

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. READING.

Played at Reading on Saturday. Result :—

Luton Town.....	3 goals.
Reading.....	2 goals.

The teams were as follow :—

RIGHT.	LUTON TOWN.	LEFT.
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Bee (goal).

Chesher.		McEwen.
Watkins.	M'Crindle.	Howe.
Gallacher.	Finlayson.	Galbraith.
		Allen.
		Prentice.

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Watson.	Stewart.	Moore.	Wilson.	Lee
Knight.		Justins.		Deane.
	Inglis.		White.	

Cannon (goal).

LEFT.	READING.	RIGHT.
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Referee, Mr. F. Crossley, Swindon ; linesmen, Messrs. J. H. Hackett and A. N. Other.

About two dozen Luton enthusiasts journeyed to the biscuit town on Saturday to see the Reds take a couple of points out of Reading. A little more, however, and they would have met with disappointment, but the narrowness of the margin of Luton's victory was due to circumstances to which reference will be made later on.

The actual scene of the contest was Caversham, but where Reading ends and Caversham begins, I am unable to say. I only know that in order to get to the ground we had to ferry across the river and then walk a tight-rope sort of a bridge which was placed over a stream. If my duties took me to the Reading ground often, I should speedily effect an insurance on my life.

There was a jolly good crowd to welcome us—good, that is, as regards numbers. In other respects the Luton lot are not a patch on them. They shouted and kicked up such a hullabaloo as I never heard before, but fortunately, the outcry, with some exceptions, was not of the grossly ill-natured kind which distinguishes certain grounds that I have visited. Still, it was amazing enough, in all conscience.

I thought I had got in a heathen land,
That the natives on their gods did call;
For who could think such a terrible din
Was caused by fellows footing a ball.

Successful Luton ! Yes, quite so, and Luton will be successful all the time their players look after their feet, a very important item. For serviceable non-slipping boots, Freeman, Hardy, and Willis, Limited, 38, George-street, Luton, defy competition, all at popular prices, they guarantee best value for money. The Rugby and Association Boot, patented, at 6s. 11d. of which they sell many thousands throughout the kingdom, they thoroughly recommend. The largest stock of Walking and other Boots in the town—[ADVT.]

The game was timed to commence at three o'clock, but it was a quarter past the hour when Galbraith set the ball in motion, Reading having won the toss. At the very outset the crowd made a tremendous row, and I was puzzled to know what it was all about. The only words I could hear had reference to someone's taking a coat off, and then it gradually dawned upon me that the cause of all the bother was the blazer worn by the referee, which was scarcely distinguishable from the shirts of the Luton players. The shouting was somewhat justified by events, for now and then during the course of the game the referee was left in sole possession of the ball.

Comparing the two teams as they appeared on the field, the homesters certainly seemed to possess the advantage of weight, though there were one or two small men among them. By the way, it is curious to note that at Reading they never succeed in putting their first team in the field, and the reason is that nobody knows what their first team is like. Some imagine that the premier eleven should be constituted in one way and some in another.

Thus the gentleman who supplied the report of Saturday's match to the *Evening News* deplored the absence of Corbett and Ward, while the *Star* reporter lamented the non-appearance of Fletcher, Kelsey, Dickenson, and Shepherd. I fancy there were about a score of other first eleven men whose services were not available, so that it will be seen that the "powers that be" down that way were in a distinctly unfortunate position.

On the Luton side the only disappointment was in regard to Burrows, who had promised to play, but who at the last moment found himself tied to the Arsenal Reserves. Chesher took his place, and I think it will be generally admitted by those who saw the match that he made quite as good a show as Burrows could have done.

After the ball was set rolling, the first feature of note was a pretty piece of combination by Galbraith and Allen, and as a result Prentice got in a lovely shot but Inglis luckily stayed its progress. Following a splendid bit of tackling by McEwen, Prentice, M'Crindle, Watkins, Finlayson, and Allen all went in for shooting practice, but it remained for Gallacher to provide Cannon with anything like a difficult job.

