

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE

LUTON TOWN v. SOUTHAMPTON ST. MARY'S.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result :—

Luton Town.....	4 goals.
Southampton St. Mary's	1 goal.

The teams were as follow :—

RIGHT.	LUTON TOWN.	LEFT.
	Bee (goal).	
Chesher.		McEwen.
Watkins.	M'Crindle.	Howe.
Brown.	Finlayson.	Galbraith.
		Allen.
		Prentice.
O		
Hollands.	Angus.	Offer.
		Nineham.
Thompson.		Baker.
	Littlehales	Furby.
Hamer.		Marshall.
	Barratt (goal).	
LEFT.	SOUTHAMPTON.	RIGHT.
	* * *	

Referee, Mr. T. Radford; linesmen, Messrs. G. Muir (Southampton), and H. Arnold (Luton).

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.]

Persons interested in the progress of the Southern League Competition had looked forward to the meeting between Luton Town and Southampton St. Mary's as one of considerable moment, feeling that the result would go a long way towards determining the result of the struggle for championship honours.

The abilities of Millwall and Luton are pretty well known, but the Soton Saints have always been regarded as the dark horse, and it was felt that if anyone could give the leaders a tying up it would be they. Like Reading, they faced Luton with an unbeaten certificate, and some of their victories had certainly been of a sensational character.

Their goal record was a formidable one—I think it was fifty for to six against. In the English Cup Tie they beat Newbury by no less than fourteen goals to nil, and in the League they had beaten both Chatham and Royal Ordnance. Apart from the League matches, however, they had met no class teams, and therefore their strength could not be properly gauged.

Still, it was no wonder, when it was known for a certainty that Gallacher would not be able to play, that Saturday's match was regarded with some apprehension by Lutonians. Gallacher is such a fine player, and combines so well with the rest of the team, that his presence makes all the difference in the world.

The Saints, on their side, came with the fullest confidence in their ability to win. They were not quite at full strength, their two amateurs, Ward (centre-forward), and Taylor (right half), being unable to make the journey. Saturday's team, therefore, was purely a professional one, and each of the players had been promised a bonus in the event of winning.

About 170 Southampton enthusiasts came to Luton to see their pets give the strawplaiters a dusting, the majority of them being distinguishable by the cards in their hats. Poor fellows, they little knew what a terrible disappointment was in store for them. Now
The Soton Saints to their homes have gone,
With their wild hopes left behind them;
Their blackest looks they have fastened on,
In the doleful dumps you'll find them.

The weather on Saturday was delightful, and the ground was a great deal better than might have been expected after the tremendous downpour of rain which took place on Friday. About three thousand assembled to witness the encounter, the grand stand, as usual, being filled.

The Red Cross Prize Band was in attendance, and gave a selection of music. Several of their contributions, I noticed with satisfaction, were of a livelier description than has been the case on previous occasions. Take my word for it, you can't have anything too sprightly for a football match. Classical things are all very well in their way, but there are times when a good old jig is more acceptable.

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

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The kick-off was announced for 2.30, and with commendable punctuality, Referee Radford set the teams agoing. From the start, the Luton fellows went about their work in the coolest possible manner, and one could very quickly ascertain that they were quite equal to the task before them.

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The homesters at once acted on the aggressive, and from a clipper by Watkins, Barratt gave a corner, which Prentice considerably placed behind. Soon afterwards Finlayson just shaved the post, and from a corner placed by Brown, Howe made a good attempt, missing the mark by a few inches.

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The most dangerous shot of the next few minutes was one by Brown, which the custodian saved well, and then the visitors retaliating, Watkins and Brown caused some amusement by doing a double somersault, and while they were disentangling themselves, Hollands took the opportunity to put in a fine centre, which, however, was not turned to account, Baker ultimately sending high over the bar.

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Some pretty play by Allen and Prentice resulted in placing the ball in the Southampton goal at the disposition of Brown, but evidently the latter did not want to discourage the visitors thus early in the game, and he obligingly kicked skywards. After one or two further ineffectual assaults by Luton, the Saints took up the running, their forwards once making a very ugly rush, but fortunately nothing came of it.

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Then the Reds again asserted the upper hand, and Barratt having saved from a beauty by Galbraith, the ball was kept hovering about in the vicinity of the visitors' goal, until at last Prentice put an end to the suspense by scoring the first point of the match with a fast low shot, which Marshall left to Barratt and Barratt left to Marshall, the ball between the two finding its way into the net.

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This was after eighteen minutes' play, and naturally the crowd raised a tremendous cheer. After the return to the half-way line, M'Crindle handed on to Finlayson, who shot just over the bar, and Galbraith, following some good play by Prentice, missed the corner of the goal by inches. Then the Luton centre forward and Finlayson were responsible for a neat piece of work, and Finny passing back to Galbraith, the latter took a flying shot and placed the homesters two ahead.

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Of course, more cheers greeted this performance, and these were renewed when a moment later, Brown from a corner-kick hit the cross-bar. It was a near go, but the Saints managed to clear. Subsequently Allen and Prentice between them worked the ball into just the right spot, and Finlayson had a rare opening, but shot wide.

