

GREAT GAME AT LUTON

STIRRING STRUGGLE WITH SOUTHEND UNITED

Brilliant Forwards

(By Crusader)

LUTON TOWN 3
SOUTHEND UNITED 3

LUTON.—Imrie; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Mills, Hutchison, Tait, Rennie, Rowe.

SOUTHEND.—Moore; Whelan, Robinson; Dixon, Wilson, Donovan; Barnett, Jones, Shankly, Lewis, Clenshaw.

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

END-OF-THE-SEASON football has never been of a higher standard during the last fifteen years than in the last two games. The supporters seemed to be agreed that it was rough luck on the directors that men "cast off" should be the most skilful in the game. It was simply a repetition of Wednesday's play against Watford, and it was no fault of the Town attack that they did not gather the full reward of their merit. The blame for dropping a point, if blame were deserved, must rest with the defenders, who never seemed quite at home against the speedy and cleverly-contrived raids of the Southend forwards. It is a long time since Kingham and Mackey were so worried, but the halves also were often out of position when the ball came out of the ruck in the Southend penalty area. It seemed to me that the visitors played an exaggerated W formation, and at times the two inside forwards were completely lost behind their own half-backs. Still, all showed skill, enterprise, courage, and team spirit. Outplayed at times, they proved that they could hit back very hard, and though the Town had a great advantage territorially, the raids of the visitors were well conceived and executed. The match was worthy of as big a crowd as went to Wembley, and I should doubt if the football there were better.

ROWE LEADS OFF

Within a few seconds the Town had broken through the Southend defence, and Moore was engaged. He must have felt very fortunate that he was able to get the ball away twice before he was beaten, for there were three or four drives at goal, and he found difficulty in getting at them. Then he was beaten two minutes after the start, and the crowd roared with glee when ROWE brought off the success, heading through from a pass by Tait. Then we saw something of the Southend spirit, for they persisted magnificently, and only a grand save by Imrie, at full length, prevented Lewis bringing the scores level. The Town struck back very hard, and Moore made many fine saves, while Tait's endeavours to bore through were foiled because of the close watch of Wilson, and the readiness of the backs

to tumble into him when he had broken through. He did not control the ball well twice when he seemed certain to score. Southend came again, Jones doing brilliant work, and he so bothered Mackey that the latter tripped him, and as a result the equalising goal came. Dixon shot the free kick right across goal, and as nobody was looking after SHANKLY, the centre-forward headed the ball into the net.

ESCAPES FOR SOUTHEND

Play was very fast and entertaining, and to every effort by the Town the United pulled out something quite as good, but whereas the Town forwards found strenuous opposition and tackling, there seemed to be a lot of hesitation in the Town's defensive ranks, and for quite a long spell the United had much the better of the game. However, there was a pull-together resolution among the Town, and in the last twenty minutes before changing ends they gave the United rearguard a grueling. Shot after shot was fired, and it was quite refreshing to see all the forwards having a turn, and to see the manner in which they plied each other with the ball. Tait had very hard luck when a strong shot glanced off the foot of Wilson and then shot past the upright. The work of Moore was applauded, but he was completely beaten by a terrific shot from a free kick taken by Rennie from the penalty line, the ball striking the upright and coming across goal. A series of corner kicks followed, but there was no further success before the change of ends.

LUTON 1
SOUTHEND 1

Southend's goal nearly fell immediately the game was resumed. Tait and Hutchison just failing to get the ball through with Moore down on the ground after saving finely. Several free kicks were given against the visitors, and it seemed as though play would be taking a rough turn, but the referee kept the players in check very well. The Town were well on top for a considerable period, and they were playing exhilarating football, particularly forward, and the halves were supporting well. Now and then the United made a raid, but they were generally defending, and their inside forwards had to fall back to extricate the defence from many a tangle. Moore brought off a wonderful save once, when, after a great struggle caused by the skill of the left wing, Mills drove hard all along the ground, and Tait, who was in the line of flight, jumped up and allowed the ball to go between his legs, but Moore dive and managed to deflect the ball—a grand piece of work. Success came thirteen minutes after the resumption, for Tait forced his way past Wilson and Dixon and then tapped the ball along to Rowe, who sprinted away, cut in, and then lifted the ball over the heads of the defenders for MILLS to nip in and head into the net.

