

SOUND VICTORY OVER GILLINGHAM.

LUTON TOWN'S FINE DISPLAY.

Rennie Scintillates: M'Nestry Busy.

(By CRUSADER.)

LUTON TOWN 4
GILLINGHAM 1

GILLINGHAM proved a hardy lot of fellows, and the experienced follower could well realise why they have given trouble to more polished teams. It was natural, perhaps, that some of our players were not taking hard knocks without reprisal, for they had a gruelling at Gillingham, but splendid physique counts for a lot in football these days, and provided it is used legitimately, there can be no ground for complaint. At times there was too much of the rough stuff, but the referee kept it down very well. Possibly I am prejudiced in favour of Mr. Rudd, and cannot agree with the numerous spectators who felt that he had a bad day. What was really wrong on Saturday was that he was badly served on the lines, and I fancy he was not a little vexed by one incident in the second half.

LINESMEN'S BLUNDERS.

This was when Fraser had cleverly drawn the opposition and sent his wing away with a comparatively clear course; then he was fouled, and the linesman flagged. The ball was so near the touch-line that Mr. Rudd evidently thought it was over the line, or that there had been some other infringement, for he stopped play, and then had a word with the linesman, and made a note. It was so obvious that Gillingham profited by an offence that one wondered how an official could make such a blunder. This, however, was a trifle compared with some of the off-side decisions that came through the flags. Neither linesman seemed to appreciate the fact that the position of the player when the ball was last played should have been the deciding factor, and so they helped Gillingham to succeed with the exploitation of the off-side theory, and the referee got the blame. Personally, I should not mind if Mr. Rudd officiated at every match in which the Town were engaged, for, if he made an occasional mistake, one could rely upon his general use of the whistle.

WON ON MERIT.

Well, the Town were meritorious winners. Gillingham battled bravely, and there was a time in the second half when their prospects looked fairly bright. Fortunately the Town recovered, and at the end there was no gainsaying the fact that they were the better side. Gillingham showed style in parts, but the team work was never good enough to overcome the defensive quality of the Town. Though the winners did not rise to their very best, the margin of victory might well have been considerably augmented had the ground been easier. To all appearance at the start the going would be all that could be desired, but within a few minutes the surface had

cut up to such an extent that accurate passing and control were exceedingly difficult.

RUDELY PUSHED.

Some minutes had elapsed before the Town found their stride, and Gillingham's swinging methods threatened seriously. Harford was not concerned very much, but Kingham and Hodgson, the former in particular, had to utilise plenty of energy and determination into their business. A great shot by Yardley was the first attempt to evoke a cheer, but the ball passed wide. Then there was a period in which the off-side tactics of the visitors kept the Town at bay, and the skirmishes by Gillingham eventually required Harford's attention. With the ball made to move a bit more, the Town attack came into prominence, and some neat passing was seen. The visiting halves had to fall back to the help of their rear-guard, and Collins did yeoman service in a trying period. A little bombardment was attempted, but tall opponents kept the ball out. A fine pass by McGinnigle gave Heslop a chance, and he lifted the ball well in for Rutherford to accept under the bar. Still the Town persisted, and after clever footwork on the left flank, in which Fraser, Rennie and Slicer co-operated, the ball was swung across; Yardley was in the act of heading when he was rudely pushed, and a penalty kick was promptly signalled. RENNIE scored easily.

NIPPY M'NESTRY.

Gillingham made a rapid advance, but were forced back, and the nippiness of M'Nestry forced Rutherford to knock the ball behind very hurriedly when he would otherwise have had plenty of time to have cleared. Heslop placed the flag-kick to a nicety, and M'NESTRY, with a fine "stand jump," headed a beautiful goal. The Gillingham goal had narrow escapes two or three times after this, and Rutherford was often in action, but the visiting forwards needed no encouragement to show their paces, and White, in particular, was in the picture with fine manoeuvring. Bethell also did well, and Kingham was a prominent figure in the home defence, his tackling being remarkably fine. Towards the interval the Town asserted mastery, and good shots were made by the three inside forwards. Once, too, Heslop was given off-side as he centred to Yardley when an opponent at the rear of the referee was nearer the goal-line. On the stroke of the whistle for half-time a corner was forced, but Heslop put the ball behind.