A little later, from a centre by Gallacher, Prentice showed up with a beautiful shot, which furnished Cannon with another opportunity of exhibiting his skill, and then M'Crindle sent over the bar. Galbraith came near scoring with an overhead kick from a throw-in by Watkins, but once more Cannon proved equal to the occasion.

The ex-Scots Guardsman having negotiated a very smart shot from Prentice, Reading broke loose, but Watson spoiled the effort by getting offside. A few minutes afterwards, the homesters got away, but Moore frittered away his chance by shooting terribly wide. From a corner given by Chesher, the ball was put in goal and the Reading forwards swooped down in fine style, and were mortified to find their attempt frustrated by Bee.

Generally speaking, however, Luton were having considerably the best of the play, the whole team working together in grand combination. The passing all round was clean and well judged, and had not Reading had a strong pair of backs and a splendid goalkeeper, the Reds must have scored over and over again.

At length, White gave a corner to a shot by Prentice, and the little 'un placing from the flagstaff, M'Crindle headed on to Gallacher, who headed into the net. This was after twenty-five minutes' play.

Two capital headers obtained the goal
And Luton were truly elated ;
But the dismal looks of the Reading shoal,
Are better imagined than stated.

EVERYTHING new at S. Bassett's, 28, Wellington-street. New Hats, Hosiery, Ties, Collars, Gloves.—[ADVT.]

Nothing succeeds like success, it is said, and the Reds, greatly inspirited, went at it again ding-dong. A clinking shot by Gallacher was cleared beautifully by Cannon, who eluded Galbraith by letting that gentleman go over his head into the net. Gallacher then had another try, and this time put in such a hot 'un that the custodian was obliged to give a corner, from which nothing resulted.

A beauty by Allen, Cannon was not quite able to clear, and Prentice with the goal at his mercy, shot over the bar. Then Galbraith, after a grand bit of play, put Prentice in possession, and the left winger sending across the mouth of goal, Gallacher registered a second point with a lightning shot.

Subsequent to this, the play became a bit more even, and once, at any rate, Reading came within an ace of scoring. Just before the interval a great misfortune befel Luton, Gallacher, who had been playing a champion game, twisting his leg. It was quite an accidental affair, though the injury was the result of a collision. While Gallacher was lying on the ground, however, I regretted to hear a well-dressed ruffian on the grand stand give expression to his satisfaction at the mishap by advising the Reading players to "Give 'em socks."

During this first half, the Luton team had given as fine an exhibition of football as it has been my lot to see for many a long day, and it was certainly no discredit to the Reading men that they were a couple of goals behind. After the match was over, the opinion was freely expressed that Luton's play during this forty-five minutes was far superior to anything seen on the Reading ground this season.

At the beginning of the second half, the Luton goal experienced a narrow escape. Owing to a miskick by M'Crindle, Moore was given a clear opening, but that player, instead of taking the ball down as he ought to have done, very foolishly contented himself with a long shot, which went wide of the mark.

Luton at once retaliated, and Galbraith transferring to Allen, Freddie put such a lot of powder behind his shot that Cannon was dumbfounded, and Luton were placed three up. It was really a wonderful goal, and Allen must have been as much astonished as anybody.

Soon after this Gallacher came out again, but found that he was no good, and had to give it up as a bad job. Reading now began to infuse an immense amount of energy into their play, and getting in front of the Luton citadel, Stewart had a good chance afforded him, but he sent the ball clean out of the field.

A minute or so afterwards, Prentice, apparently thinking the game would benefit by the introduction of a little of the comic element, deliberately used his fist to the ball when he should have used his head, and reading, seizing the opportunity to attack which the miskick gave them, tested the powers of Bee,

he repulsed on this occasion, but subsequently made

a mistake, which almost had disastrous consequences. Through an error of judgment he left his post, and did not reach the ball, but Watson took compassion and shot over the bar. A little later Reading again attacked, and Bee being unable to clear from a shot by Knight, the ball was rushed through.

