

TWO FROM NEWPORT

BELL AGAIN OPENS THE SCORING

Defence Sound Under Pressure

(By "CRUSADER")

LUTON TOWN 2

NEWPORT COUNTY 1

LUTON: Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Pease, Martin, Bell, Rennie (A.), Hutchison.

NEWPORT: Emery; Robinson, McLaughlin; Clarke, Jordan, Jones; Reynolds, Burgess, J. Haycox, Higgins, Thomas.

Referee: Mr. E. Pinckston, Birmingham.

WHEN Newport County came to Luton in September they won admiration by a skilful and plucky display, although, as their trainer and our old goalkeeper, Tommy Gibbons, remarked to me after Saturday's match, "Luton should have won at home." In the return game at Somerton Park the County were just as plucky, but for a considerable part of the game did not find the same skill. The Town fully merited success; they were better in all departments. The County's spirited reply in the second period was assisted to a great extent by the injury to Fraser—a bad kick just below the knee after fifteen minutes' play. He had played brilliantly, and the ball seemed to come to him at will. After Horace Pakes had attended to him he returned, but soon after the interval had another bad crack, and as a result was almost a passenger for the rest of the game.

TROUBLESOME PASSENGER

There are passengers, however, who can give a lot of trouble, and although the Town left-half found it difficult even to walk a few yards, he went to the outside-left position, and stood near the half-way line. When the ball came he always made good use of it, holding until an opponent tackled, and then parting with it to advantage. Crippled though he was, his presence frequently bothered the opposition and frustrated many of their intentions. By the mishap, however, the Town attack was shorn of a lot of its power in the second half. Hutchison having to take the left-half position. The County thus had much more of the play, but, even so, the better scoring chances were at the other end, and actually, on the admission of the home goalkeeper, Pease did score a third goal, but the referee, who was a good distance away, gave the home side the benefit of the doubt.

COUNTY'S SPIRIT

In the first half there was virtually only one team in it. The Town halves put up a wonderful performance, and mastered the home attack completely. Rarely was there a chance for the home forwards in the first half-hour, and at half-time the home followers seemed to feel that the visitors had won. Not so the County players; they went into the fray with an energy and spirit that would have overwhelmed many defences, but so well did the Town defend that Harford had comparatively little to do until the last few minutes, when he had a big part in foiling the tremendous efforts to break through. The game would have been more enjoyable for everybody had the going been better; all up the middle of the field was thick sludge, and it was ankle deep at the lower end. Had the Town forwards, particularly Bell and Pease, been able to get through it, they would have scored two or three goals in the second half.

JORDAN'S CHOICE

Tommy Gibbons thought the County captain, Jordan, made a mistake after winning the toss, but it was a question which was the better course. If he had the assistance of a slight breeze that blew almost diagonally across the ground, he had to face a bright sunshine; he evidently felt that the sun discounted the advantage of the breeze, and so he chose to play with the sun at his back. After brief exchanges, in which there were a few kicks for the backs at each end, the Town took command. The half-backs time after time brought the ball well into the home half, and then neat passing, in which Rennie's flicks were very useful, had the County defenders at full stretch. Bell was also well served from the right; played well on top of the backs, and by neat footwork overcame them and looked like scoring, but, being hampered, shot the ball to the right for Pease to dash in; the winger was foiled just in time, and a corner resulted. This was got away, but the Town were soon at it again.

BELL SCORES

Now and then the County right made progress, but Harford was not called into action, Kingham and Mackey playing well, and McGinnigle was quite the master of midfield. Kean, Martin and Pease impressed by their clever interchanges, and after Fraser had been helped off the field, following his injury, Bell nearly got through twice. Hutchison centred finely, and Emery had several good shots to save, and Rennie once sent a pile-driver over the bar. There was a well-earned reward after 20 minutes' play. Rennie misled the opposition by swinging the ball out to the right, and Martin, Kean and Pease all had a hand in the subsequent movement which brought a beautiful centre from Pease, and BELL dashed in and, without waiting to hold the ball, met it in flight and crashed it into the net, Emery having no chance.

HUTCHISON FOLLOWS SUIT

A minute later it seemed as if Kean would score, for, after deceiving the defence by a feint to the right, he came up the middle and flashed in a shot, which Emery saved by a wonderful effort. For some time Emery and his backs had no peace, so well did the Town forwards and halves play. However, when the home forwards were going well, McGinnigle fouled Haycox, and when Jordan's free kick was headed to the left the ball was returned for Haycox to put in a magnificent shot, only to see Harford leap in the air and with a back-handed fist send the ball flying over the bar. It was a grand save, and bespoke increased solidarity in defence. Hutchison tricked the defence beautifully, and should have gone right into goal, but preferred to place the ball in the middle, and Jordan got to it first. Eight minutes before the interval there was a great movement, in which Kean, McGinnigle and Martin were prominent, for they passed and re-passed till they had the defence in a tangle, and then the ball was sent to HUTCHISON, who coolly side-stepped Robinson and then deliberately placed the ball wide of Emery.