LUTON TOWN 2
GILLINGHAM Nil

Splendid play on the Town right wing kept play in the visitors' quarters for some minutes, and Rutherford's goal had close shaves on three occasions. Heslop

sistent against hefty opposition, but when the visitors got over this period they caused a lot of trouble. The Town goalkeeper was very fortunate when he came out and French sent the ball past him, for Kingham had wisely taken the custodian's place, and the ball was kicked away when a goal would have been assured. We thought Yardley was through when he snapped up a pass from Rennie and rushed the backs, but the referee had seen him handle to get the ball under control, and Rutherford also foiled him by running out. Gillingham got down again, and Scott drove the ball in very hard from a fine angle; Harford seemed to have it safe, but somehow it slipped between his hands, and there was a general rush for it; FRASER arrived first, and tried to turn the ball round the upright, but sent it into the net. Let it be recorded that he was not to blame.

THE TOWN'S THIRD.

The Town halves and forwards were holding the ball much too close hereabouts, and the Gillingham halves were able to stop their progress often, and the home defenders were given some work. Harford was not called upon for anything difficult however, and then there came a change. M'Nestry led a strong attack, and the visitors could not escape from it altogether. Rutherford saved finely, and the goal nearly fell to headers from Yardley and M'Nestry. The latter then shot magnificently, and Rutherford managed to hand the ball over the bar, falling backwards into the net as he did so. More hot work on the Town right wing brought trouble for Rutherford and his backs, but they did well. Then Yardley gave Slicer a lovely pass, and he drove hard and low for the farther end of goal; Rutherford dived, and managed with the tips of his fingers to turn the ball out, but it went straight to the feet of M'NESTRY, who had a simple task to send it into the net.

ONCE TOO OFTEN.

Gillingham were not done with, but their forwards could not make any real impression on the Town defence. At length, Yardley, who had suffered more than any other player from the off-side tactics of the Gillingham backs, wisely kept position when Fraser fed Slicer. The latter put the ball forward at the right moment, and Yardley rushed forward as the backs tried the off-side trick just too late to be effective, and the Town centre-forward went on at top speed; Rutherford rushed out, but YARDLEY sent the ball past him into

the net, the hot protests of the visitors being of no avail. The off-side trick had been tried once too often. The closing stages found the visitors unyielding, but the better play came from the Town, and they were good winners when time was called.

HALVES IMPROVE.

Harford had not a great deal of work, but he should have saved the shot from which the Town goal fell. Kingham was in his usual form, and gave a clever exhibition of tackling, while his kicking was always clean and well-timed. Hodgson was not so heavily engaged, but successfully dealt with plenty of work from Bethell, who was well fed. Fraser was in better form than for many weeks, putting up a great game both in attack and defence. McGinnigle again gave a skilful exposition, though he might have distributed sooner, and Clark was in as good form as at any time this year. The three played really good football against a line that had plenty of push and go, and had a big hand in the success of the attack.

CLEVER FORWARDS.

The forwards found the free use of the ball restricted by conditions in the middle. They have shown better combination, but were very clever, and outwitted the Gillingham halves by neat control and accurate passing. Rennie excelled, and his facility in changing the point of attack, his adroitness in flicking the ball with amazing accuracy to his partner, sending it up the middle, or shooting across to Heslop, won frequent applause. He has found his position, undoubtedly. M'Nestry was an unending source of trouble by his quick movements, and was tireless. He was usually in the thick of the fray near goal, and so again on the mark. Heslop was a success, and his colleagues gave him plenty of work. Like Bryce, however, he must get the ball across more squarely. In the open he was good enough, and manipulated neatly. Slicer was not so successful as usual in the run-in, but muddled to advantage, and was concerned in three of the goals.

GILLINGHAM.

For Gillingham, Rutherford was blameless; he made fine saves. McGregor was the better of two robust backs, and, in the middle line, Beacham did very good work. Of the forwards, I like White, for he was able to control nicely, and was feeding Scott well, but Kingham was at his best, and there were not many shots from this quarter.