

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE LEAGUE.

A LOSS AT ILFORD.

Nobody but a few of the most ardent of the Essex Club's supporters anticipated a defeat for Luton Town in the Southern League match at Ilford on Saturday, yet that is what took place owing to an unfortunate train of circumstances. The Lutonians travelled by the 10.45 Midland train and reached their destination in good time, but very few townspeople undertook the journey—a fact which will not be marvelled at when it is stated that only a slight reduction was made in the railway-fares. The visitors were on the scene of operations in good time, but the start was delayed for several minutes owing to the late arrival of several of the home combination. There was only a moderate attendance, a few hundreds putting in an appearance. The ground was in fairly good order, despite the severity of the weather in the previous few days. The visitors were represented by their usual side, while Ilford had made some rearrangements necessary in their team by requisitioning the services of T. N. Perkins, the well-known amateur. This change worked splendidly for the homesters, by the way, for Perkins infused a good deal of dash into the efforts of the Ilford front rank.

It was close on 2.45 when Mr. E. Stuart took charge of the following elevens:—*Ilford*: Goal, W. R. Cosburn; backs, J. O. Drummond and E. Markham; half-backs, C. D. Regan, H. Watts (captain), and F. Markham; forwards, E. C. Porter and A. Porter (right), T. N. Perkins (centre), E. C. Linard and J. Gallon (left). *Luton Town*: Goal, E. Bee; backs, M. D. Nicholson and J. McEwen; half-backs, W. Chesher, R. McCrindle, (capt.), and A. Howe; forwards, W. Gallacher and J. Finlayson (right), H. Galbraith (centre), W. Prentice and J. Jack (left). The linesmen were Messrs. Walsh (Luton) and Markland (Ilford). The home side won choice of ground and set the strangers to face a high wind. Galbraith set the ball rolling, and at the outset the Ilfordians captured it and went off in the direction of Bee. Their progress was stopped by McCrindle, though at the expense of a corner, and another point of a like nature accrued to the home lot from a miskick by Chesher; but both kicks were resultless, F. Markham eventually steering over the goal-line. Luton managed to work their way down by some excellent forward passing and Drummond was forced to give a corner to avert the downfall of Cosburn's charge. From the kick which followed, Galbraith sent high over the cross-bar. Returning to the charge the "reds" made things lively for the opposition, and Jack took advantage of an opportunity to centre to Gallacher, who beat Cosburn with a capital shot, this result having been obtained after five minutes' play. Immediately afterwards Drummond robbed Jack well, but sent out badly, and then the Luton outside left was pulled up for getting off-side. Finlayson was very badly fouled by one of the Markhams, but the free kick which was awarded to the visitors was not productive of any addition to the score, Galbraith getting his foot too far under the ball, which consequently went sailing over the uprights. Hands against the Essex men presented their adversaries with an opening, but Howe sent wide when apparently in a splendid position for scoring. In the next minute was witnessed what was undoubtedly the finest exhibition of combined tactics given during the day. Gallacher and Finlayson passed

