

SUCCESS AT HOME

LUTON OVERCOME THEIR OLD RIVALS

Smith's Successful Debut

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN 2
(Martin, Ball)
MILLWALL ATHLETIC 1
(Hancock).

LUTON.—Coen; Reece, Smith; Brown, Thayne, Fraser; Martin, Bell, Ball, Rennie, Stephenson.

MILLWALL.—Yull; Walsh, Turnbull; Newcomb, Hancock, Miller; McCartney, Alexander, Yardley, Roberts; Harkins.

Referee.—E. C. Carnwell, Lichfield.

MILLWALL ATHLETIC put up a great fight at LUTON, and although they were struggling against a superior side for quite three-fourths of the game, their pluck and perseverance nearly snatched a point. The combination of the Town in the first half was something like the best they have displayed in some of their away matches, and if there had been finishing as efficient as their general play, they would have won handsomely. The first half provided a marked contrast in the quality of the teams, and only a gallant, if at times somewhat unscrupulous, defence, prevented the Town collecting a lot of goals. Not only in the rear did the visitors show merit, however, for there were rare occasions when they beat the Town defence all at sea, and they were unlucky not to register.

MORE STYLISH

Almost from the outset the Town showed the more stylish combination, and the forwards and halves soon had the visiting defenders in trouble. Ball sent wide when he was well through, and the Lions had to pack their goal against shots that were well on the mark. Yull behaved splendidly, and his backs lost no time in getting the ball away. Walsh once headed out a shot by Rennie when Yull was unable to get near the ball. Millwall accepted the challenge, and in spite of good work by Reece and Smith, there was a thrill when Alexander received well up, and had only Coen to beat, but he shot over.

The Town went through the opposing ranks very skilfully, the ball travelling all along the forward line, and the wingers

responded to the promptings of the inside forwards with good centres.

Yull and his backs were very hard pressed, and the goalkeeper showed nice judgment in meeting centres from Martin.

SEVERE PRESSURE

Following a magnificent bit of play on the left wing, in which Fraser was the leading light, the Millwall goal should have fallen, but Ball, who received Fraser's pass and had a wide stretch of goal to aim at, could only send the ball wide. Millwall's reply was threatening, but Thayne put the scotch on Yardley, and Yull was soon in action again, saving a very fine shot by Rennie, and Martin supplied Bell with an opening, but the latter could not keep the ball low enough.

Brown fed his wing splendidly, and covered a lot of ground, while Fraser kept his wing employed and frequently joined them in a break-through. The ball was kept down well, too, and the passing was very accurate among halves and forwards.

YARDLEY NEARLY SUCCEEDS

Millwall did nothing spectacular except in defence, but the forwards did not receive a lot of help from the middle men. However, there was a tendency among the Town defenders to leave a gap in the middle, and with Yardley hanging just on-side, there was always danger when the visitors got away. Yardley once broke clean through, and Coen rushed out to meet him; the goalkeeper managed to bar the way, but could not hold the ball, and it travelled goalwards while he was on the ground. Yardley raced after it, and could he have reached it a fraction of a second sooner, there must have been a goal, but the pace just beat him, and the ball went behind. Alexander nearly did the trick just afterwards, for he suddenly flashed in a shot when Coen was at the opposite end of the goal, and the ball went past the upright with Harkins racing up too late.

COEN SHINES

The Town set up another very strong assault, and the ball hovered about the

goal after Martin had muddled perfectly. Yull again coming to the rescue of his side.

There was another thrill at the other end, where Yardley again slipped through the gap as a long pass came up the middle, and only the fine judgment of Coen averted trouble. He rushed out and forestalled Yardley just in time.

Coen had to do the same again, though the danger was not so great, but in the main the Town were attacked fiercely, and several corners were forced on Millwall defenders. Turnbull once headed his own goal when Ball had beaten a way through on the right, and the defenders, however, invariably got the ball away from these flag-kicks, and Yull saved ever so often when necessity arose. Smith was applauded for his skilful work, and had almost as much credit as the half-backs for the way the forwards were sent to the attack.

MARTIN'S GOAL

As the interval approached, the Town maintained a steady assault. A grand pass from Rennie gave Ball a chance, and he broke through, but his shot sailed over the bar. The defence rallied, their battery, and met with well-merited success seven minutes before the interval.

Shots from all quarters were fired at the Millwall goal; Yull had saved again and again, and his backs and halves had driven the ball out more or less luckily, but, following a sustained siege, the ball came out to the right, and MARTIN closed in and fired home a hard drive which gave Yull no chance.

Millwall lost no time in their efforts to make amends, and a free kick by Yardley struck a barrier of players, and Smith made a clearing clearance. Reece also kicked well, and Thayne did his part in holding up the determined opposition.