In the remaining period before the

change of ends the County put on pressure, and Harford had work to do, but for the most part the play was at the other end, and with better foot-hold Martin and Bell would have been through. Half-time:

LUTON 2

NEWPORT 0

Whether the County team had been lectured or not at the interval I do not know, but they went about their job on the restart with great determination. They were not allowed to give Harford any trouble, however, and when Fraser and Rennie made play the ball was put in the middle for Bell to try and force a way through, but the ball stuck in the mud close in goal, and when he got in his shot Emery took it easily. Fraser was again in the wars, and this time it was necessary to move him to the extreme left, Hutchison going to half-back. McGinnigle did great work when the County tried to plough through the middle, and Haycox could make little headway against him. When Burgess had a chance to shoot, the ball sailed high over the bar, with Harford directly underneath. By hard kicking the County halves kept play in the Town half for a long time, but Kingham and Mackey kicked strongly, and although Thomas gave the Town right-back an anxious time, he was not allowed to get in a shot. Fraser was hurt twice, and there were stoppages while he received attention, and in a further desperate assault by the County it was good to see the Town forwards fall back to the help of the defence. Martin dribbled brilliantly in the mud, and relieved a lot of tension.

BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

From long forward passes, Bell made single-handed dashes up the middle, and was frustrated by the thick mud, being unable to pull the ball through it. Pease also made two or three thrilling runs, and once he accepted a great pass from Bell, raced past the backs and drove in a hard shot. Emery's hands went up, but the powder behind the shot beat him, and the ball fell behind him and appeared to be well over the line, but the goalkeeper turned quickly and retrieved it, and was pleased to see the referee signal for play to proceed. The home forwards could not find touch with Harford, so well did Kingham and Mackey repel them when they got past the middle line. Rennie again swung the ball well out to the right, and Pease raced through again and drove in a fierce shot, which whizzed only inches the wrong side of the upright. Just afterwards Pease again beat the defence and squared the ball for Bell to jump up and head just over.

HARFORD'S TURN

Newport now tried harder than ever, and Harford had more work. He was well protected by his backs and halves, and shock tactics were beaten again and again. Burgess shot over, and Harford saved neatly from Reynolds and Higgins. After Harford had lost the ball close in, Mackey came through a crowd by sheer strength, and sent well up the field for Bell to dribble well out to the left, beat Robinson and then turn into goal, but when four yards out he stuck in the mud again, and the ball was scrambled away. A moment later he forced a corner, but the flag kick was sent behind. Five minutes from the end Hutchison held up the County right, and then tapped the ball inside to McGinnigle; the latter tried to return the pass when challenged, but the ball stopped in the mud, and Reynolds snapped it up and ran through on the right to centre, and as Harford ran out HAYCOX got to the ball first and headed a nice goal. Harford then had to do more work, for the County went all out to save a point. The goalkeeper made a grand save at full length, and the Town goal was packed to resist further efforts, and the whistle sounded with the game well won.

GRAND DEFENCE

Harford's job was no sinecure, although he had not quite so much work as Emery, taking the game throughout. The trouble was the frequency with which the ball was slowed up in the penalty area owing to the thick mud. Kingham and Mackey played finely all through. The former had a difficult task to hold the elusive Thomas, but with Kean also giving a lot of attention to the outside man the danger was minimised. Mackey was again a host in himself when things were most difficult, and the kicking of both was clean and of excellent length. The halves were the best that had been seen at Newport this season, was the general comment, and they deserved the compliment. All three played grand football, especially in the first half, and Hutchison was more than useful when he took over Fraser's duties. Their quick tackling was followed by accurate passing, and the forwards carried on well.

CLEVER FORWARDS

Bell improves every match. He was always bothering the backs, was quick to seize a chance, and made good use of the ball when his way was barred. The line combined well, some of the passing movements in the first half being really delightful. Martin's footwork was a puzzle to the opposition, and his guile led them into many a maze. Pease had a good match, and on at least three occasions was unfortunate not to find the net. Rennie passed well, and in the first half the left wing did many good things, but in the second he had the job nearly all to himself. Again the team work was splendid, and the prospects are greatly brightened by the success.

Emery kept goal very well, and his backs and halves worked hard. None was better than our old player, Vincent Jones, who worked himself to a standstill. Thomas and Reynolds were the best of the forwards, and both required a lot of watching, while Haycox shows not a little promise.

ST. ALBANS CHARITY CUP

Harpenden Rovers 1, Redbourn 3.

MID HERTS LEAGUE

Division I.

Batford 0, Camp Old Boys 1.

Division III.

Welwyn G.C. Ro. R. 2, Harpenden Ro. R. 3.

Division IV.

Redbourn Rovers 4, Harpenden T. Res. 1.

MID HERTS BENEVOLENT CUP

Harpenden Town 1, Hook Sports 4.

ST. ALBANS MINOR LEAGUE

Harpenden Juniors 7, Scouts Tigers 1.