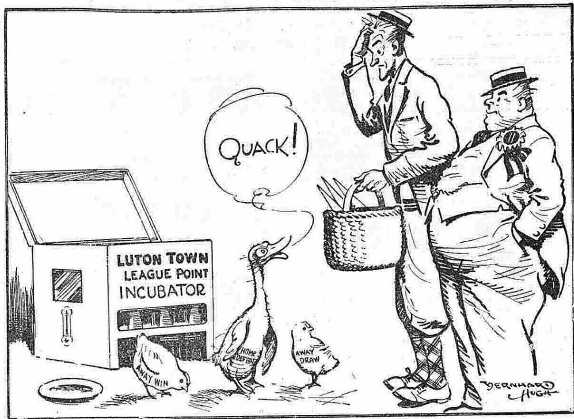


THAT UGLY DUCKLING



LUTON SUPPORTER:—"Thought you weren't hatching any ducks this Easter?"

THE STRAWHATTER:—"I didn't intend to, and I could swear that I put a 'home victory' egg in that box."

LUTON SUPPORTER:—"If you did, then that visitor from Brighton must have substituted a 'home defeat' one for it." After their creditable display at Brighton and Bristol, where they secured three points out of a possible four, Luton greatly disappointed their supporters by losing at home to Brighton on Monday.

HOME DEFEAT

(By "CRUSADER")

BRIGHTON AND HOVE ALBION 2
LUTON TOWN 1
LUTON: Harford; Mackey, Reece; Kean,
McGinnigle, Fraser; Holbeach, Martin, Bell,
Rennie (A.), Hutchison.
BRIGHTON: Webb; Marsden, King;
Wilkinson, Mooney, Walker; Jepson, Farrell,
Brown, Egan, Wilson.

Referee: Mr. F. Ratcliff, Hampstead.
[F]or ever a referee were the hoodoo of a particular team. I think that Mr. Ratcliff must be deserving that one as far as the Town are concerned. In the two holiday games he has handled, the misfortunes of his decisions have operated harshly against the Town, and that is putting it very mildly. None would be better pleased than the Town players if he were omitted from their programme. He had something to do with the unhappy ending to the holiday card just when everything seemed to be as bright and happy as could be, and some of his decisions were more than curious. There was an instance in the second half for which I have never seen a parallel. Bell was brought down when within three or four yards of goal by Mooney; the referee pointed to the place, and everybody expected a penalty kick, but then he took the ball outside the penalty area and gave a free kick. Whether there was a previous foul or not, I do not know, but, if so, why did not the whistle sound for it. But even when the free kick was given a row of opponents stood within six yards of the ball, and they got away with it, although not only the referee, but the Town players themselves, deserve censure for this, since they should have refused to take the kick until the opposition was ten yards distant. It is a regular thing for the Town players to overlook this, yet opponents have the wisdom to draw the attention of referees to it whenever the Town are at fault.

SLACKNESS IN DEFENCE

The defeat was due in some measure to misfortune, but largely to some slackness in defence, and to lack of marksmanship forward. The policy of Mooney in playing a third-back game should have resulted in the Town players giving less work to Bell, and the inside forwards being more in the line. Holbeach was a disappointment, for he failed to take his chances, and was rarely in the picture until late in the game—too late. Pease was certainly missed. The Town forwards did not settle down to the game they played at Brighton or Bristol, though the left wing and Martin played finely all through, and Rennie was hurt early in the second half, and eventually had to go to the extreme left, with Hutchison inside. The half-backs played grandly all through, and got through an immense amount of work, every man playing great football, but Mackey was not at his best, and Reece, who otherwise put up a fine game, made one error in covering Mackey, and that cost a goal. Harford was quite blameless, for he had no chance with the goals against him. It was a very lucky victory for the visitors, for they were hard pressed for two-thirds of the game, but they made good use of their chances, and were always on the alert.