Tremendous cheering all round the ground greeted this performance, and the locals no doubt began to conjure up visions of victory. At this juncture Wilson and McEwen attracted notice by showing each other undesirable attention, and on a repetition of the offence in a scrimmage in the Luton goal, both were ordered off the field.

Now that the Lutonians were reduced to nine, the Reading players saw their opportunity, and made the most of it. They piled it on in a most determined fashion, and the marvel is that the Reds were able to hold them at bay as long as they did.

Just before the call of time, and in a somewhat bad light, Justins added a second goal with a long shot, and again there was an outburst of enthusiasm on the part of the spectators. What a scene we should have witnessed had the homesters been able to equalise, I dare not contemplate, and it was quite a relief to me when the whistle sounded for a cessation of hostilities.

OVERCOATS to order from 30s. at S. Bassett's, 28, Wellington-street. Gentlemen waited on at their own residences on receipt of postcard—[ADVT.]

The Reading team certainly deserve great credit for the amount of dash they put into their play when they saw there was a possibility of retrieving their fortunes. Credit is equally due to the Reds for the equally determined defence they opposed to the fierce onslaughts of the home team.

As I have said, Luton played a first-class game in the first half, and better than could have been expected, under the circumstances, in the second. My first compliment must be paid to Chesher, who, taking his place at very short notice, acquitted himself splendidly throughout the match. Did he always play as well, there would be no need to seek the services of another back.

McEwen was in fine form, and it was a great pity that he and the other fellow lost their tempers. M'Crindle was a pick of a very strong half-back line, and seemed as though he could do nothing wrong. Howe and Watkins both did yeoman service, working untiringly from beginning to finish.

Galbraith, as usual, gave a brilliant exhibition, and all the others seemed to emulate them. Gallacher, until he was hurt, performed splendidly, and Finlayson also rendered a capital account of himself, though the injury to his eye placed him at a disadvantage in the matter of heading. The left wing was on its very best behaviour, Prentice again going very strongly, while Allen put in any amount of work. In the latter part of the second half Allen combined the functions of half-back and forward, Howe going back, and he did it remarkably well. He always shows up best in an emergency.

With regard to the Reading team, the man who stood out most prominently was undoubtedly Cannon, whose display between the sticks was irreproachable. Inglis and White at back always wanted a lot of beating. The half-back line was nothing out of the ordinary way, and the forwards, four of whom belong to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, were only moderate in point of ability, though they played up very pluckily.

Mr. Crossley had a very difficult position, owing to the fact that he is a Swindon man, and that there is bitter rivalry between Reading and Swindon. Nevertheless, he discharged his duties in a manner which did him great credit, and he kept cool in spite of the noisiness of the crowd.

The Reading Committee did a very kind thing in providing tea at the Queen's Hotel, for the Luton team, and this is a practice which might be more generally followed. Such hospitality must of necessity tend to promote that good feeling which it is desirable, in the interests of the game, to cultivate, and I commend the Reading plan to all whom it may concern. I ought to say that Messrs. Walker and Matthews, the secretary and assistant secretary respectively, were kindness personified.

The only other Southern League match on Saturday was that between Southampton St. Mary's and Royal Ordnance, on the ground of the former. The Royalists were beaten by three goals to one.

A serious accident to footballers may often occur by being badly booted. The boot recommended to prevent these accidents, is the Rugby and Association Boot, patented, price 6s. 11d., sold by Freeman, Hardy and Willis, Limited, 38, George-street, Luton. For the money it is a marvel. It gives the greatest satisfaction to hundreds of players. For Gent's Smart and Durable Walking Boots at 3s. 11d., 4s. 11d., and 5s. 11d., see Freeman, Hardy, and Willis' windows. They are the largest retailers in the kingdom.—[ADVT.]