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After Luton had had the luxury of another fruitless corner, they once more made tracks for their opponent's headquarters, M'Crindle and Galbraith showing up most prominently, and to the intense delight of the spectators—barring the Southampton portion of them—Galbraith added a third goal with a clinking shot. It was the twin brother of the one with which he scored his first goal.

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Gally, having scored with a grand straight shot,
Thought he would try with another,
And Barratt, again finding pace too hot,
Let through in same way as t'other.

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As it was now close upon half-time we all thought the scoring in this, the first portion of the game, had finished, but it was not so. The visitors, in the course of one of their rare attacks, had the good fortune to secure a free kick close in the Luton goal, M'Crindle having handled. The ball was turned over to Angus, who obtained the Saints' first, and as it proved, only goal, with an easy shot.

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The players now retired and the band took the field, the inevitable collection also taking place during the interval. By the way, it would be interesting to know what influence the state of the game has on the contributions to the silver plating fund. I should imagine that when Luton are well ahead, the onlookers are more generous than they would be under reverse circumstances.

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Turning to the play, I must say that I had been somewhat disappointed in the form shown by the visitors. On very few occasions had they done anything worthy of their reputation, though occasionally the forwards showed glimpses of the form which would play the bear with a weak defence.

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In the second half the Southampton folks rearranged their forwards, Offer going inside right, and Angus taking the centre. This, however, did not effect the desired improvement, for while the visitors did now and again have a look-in in the first portion of the game, they never had a ghost of a chance in the second.

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I will not weary my readers with the details of the last forty-five minutes' play. It nearly all took place on Southampton territory, and Bee was never once called upon to defend his charge. It may thus be seen that this end of the contest really provided very few incidents worth chronicling.

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Once Finlayson put in a beautiful shot, and someone in the stand excitedly shouted, "Oh, Finny's got a goal," but as a matter of fact it did'n't come off,

Barratt saving just under the bar. There were some curious misses made during this portion of the game. Once Prentice sent right across the mouth of goal, and Galbraith and Finlayson both missed their kicks, while the same players afterwards individually failed to convert middles by the left winger, when only the merest touches would have sufficed to have done the trick.

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From a free kick for hands, Chesham placed in the net, but this did not count, as no one touched. At last, about five minutes before call of time, Luton once again got in evidence in front of the visitor's goal, and Finlayson putting the ball nicely at Allen's feet, that young gentleman registered a fourth point with a capital shot.

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Nothing further transpiring in the scoring line, Luton were left the winners of an unexpectedly easy game by four goals to one. I say unexpectedly easy, because the Saints did not play up to anything like the form we had credited them with.

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I can quite understand how their forwards would pile it on against a weak defence, for on Saturday, when given half a chance, they attempted to swoop down on goal in just the way that would be irresistible when the opposing backs and half-backs are not up to their duties. But their rushes did not take effect against Luton, and so the Saints were left in the lurch.

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Offer and the rest of the forwards worked very hard, but they have not yet learned the art of parting with the ball at the proper moment, and the result was that they were unable to make much headway against the brilliant defence opposed to them. Hollands showed very decent form on the left wing, and might with advantage have been given more to do.

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Littlehales also played a very good game at centre half, and Marshall was sound at back, but the latter's partner was a poor one, and had Gallacher been playing for Luton we should have seen what we should have seen. Barratt in goal gave a moderate display.

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On the Luton side, the forwards did not show that excellent combination they did against Reading, but still there was not much to grumble at. They took matters very coolly all the way through, and probably could have done more had it been really required.

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Galbraith was not in quite his best form, but his two goals were well got, and he showed all his usual ability in getting out of a tight place and disposing of the ball to the greatest advantage. Finlayson worked very hard, and I think he develops more speed every time he plays. Brown was fair, and it is his misfortune and not his fault that he is not in the same class with the man whose place he took.

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The left wing did some smart things and also some that were not smart, but taken on the whole, I think both Prentice and Allen gave a fairly passable display. It would be better, however, if the latter did a little more passing and a little less individual work.

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As to the half-backs, it is again difficult to single out one of them for special mention. If I say Howe gave a splendid exhibition, I can, with equal truth, say the same of M'Crindle, but with regard to Watkins, I think I have seen him do better. The backs were in grand form, Chesham again vying with McEwen in his efforts to keep Bee from molestation, the result being that the Luton custodian had very few opportunities of showing his skill.

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The referee held the scales of justice with an even hand, favouring neither one side nor the other. I think, too, he would admit, if he were asked, that his decisions were applauded impartially, whether given for or against the home team. The only bad mistake he made was when he gave a foul against M'Crindle.

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There were three other Southern League matches on Saturday. Reading justified the good opinion I formed of them by beating Clapton at the Spotted Dog by two goals to nil, and Millwall did the expected in disposing of Ilford, though the play was not so one-sided as the score of six goals to one would seem to indicate. The Royal Ordnance scored their first win by beating Chatham by two to one.

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Persons wishing to communicate with Mr. Isaac Smith, secretary of the Luton Town F.C., are requested to do so to 10, Grove-road, Luton, only. At home from 1 p.m. to 1.45; 5 p.m. to 5.45 p.m., and after eight o'clock every evening.

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