given during the day. Gallacher and Finlayson played in superb fashion, and transferring cleverly to Galbraith that player was enabled to burst through, only to shoot a couple of yards outside the net. It is only fair to the crowd to state that they expressed appreciation of the display; it is necessary to emphasise this, for it was rarely that the Lutonians came in for anything more acceptable than abuse and uncomplimentary epithets of the most pronounced character. Perkins had not up to now shown up at all prominently, but he at this stage conclusively proved the possession of powers of no mean order by racing away at full speed towards the enemy's citadel. He was not allowed to have it all his own way, however, for he was so sadly hampered by the Luton defenders that he was compelled to kick over the goal-line. Prentice was punished for some unnecessary pushing and from the free kick Ilford equalised, Watts sending through after a determined scrimmage had taken place in front of goal. The Essex players now became somewhat more prominent, and more than once they came down excellently. On one occasion McEwen gave a corner; but "Mac" did not repeat this mishap, for a minute later he relieved with a grand long kick. A wild attempt to lower Bee's colours a second time failed, and then Galbraith was stopped for an alleged foul, and another decision of a like nature was noted a little while afterwards, the offender being duly execrated by the spectators and a number of officials who occupied seats under the Press-box, and some of whose comments were not couched in the choicest of language. A couple of free kicks for handling the ball were awarded against Ilford, and Gallon was subsequently pulled up for lying off-side. The next point of interest was that the homesters succeeded in obtaining the lead. The ball was nicely centred from the wing and as it passed across the mouth of the goal at a high rate of speed Perkins cleverly diverted its course with a screw shot, and the leather found a resting-place in a corner of the net. The score was very neatly obtained, and Perkins fully deserved the cheering which burst forth from the delighted partisans. Twice in quick succession Galbraith was stopped for alleged infringements of the off-side law, and then an extremely regrettable incident occurred. The visitors' centre forward made use of bad language and was promptly ordered off the field by the referee, though it was denied that the unparliamentary words were addressed to that official. "Gally" proceeded to march off, but was stopped by one of his companions, and he returned as if to argue the matter with Mr. Stuart. That official declined to alter his ruling, and a consultation of players and members of the Luton Executive took place in mid-field, play meanwhile being entirely suspended. The outcome was that Galbraith made his way to the pavilion, though with evident reluctance. The unpleasant incident closed with this, but its influence was apparent throughout the remainder of the game, the "reds" infusing considerably more vigour into their display than formerly. Of course the attack was weakened considerably, and altogether most of the visitors concluded that the punishment was somewhat more severe than the nature of the offence merited. Playing a man short, Luton continued to press after the resumption, and Prentice narrowly missed scoring with a well-judged "header." Jack sent behind, and McEwen put too much powder behind one of his kicks when sending into goal. A foul was awarded against the leaders, and after Nicholson had sent over the line Perkins was punished for getting off-side. The "reds" thereafter pressed continuously, Gallacher and Finlayson doing very useful work. Another foul against the Essex contingent was chronicled, and when Luton had forced a corner Prentice was again visited with the displeasure of the referee for fouling. Gallacher managed to get through but sent wide, and E. Markham almost assisted between the posts another capable effort by the same player. Until the midway stage the "reds" had the best of matters, but they could not score, and thus the interval arrived with the totals as follows:

Ilford, two; Luton, one.

It was thought by some that with the wind in their favour the Lutonians, though sadly handicapped by the loss of one of their best men, would make a good show in the second moiety, and so it proved. Perkins got too far up the field early in the second half, with the usual result, while Luton conceded a free-kick just after. Drummond saved from Prentice, and Chesher sent out when a grand centre had been put in. Another decision against Ilford for off-side was followed by Gallacher sending over. Luton gave Cosburn considerable anxiety hereabouts, several hot attempts being made to capture his charge. The custodian bore himself bravely, however, and repelled all the assaults. Try as they would the "reds" could not break through the sturdy defence offered, but they managed to force a corner. Gallacher sent out from a good kick by Nicholson, and subsequently Cosburn had another bad time, shot after shot being rained in. Howe once missed with a beauty, and altogether the Lutonians were experiencing terrible luck. Resultless minor points fell to either side, and then the "reds" managed to secure a further corner, their behaviour at this stage compelling a committee man to involuntarily utter the compliment that "Their ten are as good as our eleven." When it is known that an Ilfordian admitted so much, it will not be required that emphasis should be laid upon the display of the Lutonians just now. All that is necessary is to state that they could do almost everything except score. Nicholson was penalised for fouling when as a matter of fact he had himself been sinned against, and after another bout at the Ilford end, A. Porter was visited with the referee's displeasure for indulging in foul tactics. Finlayson was also fouled badly in front of goal, but this was balanced by a like decision against the visitors' captain. Once more Perkins lay off-side, and in the next minute or two two decisions adverse to Ilford were given. After some comparatively uneventful play Gallon managed to get away from Chesher and, passing Nicholson, scored with a hard, long drive. McEwen was cautioned for fouling, and Ilford offended in the same way. Finlayson barely missed, and Cosburn was twice tested severely by others of the Luton forwards. McGrindle had a long try after a corner, but the attempt was as unsuccessful as its predecessors. As time drew near the "reds" redoubled their efforts, and just before the whistle blew Finlayson threw away an admirable chance by kicking over when the merest touch would have sufficed. The result was that Ilford gained two League points with the following score:

Ilford, three; Luton, one.