

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE

LUTON TOWN v. ILFORD.

Played at Ilford on Saturday. Result :

Ilford	3 goals.
Eaton Town	1 goal.

The teams were as follow :—

RIGHT.	LUTON TOWN.	LEFT.
	Box (g281).	

M. D. Nicholson.

McEwen.

Abstract

M'Chelle

Howe.

Gallagher. Flanagan. Galbraith. Prentice. Jack.



Gallen. Linard. T. N. Perkins. A. Porter. E. Porter.

F. Markham

WILEY

History

E. Markham

Drummond

Costume (goal).

LEFT

ILFORD

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The referee was Mr. E. E. Stuart, and the linesmen were Messrs. W. Walsh and A. N. Ilfordian.

Don't FORGET Concerts in Corn Exchange Sunday
next, to be given by the Red Cross Silver Prize Band.
Admission 2d.; members free. Afternoon, 2.30;
evening, 6.30.—[ADVT.]

Surely never was a man more bitterly disappointed than I was on Saturday. I went to Ilford, notwithstanding the unpleasant associations of the place, in the confident expectation of seeing Luton beat the Essex men by at least four clear goals, securing a couple of points in the League competition, and completing their century of goals scored this season, and I came away - disgraced.

Yes, there is absolutely no other word for it. I was disgusted with matters all round, with the Ilford committeemen and spectators for their wretched behaviour, with the bumptious and tactless individual who had the control of the game, with Galbraith for placing himself in his power, and with the Luton forwards for their total inability to shoot.

The displays given by Luton at Ilford have always been of the most miserable character, and while in some respects their exhibition on Saturday presented many redeeming features, yet taken altogether the game was about the most unfortunate one of any in which Luton have engaged.

Luton's connection with the Southern League has been one of the most unhappy chapters in the history of the club. It has been one constant succession of disagreeable incidents, beginning with Millwall and ending with Ilford.

Of course, our troubles are chiefly due to the referee question, and upon this point it must be admitted that the management of the League has left a great deal to be desired. The want of judgment shown by the few individuals who have "bossed the show" has been deplorable, and it is to the incapacity exhibited in this direction that I attribute most of the troubles.

The constitution of the committee of management itself is open to criticism, but its actions have been more foolish than could possibly have been anticipated. Laton is not represented on that committee. The Clapton goal-keeper is chairman, and the other members include representatives from Ilford, Royal Ordnance, Chesham, and Old St. Stephens, with the Millwall chairman, by virtue of his position as League treasurer, and our particular friend, "the popular Nat," as secretary.

The commencement of our troubles was the appointment of Mr. Whittaker to referee in the Millwall match, despite all the protestations of Luton. The results of the Committee's rashness in overriding Luton's wishes in the matter are too well known to need recapitulation.

Now we come to the question of the appointment of Mr. E. E. Stuart to referee in Saturday's match. Possibly the committee thought they were acting wisely in their selection of this gentleman, but it seems to me the choice was the outcome of a shortsightedness on their part so extraordinary as to be well-nigh incredible.

Last May an incident occurred which, to my way of thinking, made Mr. Stuart an impossible referee in matches in which amateurs and professionals are engaged. The incident took place at a meeting of the West Herts F.C., called to consider the question of the adoption by the club of professionalism.

At the meeting Mr. Stuart spoke strongly against professionalism, which he "hated," and he remarked that "he had had considerable experience in the field this year, and he could say if they wanted a good game have an amateur one, for professionals would resort to any foul means in their power to win."

At that time I asked whether a gentleman confessing to such strong prejudices was a fit and proper person to officiate in matches in which amateurs were opposed to professionals. What would be thought of a judge, for instance, who tried a case, one of the parties to which he had previously described as possessing all the virtues and the other all the vices?

These facts were brought to the notice of the Southern League by Luton, who emphatically protested against Mr. Stuart being placed on the list of the League referees, and who protested still more strenuously against his being appointed to act in any match in which Luton were engaged. Their wishes, as usual, were derided.

Consequently, whatever justification Mr. Stuart may have had for his action on Saturday, it is certain that it could not fail to give the greatest dissatisfaction to Luton, apart from that involved in the loss of a player.

With the bulk of the referee's decisions I have no particular fault to find. There were sins of omission and sins of commission, such as can be laid to the lot of every referee. His great failing appears to be that he considers smartness everything and tact not worth cultivating.

The dismissal of Galbraith twenty minutes from the start seemed, on the face of it, to be a very high-handed proceeding. Galbraith's offence was the use of unparliamentary language. Now I would be the last to defend such a thing as that, because I consider the ordinary English vocabulary affords a sufficient choice of terms without the introduction of unorthodox expletives.

But I should say that the case in question was one for the exercise of a little tact rather than the resorting to extreme measures. However, Mr. Stuart, in the discharge of what he conceived to be his duty, thought fit to rob Luton of a player and thus spoil the character of the game almost from its very commencement.

As a matter of fact, the epithet complained of was not, as was generally concluded, addressed to the referee at all, but to Prentice. At least, that is according to the information I have received, and that is borne out by a letter from Galbraith himself.

Have you paid S. Bassett's Establishment a visit? If not, hurry up, all his goods are New and of the Latest Style, and prices charged are on the co-operative system. Tailoring up to date.—28, Wellington-street, Luton.—[ADVT.]

