

ONE POINT NOT ENOUGH

FOR THE MERIT OF LUTON

(By Crusader)

LUTON TOWN'S display at Southend, on Saturday, was reminiscent of their splendid success in the Cup-tie at Swindon. It was very heartening, even though one could not help regretting that they had not performed similarly in the tie with the Wolves. There was not a weak spot in the side, as far as combination went, and the football, in a game clean and well-conducted, was worthy of a much higher class. The troublesome feature was that the forwards could not bring their midfield brilliance to fruition.

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How many times the home goal seemed certain to fall I cannot estimate with certainty, but play was so often around Whitelaw, and he performed so gallantly, that the stand occupants rose to him, and cheered him heartily as he left the field. He deserved it, even though he had an inordinate amount of good fortune, since he saved magnificently many times, and at others he could not have said how he escaped being beaten.

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Despite having to face a strong breeze the Town had the upper hand in the first half, and by dint of neat passing, and canny positioning, they kept the home defenders hard at work. Play was chiefly on the right wing, for the wind took the ball there a good deal, and Kean and the pair in front of him gave a skillful display. On the opposite wing, when they got the ball, Fraser and his colleagues were equally thorough, and with Miller playing a fine game as pivot, all that was needed to achieve success was accuracy in shooting.

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Here it was, however, that the Town failed. Easy openings were missed after progressive work that elicited the admiration of the crowd. Slicer and M'Nestry got across many fine centres, and the halves often shot the ball into the goal area, but there was always something happening to counter the danger. Tait shot very well, and M'Nestry also went close very often, while Slicer had one drive luckily diverted by the goalkeeper when he was out of goal, and the ball hit the upright and went behind.

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M'NESTRY scored the Town's goal after 37 minutes' play. The halves and forwards had advanced by beautiful passing, virtually all the players in these departments having a part in the movement, and Yardley was left with a good chance. M'Nestry had a better, however, and when he received from Yardley he sent the ball into the net at lightning speed, the goalkeeper having no chance to stop it. With the exception of the first five minutes, and a big spurt shortly before the change of ends, the home team were kept almost continuously on the defensive, and they were very glad of the whistle.

LUTON	1
SOUTHEND	0

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Imrie made grand saves in the second half during the United's best time, which occurred about the middle of the half. Twice he saved brilliantly at full length, and when he was beaten he had saved a penalty-kick taken by French,

and also frustrated the marksman when he got to the rebound, but the ball escaped the goalkeeper, and went to JONES, who had an easy job. Jones deserved more than any other of the home forwards, excepting Donovan, perhaps, to get the goal, but it was rough luck on Imrie.

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For the most part, however, the Town were the aggressors, and their football entitled them to goals they could not get. Twice Rennie missed the simplest openings in unaccountable fashion, while he had several shots miss by the narrowest margin, and once he kicked the turf when he had a clear shot from a few yards' range. Yardley also missed chances in this as well as the first half, and though many shots whizzed close to the framework, Whitelaw got all that came within the eight yards' width of goal.

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There were numerous corners forced, and several scrimmages round Whitelaw, but he had good understanding with his backs, and they fought back stoutly. They had to, for their halves could not cope with the swinging football of the Town forwards and halves. On the run of play there should have been an overwhelming victory for the Town, but with the marksmanship poor, and the defence in very determined mood, goals would not come, and the Town had to be satisfied with sharing the spoils.

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If this is the sort of football they are going to play they will not fall lower in the League table. They will get goals, for they suffered a lot of ill-luck in the match, quite apart from their failures. The defensive work was near its very best, but the most pleasing feature of the game was the linking of the middle line with the forwards. All three played great football, and Miller's display was a revelation to those who had not seen him lately. After his very fine work at centre-half against the Arsenal Reserves the other week, however, he merited this chance.

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Kean's exhibition was such as one expects from an International, and Fraser was absolutely at his best. Their passing was really wonderful, and the forwards made much of it in the matter of attack, though they did not carry through to success. The right wing pair were all the better because they became a part of the team, and M'Nestry showed that he can centre with the best if he likes. The triangular work on this flank surpassed anything they have previously done. The left-wing played effective football, and Yardley also got through a lot of work, but there should have been at least half-a-dozen goals on the chances that were made.

SOUTHEND UNITED	1
LUTON TOWN	1

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SOUTHEND.—Whitelaw; French, Robinson; Johnson, Wilson, Pike; Crompton, Jones, Shankly, Donovan, Clenshaw.

LUTON.—Imrie; Kingham, Hodgson; Kean, Miller, Fraser; M'Nestry, Tait, Yardley, Rennie, Slicer.

Referee:—Mr. A. J. Jewell, London.