

LUTON TOWN 2
GILLINGHAM 0

LUTON.—Imrie; Kingham, Hodgson; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Heslop, M'Nestry, Tait, Rennie, Turner.

GILLINGHAM.—Burnett; McGregor, P. Lester; Beacham, Collins, Bishop; Williams, Shaw, Gellatly, White, Ames. Referee: Mr. W. J. Lewington, Croydon.

AT LUTON

ON Monday night the Town managed to beat Gillingham by two goals clear, and the Kentishmen are thus the first victims to provide the Town with a double. We hope there will be a lot more before the season is completed, but we cannot expect it with confidence unless there is a considerable improvement in the general play, and especially forward. I do not think there is a single supporter with a complaint against the defence, and the half-back line is more satisfactory than in the first game, but there is a great deal of discontent regarding the attack.

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Gillingham had been beaten on their own ground by three goals to one on the previous Wednesday, and the display of the Town on that occasion had allayed any unrest among the officials, while supporters expected a handsome victory in the return game. The balance of play tended to prove that anticipations were justified, for, in spite of the lack of cohesion among the forwards, the ball was in the Gillingham half for long periods. The failure, however, was in both approach work and marksmanship, for, instead of a united front line, we had the spectacle of individual effort, and such attempts as were made to advance in unison usually deserved to break down.

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Gillingham's forwards gave comparatively little trouble, for the simple reason that they were playing much the same sort of game, but they had not the support from the middle line that was received by the Luton quintette. Seven times the home forwards came very near scoring, but the best opening of the match was missed by Rennie. As in many other instances the chance was the outcome of brilliant strategy by Kean, and Rennie, with all the goal, save that occupied by the goalkeeper, to shoot at from half a dozen yards' range, pulled the ball just wide.

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The goals came in the second half, and were both credited to Tait. He was by no means a brilliant leader, but he was a genuine trier, and that was how he succeeded. Kean had given Heslop a pass that enabled the little winger to run down and lift the ball high into the goalmouth; Burnett punched the ball as it fell awkwardly under the bar, and up in the air it went; TAIT rushed in and jumped high to head the ball into the net. His second came as the result of a pass from Heslop after good work by M'Nestry. The winger slipped the ball forward, and TAIT raced ahead, and brought it along almost into the goalmouth; he shot hard, and Burnett, expecting a high shot probably, could only beat the ball down as it came about hip high, and it passed into the net.

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There should have been more goals in this half, but the visitors, who seemed to be playing seven or eight backs and no half-backs for most of the game, defended stubbornly, and there was no further score, although Rennie shot with great power and was within an ace of scoring on three or four occasions, while Burnett made one wonderful save from the same hot foot.

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Imrie was rarely troubled, but he did his little work exceedingly well, and further established confidence in the rearguard, where Kingham and Hodgson also played very fine football. The Town captain came back to his best, and put up a fine show, while Kingham was sound and consistent as ever. In the middle line, Kean, in spite of a badly bruised knee, an injury sustained at Fulham, was again the master craftsman, his work in every phase being brilliant, and Fraser was nearly as good. Two finer flank halves it would be difficult to find in the South. McGinnigle was playing his fifth game in ten days, and his work was very good, though, naturally, he tired a little in the second half.

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The forwards need some coaching in combination. They were good enough as individualists, but were often ragged in their approach, and the ball was not transferred as accurately as it should have been, and all too often was in the air. Heslop and Turner, who also were playing their fifth game in ten days, did pretty well, and Rennie made some nice passes, as well as some very fine shots, but the line was not dependable. M'Nestry worked hard as ever, and Tait put a lot of energy into his business, but somehow the five do not blend so well as they should.

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Gillingham owed their escape from a heavier defeat to their backs and the fact that the halves also undertook a purely defensive role. At times they were inclined to show roughness, and many free kicks were given against them, but they deserved praise for their gallant struggle against a better side. The gate did not touch the 7,000 mark.