

SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO GILLINGHAM

How the Changes Worked

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	3
(Pease, Bell (S.), Stephenson)	
GILLINGHAM	1
(Williams)	

GILLINGHAM.—Harvey; Marsden, Lester, Randle, Barrie, Kidd; Crompton, Syred, Raleigh, Baldwin, Williams.

LUTON.—Coen; Mackey, Reece; Brown, Thayne, Beck; Pease, Bell (S.), Bell (T.), Stephenson, Russell.

Referee.—Mr. G. Hamilton-Jones, Woolwich.

LUTON TOWN'S reorganised and rejuvenated team brought on a fine victory at Gillingham last night in the first round of the Southern Section Cup Competition. It may be as well not to place too much importance on the success, inasmuch as during the whole of the second half Gillingham were a man short, Marsden sustaining a broken nose a few minutes before the change of ends. Even allowing for this, however, the Town had played very well against a hell-for-leather defence, and under conditions that did not make for good football. The wind was blowing half a gale throughout, and when Mackey lost the toss it appeared as though the home captain had given the advantage of the breeze, but before many minutes it was noticeable that the wind favoured the home side. Later, the Town players averred that the wind changed during the interval, and that they had to face it both ways, but this was not so. The wind was of the whirl variety, and at one end of the ground the streamers appeared to be blowing directly into the Town goal area in the first half, but at the other end it seemed to be just the opposite.

RUSHING TACTICS

Gillingham adopted rushing tactics, and there was something to like about the manner in which their defenders booted the ball at the first threat, and the first-time shooting of the forwards. Their goal was an object lesson in the art of getting things done by the quickest and the shortest route, and the Town defence had a very severe testing time. The home team was changed considerably from the side defeated at home by Watford on Saturday. Harvey displaced Holland in goal, the backs and halves were unchanged, but in the forward line Syred took the place of Anstiss at inside-right, and the left wing was made by Baldwin and Williams instead of Orr and Doncaster.

On the Town side, the rearguard was the same as on Saturday, but the whole of the middle line was altered, while in attack only Sam Bell and Russell were retained, and they were in different positions.

Gillingham's right advanced immediately, Crompton tricking Beck and centring into the goal-mouth for Thayne to clear. They were soon back, and a clever back-heel by Raleigh won applause, though the ball sailed yards over the bar. Both Beck and Brown came into the picture by forceful attacking work, and the latter once made a bee-line through the middle when he was expected to pass to the wing, and he wound up with a shot from the edge of the penalty area, but the ball went wide.

COEN'S SPECTACULAR SAVE

Gillingham replied fiercely, and Baldwin drove in a terrific shot from fifteen yards for Coen to make a spectacular save by throwing himself across the goal and turning the ball out. Barrie was conspicuous with strong work when Luton got going again, and after seven minutes' play Gillingham met with success, and deserved it. Crompton and Syred went right away with delightful passing, and at the right moment the latter shot the ball out to the left; WILLIAMS raced in hard, and, without hesitation, shot with great force, and the ball had Coen beaten all ends up. The crowd of 1,000 spectators wanted more of this, but the Town defenders were settling down, and set the Town attack on the move. Russell wriggled clear and centred right into the goal-mouth, but Barrie's head bobbed up in front of Tom Bell's and got the ball away. A rush to the other end brought a sharp shot from Syred, but he was off the mark. Gillingham swung the ball about well, and Mackey had to concede a corner to hold up the lively Raleigh.

TOWN IMPROVE

The ball was frequently out of play owing to the wind, and the extreme wingers could do little with it, though Crompton was a lot of trouble. Lester made a great clearance when the Town right pressed him, but they attacked again as the result of a free kick, and a neat back-heel pass by Pease gave Sam Bell a chance, and he shot strongly, but Harvey saved in fine style. Russell and Stephenson next tried to break through, and from the former's centre Sam Bell shot over. Play was quiet for a little while, the ball travelling from end to end without either forward line having chance to shoot, but eventually a nice movement initiated by Thayne and Stephenson brought danger, and Tom Bell beat the defence but could not get enough powder behind his shot to beat Harvey. Sam Bell was always on the spot if there was a shot to be had, and Tom Bell was pulled up for hands as he burst between the backs and headed for goal.

