

ODD GOAL WIN

WHALLEY AND NELSON MAKE GOOD

Gillingham's Game Finish

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 2

GILLINGHAM 1

LUTON.—Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Mills, Nelson, Brown, Rennie, Whalley.

GILLINGHAM. — Holland; Jackson, Shipley; Darling, Collins, Kidd; Armfield, Purcell, Nicol, Cropper, Liddle.

Referee.—Mr. G. T. Gould, Woolwich.

THOUGH none would question the superiority of Luton Town on the run of the game on Saturday, they very nearly lost. As a scientific side they were much the better, thanks always to

the splendid middle men, but there was a deficiency of thrust and forcefulness at close quarters. Tait was missed in this respect, and what it would have been but for the enthusiasm of Nelson and Whalley can hardly be understood. It was a stroke of good fortune that they were included, for they brought life into the attack, and justified thoroughly their inclusion. Gillingham were a difficult side to hold, for though they did not have a lot of play until the last half-hour, they were always dangerous near goal, fought with much vigour, and

almost snatched at least a point. The difference between the teams might be summed up so: Luton were the more scientific, but the visitors had the more vitality and spirit.

AN IMPROVED TEAM

I expected the men from Kent to make the Town go all the way, especially as they had beaten comfortably the Palace on the previous Saturday, for such a victory would give them heart. Moreover, everyone conversant with the Gillingham record of recent years would agree that they had a better side than for years past. Scoring apart, therefore, it was all to the credit of the Town that they were able to command play for an hour or more. In the first half the visitors rarely broke through, but defended stoutly, and though the Town wing men got the ball across goal many times, it must be confessed that the inside forwards did not often look like scoring. Not only did Holland behave admirably, but his co-defenders were so unceremonious that they made the Town inside men hesitate before having a shot, and in that reluctance was Holland's salvation.

MANY CORNERS

Whalley and Nelson soon made it plain that they were all out to deserve their promotion, and pressure was continuous for about ten minutes, and the visitors hardly had a glance at the Town goal until there was a flutter on the left: Armfield was given a chance, but the ball beat him as it skidded off the slippery turf. Corners were conceded time after time by the visitors, but when the ball was anywhere near Holland had it, and if it were not, then Collins and his backs found it with their heads. We all thought that the visitors would take the lead when they suddenly broke through on the right: had Harford come out at once there would have been little danger, but he hesitated a moment, and when he did come he had to make a daring dive at the feet of Armfield: he spoiled the forward's chance, but the ball went behind him, and it was well that Kingham had fallen back into goal, for he was able to kick off the line, or a goal would have been certain.

FLUKY GOAL

When the score did come it was a distinct fluke. Kean made the initial move and fed MILLS neatly. The winger swung the ball from the touch-line right across goal, and Holland and Brown each went for it and missed; however, to the amazement of everybody, the ball swerved just inside the upright. The visitors strove manfully for a little while, but had to shoot from long range, and Harford took all the shots without trouble.

LUTON 1
GILLINGHAM nil

More spirit was infused by the Town in the opening minutes of the second half than they had shown all through the first period, and the reward was a very fine goal. A beautiful glide by Brown sent Mills away, and he went right through and whipped the ball across; as usual, it was too speedy for the inside men, but WHALLEY always ready for anything loose, dashed up and, catching the ball almost on the line, drove in a terrific shot from what looked like an impossible angle for a scoring shot, yet Holland was beaten completely. The Town held the upper hand, and once Brown cleverly beat the backs, and could have run straight into the goalmouth, but after rounding Jackson he shot at once, and Holland made a magnificent save at full length. Just afterwards there was another assault, and Brown headed in; Holland got down to the ball and touched it, but it evaded his grasp, and there was a shout for a goal from the crowd; the referee turned towards the centre, but evidently changed his mind, and when the ball was put behind gave a corner. If there were the slightest doubt about the ball being over he did the right thing to give the benefit to the defending side.

NICOL NOTCHES

Play became rather vigorous, and there was some slackening of effort by the Town, with the result that the visitors accepted this as an encouragement, and Harford and his backs had more work than at any other time. Even so the Town now and then raised hopes of goals, and once Brown missed very badly when Nelson sent all along the ground one of the best centres of the match, for the ball wanted but a touch to be turned into goal. The last goal, however, was to be scored by Gillingham, and it was well merited. Armfield walked round Mackey and then centred gently to Nicol; the centre-forward took the ball as it came and with a delightful shot had Harford beaten all the way.

ROUGHNESS

There was a good deal of roughness after this, and it culminated in Cropper receiving a reprimand. Indeed, the Gillingham left wing pair were responsible for nearly all the rough stuff in the game, and Liddle was fortunate that he did not receive something more than a censure for a foul on Kingham that missed the eye of the referee. Towards the close the visitors, by dint of energetic play, came very near scoring again. Harford deprived Cropper of a certain goal when right through, but Holland did the same at the other end when he was required urgently, and again brought off a wonderful save from Brown. The closing stages, however, were of a scrambling character, and the end came none too soon.

FRASER'S SKILL

Apart from an occasional fractional hesitation, Harford kept goal as well as he ever has done, and had a clever protector in Kingham. The Town right back did not seem to have the best understanding with Kean in the first half, however, and Liddle was good enough to make a lot of trouble when he had the chance. Nevertheless, Kingham was the most polished back on view. Mackey did not see so much of the ball as he has done lately, because Fraser was the best half-back on the field, and did not leave a great deal for the man behind him.

Kean also played magnificently, and the two flank halves were at their very best. They gave their forwards splendid passes, and also took a big part in trying to force the attack at close quarters. McGinnigle was stubborn and tireless as ever, and the Gillingham inside forwards had few opportunities.

ATTACK

Of the attack, Nelson and Whalley deserved most praise, and the experiment, as it was, certainly was justified to the hilt. Both played really well, and brought a refreshing enthusiasm into their work, being game to a degree, while capable of beating opponents. Mills did very well in the open, and could beat a man, but could do with a little more pace when on the move. He is apt to centre too hard, the ball going too fast for the inside men even when the defenders have been drawn. Brown suffered from this, but was well policed by Collins and the backs, and had not the physique to challenge with much success. His distribution was good, and he had little luck with his shots. Rennie did not have a good day at all, and was not helped by some of the crowd, who were silent when he did something good, but well heard when he failed.

GILLINGHAM

Gillingham are strong rather than skilful, but had any amount of pluck and perseverance. Nicol led well, and Cropper had good ideas, while the wingers showed pace and pluck. Collins was a cool pivot, positioning well, and his powerful physique was very useful. His colleagues in the middle line worked hard, and so did the backs, while Holland