

Crusader Comments

ON THE VISIT TO BOURNEMOUTH.

IT was a curious game in several respects at Boscombe on Saturday. The 4,000 spectators seemed quite assured that Luton Town would fall, and even the fact that the first half had proved conclusively that either the Bournemouth attack would have to improve or the Town defence deteriorate did not seem to vary the opinion of the crowd. Those of us from Luton thought that the points were more likely to be added to the Town total.

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In the first half there was a general admission that the Town had been the better side in every respect; the change-over brought a slight difference, for Bournemouth had more of the game, and yet could not batter a way through the Town rearguard. They tried battery tactics, too, for there was at no time any hesitation among the home team when it came to a clinch or a clash: they just got in with all their weight. The Town were not slow to respond likewise after the interval, and so much of the attractive went out of the game long before the close.

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At Luton, Bournemouth played a fine, fast, open game, and merited their success; they tried similar methods on Saturday, but this time were countered with equally relentless challenges in defence and attack. The Town—in such odd moments as they were permitted to play scientific football, gave glimpses of the clever constructive game we have come to anticipate and to relish during the last two months.

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Details of the game need not be recorded here, for there was not much that could be regarded as serious trouble for either goalkeeper, and though there have been reports that have credited Scott with missing the easiest chance of the game, there were far more exciting moments in front of the home goal. The crowd were generous in their applause when M'Nestry hit the bar, when Heslop headed over, and delighted when Yardley got entangled with only the goalkeeper to beat from two or three yards' range.

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Of shots that went very close the Town had the greater proportion, and if Harford had more work, it was mainly because he sought it, for often he came out of goal—with good judgment—and punched away. Three of these saves were from corner kicks, and most of the other shots that went his way were from long range. Two were from free kicks by the backs, lunging the ball from the middle line. The goalkeepers owed a lot to their colleagues in the rear.

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Kingham and Hodgson were more polished in their work than the opposite pair; their tackling was sound, and judicious length kicking invariably found the forwards when the ball did not play freakish tricks in the air. The home backs were often criticised for faulty kicking, and yet must have been exasperated with the behaviour of the ball, which was ill-turned, and often the plaything of the gusty breeze that blew right across the ground.

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A more level game the Town halves have seldom played, and Clark gave a very good display indeed, certainly the best since his extraordinary game at Griffin Park. He was just the man to take on a powerful fellow like Russell, and with Webb apt to infringe, there was a rather rough ordeal, but he came out with the honours, and there was not a better half on the field. McGinnigle played very well, and undertook more of a defensive role than usual. He did not dribble much, and, along with Kingham and Hodgson, deserves the main credit for the mastery of that head-strong

and broad-shouldered centre-forward, Eyre. Fraser was just as good as the other two, and perhaps no better tribute could be paid to Charlie than the admiration of Tom Hodgson. There is no better flank in the Third Division than the Town's left flank to-day, I am convinced.

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Rennie again gave a delightful exhibition of cool and calculating football. His deftness of foot, and the remarkable accuracy of his passes, either the carpet touches to Slicer or the long, slanting kick that put every defender on the scutter after Heslop—in both phases he excelled, and there was no forward to touch him in that respect. I wish, however, he had kept a little farther forward, for I want to see that hundredth goal. Perhaps it is in store for the home crowd. Slicer benefited by his partner, and got over some nice centres, though now and then he wanted to do too much. I think he would have won the match shortly before the end but for the hustling he received from behind when he had bored into the centre and went through.

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M'Nestry was beyond the understanding of the home halves. He led them a merry dance, and once more had a centre-half weary of running about. His control was very good, and it was hard luck that his very fine surprise shot hit the bar. A few inches lower and the goal would have fallen, I think, in spite of the skill of McSevich. Heslop was not quite so successful as in the previous match, but found plenty of work for Moralee, and Brown was inclined to get wild when the little winger was on the move.

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One hears a good deal of criticism of Yardley, but I think he is the best man for the job. He may not be a devastating shot, but his energy and earnestness account for a lot of the room given to Rennie and M'Nestry. The defenders dare not leave Yardley, and with a little steadiness in front of goal he would be good enough almost anywhere. His distribution was nice, and Slicer had many passes from him in the first half, which was the right course in view of the strength of the breeze.

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A point away from home requires a lot of courage and no small amount of skill in these days, and though chief honours must be given to the backs and halves for their strong and stubborn play against a powerful attack, the whole team deserved a "pat on the back" for the manner in which they stuck to their job. They would have had no more than their deserts on the run of the game had they managed to pull off another victory away from home.

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For Bournemouth, McSevich had no harder task than Harford. Hayward was the better back, and played right up to his best, fortunately for his side. At half, Moralee and Halliwell did brilliant work, but it is difficult to see how Coxford is better than Forbes. In the attack, the amateur, Sherman, was very active, but Webb was probably the best, for he had ideas, and his nursing of Russell was praiseworthy.

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BOURNEMOUTH: — McSevich; Hayward, Brown; Halliwell, Coxford, Moralee; F. H. Sherman, Scott, Eyre, Webb, Russell.

LUTON: — Harford; Kingham, Hodgson; Clark, McGinnigle, Fraser; Heslop, M'Nestry, Yardley, Rennie, Slicer.

Referee:—Mr. S. L. Stenning, Ilford.