TOWN START WELL

Brighton won the toss, and the Town attacked the Kenilworth-road end. In the first minute a pass by Kean found Rennie, and he sent in a hook shot which bounced in front of goal, and Webb had to tip the ball over the bar. From the flag kick Rennie fired again, but was yards too high. Reece cleverly cleared from Jepson, and a dash on the Town left brought a centre from Hutchison, which travelled just too fast for Holbeach. When the Albion had a turn Kean dispossessed Egan with a brilliant tackle, and Mooney was well wide with a shot from forty yards. There was a short spell of even play, and then Martin sent up the middle for Bell to shoot, but

Webb saved easily. Rennie again banged wide after bright work by Fraser and Hutchison. Egan dribbled well, but his pass inside was snapped up by Mackey, and at the other end Rennie, who was shooting with commendable promptitude, if not with unusual accuracy, had a fierce drive blocked by a defender. Fraser made a grand effort and swung the ball right over to the right; Holbeach returned it to the middle, and Martin beat the goalkeeper with a neat header, but the ball

struck the bar and came down for Marsden to boot behind for a corner.

NARROW ESCAPES

The Town forced two more corners in quick succession, but the Albion defence took no risk and booted the ball out. Jepson went away on the visitors' right, and Egan shot well, but Harford punched away, and then Farrell shot wide from long range. A foul on Holbeach brought a well-placed free kick by Kean, and Hutchison and Rennie rushed past the backs as Webb came out; the goalkeeper touched the ball, but could not keep it, and it struck Hutchison and went behind—a marvellous escape for the visitors. More corners followed, and Rennie just missed with a capital shot, and the pressure was maintained insistently, the visitors defending somehow, anyhow. However, a quick raid by the visitors saw Mackey fail to check the left wing, and Wilson missed a glorious opportunity by a wretched shot. Another free kick against Mooney was well placed by Kean, and Webb was lucky to get at a header from Hutchison, and he saved from Bell and Holbeach.

FIRST GOAL

The Town rearguard was not working efficiently, and once the Albion forwards got through, and Harford saved grandly from Brown at the expense of a corner. A tussle near goal followed, and Harford was beaten by Egan, but Reece kicked away from the line, and the spectators breathed again. Rennie sent Bell through, but King saved his goal by a fine tackle, and then more clever play by the Town left wing compelled Webb to save magnificently from Hutchison. Five minutes before the interval the visitors' right wing got away, and Jepson centred into the goal area, where there was a slovenly attempt to cover up, and Brown got an easy chance, of which he took full toll and opened the score. The Town pulled out a bit more, and the left wing constantly wrought danger, but they were beaten back, and though they fought hard for the equaliser, the interval came with the score:

BRIGHTON	1
LUTON	0

Brighton resumed with great dash, but the Town defenders relieved, and Rennie was put through to shoot hard, but the effort was deflected for a corner. It was evident after a very few minutes, however, that the players were feeling the effects of the strenuous games of preceding days, and the pace was much slower. Several fouls were given against Walker and Mooney, but try as they would the Town could not get through. Holbeach missed badly neat passes, and was obviously too anxious. Webb saved another free kick from Kean, and Martin drove in a fine shot which Webb saved with difficulty. Then Bell was fouled by King, and this free kick was also cleared. A run to the other end was nullified by a good save by Harford, and then the Town set up hot pressure once more. Webb saved well, and the visitors drew their inside forwards back to assist in the defence. Whenever the visitors got away it was the left wing that was best fed, and gave most trouble.

ONE TO RENNIE

The Town attacked hotly after fine play by McGinnigle, and Webb saved a hard ground shot from Hutchison, who had slipped into the middle. The Town came again on the left and the ball was swung right across to the right; Holbeach gave to Kean, who tapped the ball across for RENNIE to drive into the net at lightning speed, the goalkeeper being helpless. Martin and Rennie were prominent in more attacks, and Rennie was injured in a rush through the middle when he seemed certain to score, and as a result he had to exchange places with Hutchison. Attack after attack was delivered against the visitors' goal, but they refused to give way, and the backs kicked with great power and were steady under pressure. Mooney often floored Bell, and played on to him all the time. The Albion made raids occasionally and once Jepson only just missed with a fine shot, but most of the shooting was at the other end.

THE WINNER

With thirteen minutes to go the visitors broke through on the left, first Mackey and then Reece being unable to clear properly, and BROWN received the ball from Reece's head and fired in a terrific shot from close range that had Harford thoroughly beaten. The Town pressed fiercely in endeavours to get level, and Webb made many fine saves, while the backs and halves drew right back into the goal area, and staved off the assaults, and eventually the end came.

There were 10,133 spectators, and the receipts were £586 6s. 4d.