DEFENCE SHAKY

Moore saved magnificently time after time, and the Town halves joined the forwards in their efforts to penetrate again. Moore's skilful positioning was great, and his pluck must have given his colleagues heart, for all at once they turned the tables. It seemed as if the whole side threw themselves into the attack, for they bore down on the Town goal, and had the defenders all at sea. Several times Kingham and Mackey slipped down so badly that it seemed as if they were not studded, and though Imrie had not a great deal of work, he had a lot of anxiety. Eventually he was beaten, and very cleverly, too. The ball had been cleared out of a scrimmage, and went out to the right, only to be suddenly lunged across goal, and CLENSHAW had wisely closed in, and meeting the ball first time, he banged home a tremendous shot that went into the top of the net at lightning speed. This livened up the Town again, and they were soon pressing round Moore, who, however, saved splendidly and "brought down the house with one feat." Kean had been tripped just outside the penalty area, and he took the kick and sent the ball right across: Rowe dashed in and seemed all over a score as he got his head to the ball, and it was going at flashing pace when Moore got his fist to it and away it sailed over the bar. It was a wonderful save. Then came a superb drive by Rennie, but the ball struck the bar, and as it dropped Hutchison got his head to it, but could not nod it downwards, or a goal must have come; it went over the bar.

SHANKLY'S GOAL

There had been times when Shankly was by himself in the middle of the field, but his wingers always kept position on the touch-line, and now and then he raced away almost without hindrance. Every time this happened the spectators gasped, for neither Kingham nor Mackey seemed able to divine his intentions, and they were often in trouble with him. SHANKLY it was that gave the visitors the lead, but it seemed to me that he was two or three yards offside, standing in a position clearly behind the Town backs, and with no one but Imrie to beat when the ball came across from a free kick. There was no doubt about the infringement in my mind, but, worse luck for the Town, there was no doubt about it in the mind of the referee from the opposite standpoint. I thought it was the one and only bad decision Mr. Rous made during the game. The visitors were soon forced back into their penalty area, and they collected there to defend their charge. They had to work tremendously hard; frequently it seemed as if the goal must fall, but Moore made grand saves, and refused to be beaten. Rowe was playing a wonderful game, his speed and courage being nourished by support from the crowd, and eventually he took a pass and went through at top speed before swinging the ball across goal, and MILLS again had the satisfaction of scoring

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with a simple header, Moore having no chance to save. The Town came again but Moore was almost invincible to any thing from a range that gave him sight of the ball. Now and then the visitors went off again, and once Shankly was right through, and seemed to have the goal at his mercy, but he shot wide.

SOUTHEND'S MERIT

It was a thrilling struggle from beginning to end, and reflected great credit on the teams. I thought the visitors were a bit lucky to get away with a point on the run of the game, but they gave a splendid display, and deserved some reward. Moore has always done well at Luton, even with the Reserves this season he gave a clever exhibition, while his backs on Saturday did very well, Robinson being a tower of strength. Wilson was the best of a powerful middle line, and in a skilful attack Jones was the master mind, but all the others came into the picture when they had a chance, and Shankly was a tiresome sort for the Town defenders to check.

TOWN TEAM

Imrie did his part well, and could not be blamed in any way for any goal against him. I thought the backs were not quite sure of themselves, and Mackey seemed very puzzled by the dapper Jones. For some reason the Town defenders did not keep their feet so well as the United's rearguard. McGinnigle played moderately, and for once in a while he seemed to forsake the role of third back, and gave Shankly a lot of rope. I wondered if the Town pivot were trying to open his League account. He has only scored one goal this season, and that was in a Cup-tie. Kean gave a sparkling exhibition, but I thought he began to grow tired after an hour, and Fraser, wily and clever as ever, found more than his match at times in the shrewd little Jones. Still, as a line they supported their forwards grandly all through. What again can we say of Hutchison, Rennie and Rowe? All three played great football, the combination being particularly skilful, and it was fine to hear the crowd giving Rowe that encouragement he has so often been lacking. He played his very best game of the season, being almost irresistible in the second session. Rennie fed him with wonderful passes, and Tait also found him well. Hutchison did the same for Mills, but the the robust Robinson. Mills played much latter did not get much change out of Robinson. Mills played much better than against Watford, and deserved his goals for the foresight with which he closed in to accept centres, but he also centred far better than usual, and goals should have come from his work. Tait was an earnest leader, but he could not keep the ball at his feet well when he was trying to break through, and when he received passes. He had very hard luck on at least three occasions, when a few inches the other way would have meant a goal after gallant work against odds.