ONE SHORT AGAIN

LUTON FALL AT SOUTHEND

(By CRUSADER)

THE old story of forward failure was the cause of Luton's defeat at Southend. They were the better side in all respects save finishing power, and in that most important feature were lamentably deficient. All the goals were scored in the first half, but there should have been double the number, and had the Town been in the lead they would have had no more than the run of the play suggested. However, they failed at close quarters, and with the United getting a penalty goal start, the handicap was too much.

* * *

The penalty kick was given when Kingham charged Morfitt in the back as the home centre-forward tried to head a centre from the right wing, and HATFIELD gave Imrie no chance with the kick. BARNETT put the home team further ahead after good work on the left wing, with somewhat of a chance shot, and the ball eluded Imrie's arms as the goalkeeper went full length, struck the post and glanced into goal. The Town's goal, curiously enough, came when they had lost Tait through injury. Very good work by Kean and a centre by Mills was diverted between the backs by Rennie, and ROBERTS, who had closed in, nipped through and shot hard and true.

* * *

The home team's goals were the results of raids following strong bouts of pressure by the Town, who were more frequently attacking, but the too close play of the inside forwards was to the liking of the home backs, who, for periods, were almost under their own cross-bar, with the halves fulfilling the duties of full backs. Such shots as did come within the reach of Whitelaw were not sufficiently strong or accurate as to give him anxiety, though Roberts and Mills had good efforts saved, and Tait's best was a clinking shot that skimmed the bar. Generally, however, after the first half-hour, the Town forwards did not keep the ball moving so briskly as in the early stages.

* * *

On the other hand, the home forwards did not want much encouragement to try their marksmanship, and two or three times Imrie was lucky to see his goal escape, especially after two blunders in which he failed to gather the ball. The Town halves had nearly as many shots as the home forwards, but usually from long range, and Whitelaw was big enough and safe enough to deal with all such.

* * *

The second half was much as the first, except for the absence of goals. The Town enjoyed the better of the game for long periods, and threatened almost continuously for the first fifteen minutes. There were strong shots by most of the forwards, but they struck defenders, and the United cleverly packed their goal against every assault. Towards the end there was a little vigorous stuff, and the home backs were reproved for fouls. It was quite late in the game before Imrie had anything difficult to deal with, and then not a great deal. However, while he was not beaten again, neither was Whitelaw, and the United won by the odd goal.

* * *

The Town defence showed few holes, and the kicking and tackling was very good, while the halves all worked as heroically as usual. Had the rest of the team been equal to the middle men, there would have been no doubt about the result, but the forwards could not crown splendid midfield work with good marksmanship. Imrie was at fault more than once, but Kingham and Mackey both played well. The halves were a very level lot, but the forwards, while able to outwit the opposition in mid-field, did not shoot well. Nelson and Tait were sinners for holding too close, and Roberts was the pick of the line, doing his work cleanly and quickly. He is certainly the best left winger—probably the best winger—at the Town's command.

* * *

SOUTHEND UNITED 2
LUTON TOWN 1

SOUTHEND. — Whitelaw; Hatfield, Robinson; Dixon, Randle, Donovan; Barnett, Jones, Morfitt, Lewis, Robson.

LUTON. — Imrie; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Mills, Nelson, Tait, Rennie, Roberts.

Referee. — Mr. S. F. Rous, Hemel Hempstead.