

# Crusader Comments

## ON THE FIRST SUCCESS THIS YEAR.

LUTON TOWN just managed to secure the victory over NORWICH CITY at Luton on Saturday, but the plucky young visitors made a lot of admirers, not merely because they were determined and energetic, but also because they played really good football, much better, indeed, than one expects from a club at the bottom of the League table. It is hardly conceivable that they will stay there very long, and I am pretty certain they will not have to seek re-election this year.

The conditions underfoot were almost as bad as they could be, for even though the mud was not so much in evidence as in the last three or four games, the ground was very treacherous indeed, the frost having gripped it at its worst, and in spite of the hard work that had been put in during the week, foothold was precarious, in the early stages especially, and later the middle stretch was so bad that the ball could hardly be forced through it.

The City players seemed to make light of the handicap, and to keep their legs better than the Town, several of whom seemed rather nervy, and this could well be understood. As a result, the play was not very attractive, but quite as good as any reasonable spectator could expect, and anyone who has attempted to chase a ball on an icebound ground, with a slightly greasy layer on top, could not have been surprised that so many of the players failed to touch their best form.

The Town had a few more chances than the City, but somehow the ball would not run right for Rennie, who did not play at all badly, but hit the ball aright he could not. With openings such as were afforded in this game, he would have performed the hat trick if his marksmanship had been normal. But the line, as a whole did not round off their many attacks in convincing fashion, and, minute for minute, the City had almost as much of the game.

The City had no better luck than the Town, and individually and departmentally they were very, very little inferior. To every assault by the Town they replied with rare vigour, and if they had not found the Town rear-guard at their best in covering up, there would have been goals for Pearson and Peed at least. The play for an hour was just a little in favour of the Town, but in the last half-hour the City made strenuous efforts, and came very near to success.

The goalkeepers were not tested very often, but each had his anxious moments, and both Harford and Jas. Smith made splendid saves, while they were protected magnificently by the respective pairs of backs. It was no fault of the City defenders when M'Nestry scored the only goal of the game five minutes after the re-start. McGinnigle deserved as much credit, for

he cleverly came through the middle and gave the winger a lovely pass at the right time, and the ball travelled at a good pace, and appeared to glance off the farther post.

Pearson was the most likely of the City forwards to score, for his great pace and skilful control often beat the Town left flank, and they must have been glad to see his aim awry at least three times during the struggle. In the second half he made tremendous efforts to level the scores, but the Town backs would not let any opponent have a clear shot at short range, though Harford had his hands full more than once, both in the literal and in the figurative sense.

Harford kept goal well, and Kingham and Hodgson gave a good enough exhibition, though the latter suffered from a shock in the first half that reduced his speed somewhat and gave Pearson an easier job than otherwise would have been possible. The judgment and coolness of the Town captain was a big asset, however, and Kingham played soundly.

The middle-men had the worst of the conditions, and they were slipping and slurring all over the ground. I thought McGinnigle played well enough to have been rewarded with something more than the jeering that was heard before he helped to get the goal, but have to agree that the methods are not such as best succeed in this football. Clark and Fraser had all their work cut out, and even when all out were often beaten, though as often by the ground as by the opposition.

Similarly the inside forwards, who often found that they could not keep their feet after getting the ball "dead." Dent fed Bryce skilfully, but Armstrong did not see as much of it, and M'Nestry suffered. Both wingers played well, and Rennie gave better passes than shots. He continued to harass the backs, and once more we saw him withstand charges instead of holding off, and if he will use his shoulders he will earn more respect, a remark that applies also to Fraser, who fears nothing but accepts jostling without ever adopting like tactics.

The City's best were Hannah, Greenwell, Pearson and Sargeant, but the team, as a whole, played quite good football, being speedy and lively, and taking the quick route to goal.

There were nearly 7,000 spectators, which was quite good in view of the cup-tie attractions in town.

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LUTON TOWN.—Harford; Kingham, Hodgson; Clark, McGinnigle, Fraser; M'Nestry, Armstrong, Rennie, Dent, Bryce.

NORWICH CITY.—James Smith; Hannah, W. Smith; Turner, Greenwell, Jobling; Pearson, Weir, Peed, Williams, Sargeant.

Referee.—Mr. S. L. Stenning, Ilford.