NOSE BROKEN

Gillingham played hard, and their eagerness to test Coen was a praiseworthy

feature of their play, for they hit the ball very hard for goal from anywhere within thirty yards, and Coen had his hands full more than once. He was equal to the calls, however, and watched good shots by Raleigh go just over or close to the upright. Mackey played finely, and often set his forwards going by quick little trips up the middle. Coen again saved splendidly following a free kick for "hands," and then after a hot scrimmage brought about by the nippiness of Crompton, Raleigh shot wide from a scrimmage close in the Town goal. The Town came again before the interval, and Harvey was glad to tip over the bar an awkward shot from Russell, while Lester cleared several times with big kicks. Still the Town persisted, and as the outcome of a hot scrimmage in the goal area Marsden had to be assisted from the field, and it was stated afterwards that he had sustained a broken nose. The home goal had narrow escapes after clever work by Stephenson and Russell, but remained safe until the whistle called a halt.

GILLINGHAM	1
LUTON	0

When the game was resumed there was a raid on the Town right, and Lester kicked hurriedly behind. Brown shot wide as the ball came from the ruck. Again the right wing came, and Pease centred for Stephenson to head into Harvey's hands. Pease next had a shot saved. Bad play by Brown gave Gillingham a footing, and Williams tested Coen with a hot shot. Coen saved in daring fashion as Crompton dribbled through. When the flag kick was cleared, Sam Bell put in a grand shot, which Harvey tipped over. A fine pass by Pease was taken by Russell, and from his pass Stephenson shot splendidly, but Harvey threw himself at the ball and turned it out, then recovering to get away a shot by Russell. A scrimmage ensued before the ball was got away.

THE EQUALISER

The equalising goal came in extraordinary fashion. PEASE broke through on the right, and from the touch-line swung the ball across. It bounced awkwardly and beat everybody, including Harvey, and landed in the net.

Gillingham played up with plenty of pluck, and their readiness to shoot at goal brought trouble. Coen saved finely from Williams, and the tendency of the Town halves to fiddle about helped them. The home goal narrowly escaped when Tom Bell hustled Lester, and with Harvey out of goal, the latter's kick missed by inches only.

QUICK GOALS

A great chance was missed by the Town when Pease went away with a clear field. With three or four colleagues waiting, he sent the ball too far, and though Russell got it back, the defenders were in position again. Mackey was in good form, and frustrated the home attack again and again, and set his forwards on the move. Tom Bell twice headed just wide. Pease raced through and centred right across the goal-mouth, but the ball was scrambled away.

It was a fine bit of work by Sam Bell that gave the Town the lead thirty minutes after the restart. He and Pease made a great passing run, and SAM BELL eventually beat Harvey all ends up with a fine cross shot. Three minutes later Stephenson took a pass from Sam Bell bore to the right and passed to Pease, who returned the ball for STEPHENSON to head through in clever fashion.

Gillingham played up well, but Raleigh, who had already received one rebuke from the referee, badly fouled Thayne, who had to receive attention before the game was resumed. Then Tom Bell raced through with a clear field, but, with only the goal-keeper to beat, shot wide. Thayne saved a certain goal when Crompton raced clean through, and then Coen made a great save from Syrett. The Town came again, and Russell swung the ball across for Stephenson to scrape the ball wide. The end came.

LUTON	3
GILLINGHAM	1

HOW THEY SHAPED

Coen kept goal splendidly, and was never at fault in the slightest degree. He had unbounded confidence, felled well, and his clearances invariably went beyond the middle line. Mackey played one of his very best games, and he was every inch a captain. His tackling was of the best, and his kicking of material assistance to the forwards. Reece had a warm hand in Crompton, but played well, and the winger, who began to mix matters early on, soon found that he could have the same medicine. The halves did not settle down quickly, but once they had the hang of things they did great work. Thayne was a stalwart in defence, and was perfectly fair in his tackling; his kicking to the wings was also good, and though he received plenty of hard knocks, he took them cheerfully. Brown was particularly good in attack, and Beck did many bright things, though inclined to wander a lot, with the result that Crompton had more freedom than was good for the Town defence. Still, the three played very well indeed, and held the opposition well when they began to fall in with the play of the backs.

THE LIVE WIRE

Sam Bell was the live wire of the attack, both in foraging and in shooting. He fed Pease with many clever passes, and the second half saw a lot of danger from this wing. Stephenson also did well, but both Pease and Russell found the wind bothersome. Tom Bell led the line nicely, and was constantly harrying the backs, and it was largely due to his persistence that the equalising goal was scored.

As I stated at the beginning, perhaps it will be better to wait a while before making any bold assertion regarding the success of the changes, but the team spirit was good, and the whole of the players deserved praise for the performance.