The match was timed to begin at half-past two, but it was ten minutes after that time before Mr. Stuart and the last of the Ilford players put in an appearance, the Reds then having been on the field something like a quarter of an hour.

Both teams were considerably stronger than when they met a few weeks ago, the most noticeable addition to the Ilford ranks being T. N. Perkins, the Cambridge University man and International. He played centre forward.

Somewhere about a thousand spectators assembled to witness the contest, and the part they took in the proceedings was very little to their credit. But when gentlemen, presumably members of the committee, set a bad example, what can be expected from the general public?

Ilford won the toss, and Galbraith started the ball against a fairly strong wind. The locals immediately got away, and Gallon put in a good centre, to which M'Crindle conceded a corner. This was followed by another, given by Cheshier, and after a sharp struggle, E. Markham put behind.

Then the Luton forwards showed up with some remarkably pretty play, and as a result Drummond had to give a corner. Gallacher placed from the flag-staff, and Galbraith put just over. Directly after, however, Luton got down again, and Jack middling, a brief tussle occurred in front of the Ilford goal, and finally Gallacher put the ball into the net.

A goal in less than five minutes looked rather promising, especially as, when the ball was re-started, Luton at once renewed their overtures. The combination was perfect, and after Jack had been given offside, Galbraith placed the ball nearly in front of goal, but just as Finlayson was about to take advantage, he was badly fouled by one of the Mark'ems—I beg pardon, I mean Markhams.

M'Crindle put in beautifully from the free kick, but Galbraith landed over the bar. A wonderfully pretty run by Gallacher and Finlayson was the next feature, and Galbraith receiving, took a flying shot and again sent too high.

Perkins afterwards transferred the ball to the other end, but his effort came to nought. Then a silly bit of business by Prentice enabled Ilford to equalise. He just gave an opponent a push with his hands, and a foul being awarded, Drummond took the kick, and Yatta scored with a shot which hit the post and bounced off into the top corner of the goal.

The enthusiasm of the spectators knew no bounds at this point, and the cheers which broke forth were renewed again and again a minute or two later, when Alf Porter got away and put in a centre which Perkins, with a fine burst of speed, just managed to convert, thus giving the Ilfordians the lead.

When play was resumed, Perkins distinguished himself by another smart run, but instead of going straight for goal he passed out to the right, and the ball was sent behind. Luton retaliated, and it was then that the unfortunate episode previously referred to occurred.

Jack got in a couple of beautiful centres, and each time as Galbraith was going to turn them to account, he was given offside. In the first case the ruling was undoubtedly correct, but in the second the decision was at least open to question.

What new took place was, to the spectators, in dumb show, but it was seen that Galbraith and the referee were the chief performers, and it was found that Galbraith had been ordered off the field. He did not go, however, until after a long discussion had taken place, and various persons, inclusive of two Luton committee-men, had endeavoured in vain to pour oil on the troubled waters.

Then hostilities were recommenced, and to the surprise of many, Luton with only four forwards more than held their own. So superior was their play indeed, that it elicited expressions of admiration even from this, one of the most unsportsmanlike crowds that ever assembled.

From a centre by Gallacher, Prentice headed in, and Cosburn punted out, and soon afterwards a shot from Gallacher caused the Ilford custodian to use his hands. The nature of the play may be judged from the fact that offside had to be given against Perkins near the half-way line.

However, all Luton's attempts were unavailing, and at last the locals took another turn, but failed to make much headway against the strong defence opposed to them, Nicholson particularly playing a fine game. The tables were turned again just before the interval, Gallacher getting in some first-rate centres, but there was no one to turn them to account, though once Drummond provided Cosburn with a job.

Thus when half-time arrived, the score still remained at two to one in favour of Ilford, but as already intimated the state of the poll was not at all indicative of the state of the play.

For the first twenty minutes of the second half, Ilford were kept continually on the defence, and Luton again and again had the hardest of hard luck in not scoring. A number of scrimmages occurred in the mouth of the home goal, but Cosburn and his comrades always managed to effect a clearance.

The four forwards on the Luton side played superbly in the field, and it seemed no difficulty to them to get the ball up to goal, but their shooting was execrably bad, not one among them seeming to be able to do anything in this line.

Chances innumerable presented themselves, and it is safe to say that had it been Ilford instead of Luton attacking, the score against the latter would have reached double figures, or very near it.

It must be admitted, however, that Cosburn gave a splendid exhibition, some of his saves being little short of marvellous. Few of the shots that he had to deal with were hot ones, but he resisted the efforts made at close quarters in very fine style.

About a quarter of an hour from the finish, Gallon got away and shot terribly wide, and perhaps owing to this fact, when he got away again, soon after, scarcely as much attention was paid to him as there ought to have been. But he made no mistake this time, scoring a third goal with a clinking shot.

This practically settled the game, and in the play following Ilford fared a little better than before, except that no scoring was done. It was in this portion of the proceedings that the decisions of the referee were most open to doubt. He gave a foul against Nicholson for an obviously fair charge, he did ditto for M'Crindle when the latter actually played the ball, and he not only gave a foul but cautioned McEwen when, so far as I could see, there was not a suspicion of a foul.

After the game was over a most disgraceful scene occurred. Anybody would have thought that reasonable beings would have cheered the ten Lutonians for the gallant fight they had made, but instead of that the spectators almost mobbed the Reds as they went to the pavilion, and gave vent to their feelings in yelling and hooting.

And the remarkable thing