goal had escaped twice in the most fortunate fashion. Once, indeed, Cunningham saved luckily after a shot from M'Nestry had hit a defender, and then while he was on the ground the ball struck him twice as the Town attackers strove to find the net.

Using their wingers to full purpose, the Rangers took a more decided hand for a few minutes, but the Town soon returned again, and when the second half was just over twenty minutes old they got the equalising goal. M'Nestry, Clark and Rennie made an opening for Dent to dart between the backs, and when it seemed impossible for him to miss the goal his shot hit the post; Heslop snapped the ball as it was going across the line, and gently sent it to Rennie, who headed into the net, and thus brought a long overdue reward.

Alas! our jubilation was short-lived, for the Rangers went straight away, and within a minute had taken the lead. For the first time during the game there was a wide gap in the approach to the Town goal, and Sheppard and Rounce rushed through, the latter having the privilege of the final shot, and so Banes had no chance to stop a low shot travelling very hard from half-a-dozen yards range.

The best was then seen of the Rangers, and they played hard and strong football, growing in confidence as the time wore on, and the Town falling off. Now, and then there were assaults on Cunningham's charge, but play was mainly midfield, varied by sudden thrusts by the Rangers, and Banes made many grand saves. He was beaten just before the end, when Coward got across a centre following a free kick, and Howe middled the ball for Sheppard to score from very close in.

The Town defence generally played well. Kingham was rather shaky at the start, perhaps due to the wretched state of the ground, but otherwise the whole of the rearguard played magnificently. Fraser was outstanding among the six halves, his constructive work being the brightest feature of the game, while Gale was in great form until he had to retire owing to a nasty blow in the first half, and did not seem quite himself afterwards. Clark did good stopping work, but was not as masterful as he can be.

The combination of the forwards was as skilful as anything we have seen this season, and they made the Rangers look very much inferior by comparison. All did clever things, with Bryce the most prominent, perhaps, though he had the most work, thanks to Fraser and Dent. The shooting, however, was much below what is necessary to win matches, in spite

of the misfortunes they suffered, and it is here that the remedy is required.

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS	3
LUTON TOWN	1

RANGERS. — Cunningham; Pollard, Harris; Sales, Armstrong, Whatmore; Coward, J. C. Burns, Sheppard, Rounce, Howe.

TOWN.—Banes; Kingham, Hodgson; Clark, Gale, Fraser; Heslop, M'Nestry, Rennie, Dent, Bryce.

Referee: Mr. A. Milsom, Bristol.