LECTURE

Then came incidents that marred what was a very fine struggle. There had been very few fouls, but Turnbull and Miller had committed the trickiness of the right wing, especially Martin, who had badly fouled. The referee spoke to two players, and just afterwards he gave Turnbull a lecture, in which it was quite clear that the player was in danger of marching orders if there were any further offence. Rennie was only inches too high with a head, followed by a visitor, and the Town maintained hot pressure, but could not beat Yull again. Coen had to run out again quite a long way in order to stop the Town's attack, and there was a change-over came with the Town ahead.

LUTON 1
MILLWALL 0

The second half did not produce nearly so much good play as the first. The Town had the better of the exchange for some time, and Yull did well to save from Stephenson. A sustained attack, in which Fraser and his wing were very prominent, kept the Millwall defenders hard at work, and Yull showed splendid anticipation of shots from all the forwards, while centres were headed away by the backs and Hancock.

The referee had a word with Yardley when the old Luton player persisted in trying to hinder a goal kick, and Smith was equally determined that he should not do so. When Yardley rushed at the Town full-back the referee pulled him up.

The Town forwards were not so much in the picture at this stage, and there was not the combination seen in the first period.

Moreover, Millwall were playing harder, and once there was a desperate rush on the Town goal, and two or three players were on the ground with Coen underneath. The goalkeeper rose with the ball in his possession, and cleared. Smith did great work beforeanda, but generally play was devoid of thrill, and control was poor. The Town defenders were apereadeged when Alexander broke clean through, but Coen brought off a magnificent save as he leapt across. Millwall strove hard to draw level, and their half-backs played better than at any previous stage, but there was a tightening up of the Town defence, and they could not get through.

BALL'S GOAL

Following one of Millwall's massed drives, the ball came out to Bell, and he drove the ball through the middle perfectly for BALL, just this once free from any policeman, to take it in his stride, race between the backs, and as they and the goalkeeper converged upon him he shot a great goal.

This enlivened the game, encouraging the Town and spurring the "Lions" to further effort. Rennie took a pass from the right, and speculated with a long shot, which had Yull groping, but the ball missed by a foot. Yull saved well from Stephenson, but was forced to drop the ball, and a Town forward tried to bustle him over the line; there was an appeal for a goal, but the referee was well up, and declined to affirm. Yull made another extraordinary save as he flung himself full length to keep out a hard, ground shot from Bell.

"LIONS" ON TOP

Millwall now played up strongly, and for the remainder of the game were the better side. Newcomb was prominent with delightful work, and time and again initiated movements that left his forwards in possession. The Town defence did not appear too safe, but Smith evoked applause by his speedy and thoughtful play. Once the Town broke away, and Yull pushed over the bar a grand shot from Stephenson. However, there seemed to be a certain amount of sitting among the Town defenders as the game wore on, and the "Lions" lusted the pace better. Roberts had a grand shot just too high, while Coen made several saves. Again, Stephenson narrowly missed in a Town breakthrough, but the "Lions" quickly returned, and Coen again drew applause by a splendid save close to the upright. However, from the resultant flag-kick there was a massed drive at the Town goal, and HANCOCK forced his way through a crowd of players and banged the ball into the net. This was four minutes from the end, but the Town managed to baulk all further efforts.

TOWN DEFENCE

Coen again found plenty of opportunity to show his worth, and made several masterly saves. Reece kept Harkins very much in subjection, and Smith made a very happy debut.

There is a touch of the Corinthian about his play, for he has speed, does not mind mixing it, though fairly, and his shrewdness in positioning is first class.

It was this faculty that stood him in good stead and turned defence into attack often. His kicking was not always accurate, but frequently he found his forwards with well-placed, long passes. Thayne is not content with a purely defensive role, and there were times when there was a lot to be said for his forward play. He was a gap in the middle, and this made Yardley

a danger man, especially in the first half. 'Hayne played very well, nevertheless, while Brown and Fraser did magnificent work, especially in attack. Had their first-half excellence met with the reward it merited, there would not have been so much danger towards the end when the "Lions" were on top.

FORWARDS

Ball was well watched by the burly Hancock, but did fine work as leader, and the line as a whole played much more convincing football than the opposition, particularly before the interval. Better could hardly be desired save in the extremely important function of finishing off the attack. The marksmanship was good enough to extend Yuill and his colleagues, but there should have been goals, too. Martin was very tricky, and Bell was very near his best. Rennie did well until he fell lame, and Stephenson worked hard, and was a bigger menace when he went to the inside berth.

MILLWALL

The "Lions" stayed the course the better, but that was probably because their forwards had so much less to do in the first hour. They were comparatively fresh for the last half-hour, during which they did their best work collectively. Yuill was a sound goalkeeper, and Walsh as good as ever. A very fine back he is, and Turnbull, although lacking the finer points of his captain, nevertheless, did sound work. Of the half-backs there was none better than Newcomb. Some of his touches in the second half were delightful, and he was very fair in his tackling. Hancock was a lusty fellow, and difficult to circumvent, but Miller was not always disposed to play

the ball. Yardley tried hard against his old club, and with a little luck might have had at least one goal. He kept the ball on the move, too, and Alexander also showed much skill.

There were 8,931 spectators, and the receipts were £501.