

A DRAW AT MILLWALL.

It has for some time been regarded as incontestable that Millwall Athletic and Luton Town were the strongest combinations in the Southern League, and it had been agreed that if any team was likely to beat the Londoners on their own ground it would be the "reds." At the commencement of the season there promised to be a close fight for the championship, but the recent defeats which Luton have sustained by Royal Ordnance and Ilford have greatly lessened their chances of getting to the top of the tree. Millwall had not been once defeated, while Luton had been compelled to knuckle under thrice; but Millwall had played two drawn games. This left the Athletics with a lead of six points, but it should be added that they had played one game more than their adversaries in Bedfordshire. The return match between the sides necessarily aroused extreme interest in the South of England, and so far as the League was concerned the game was the most interesting of the season. Despite the wintry nature of the weather a crowd of several hundreds undertook the journey from Luton, the Red Cross Band accompanying the trippers. Arrived at the scene of operations it was discovered that the pitch was hard frozen and near the goals patches of cinders were not far removed from the dangerous. Here and down the centre of the field cocoonut fibre had been put down, but this precaution did not greatly improve matters, for it was undeniable that the turf was not in a condition to warrant expectations of good play. However, Mr. A. Roston Bourke (the referee) made an inspection of the ground before the game started, and he was apparently satisfied that there was no reason to justify the postponement of the fixture. By the time announced for the start some thousands of spectators had assembled, and the small grand-stand was crowded. A bitterly cold wind swept over the ground, and the occupants of this erection were exposed to the full force of it. The Red Cross Band played two or three selections in fine style prior to the opening of hostilities, and they were warmly cheered each time, the London section of the spectators evidently highly appreciating the efforts of the bandmen.

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With a fair regard to punctuality the teams faced the central line in the following order:—*Millwall Athletic*: Goal, Gibson: backs, Graham and Davis; half-backs, King, J. Matthews, and H. Matthews; forwards, Jones and Wilson (right), Robertson (centre), McKenzie and Geddes (left). *Luton Town*: Goal, Dickerson; backs, Chesher and McEwen; half-backs, Collins, McCrindle, and Howe; forwards, Gallacher and Finlayson (right), Galbraith (centre), Prentice and Jack (left). The linesmen were Messrs. F. B. Kidd (Millwall) and H. Arnold (Luton). Luton won choice of positions, and they necessarily determined to play with the strong wind which was sweeping from end to end of the ground. Before starting the men Mr. Bourke addressed some observations to them collectively, these apparently consisting of a warning against indulging in rough play. Robertson set the ball rolling in presence of upwards of 5,000 spectators, and early the Millwall players were to be found in the visitors' territory. A free kick enabled them to materially improve their position; but the ball was sent over the line, and thus the siege was raised. Returning to the charge, the homesters compelled McEwen to give a corner in endeavouring to protest his side's citadel from downfall, and from the kick in the leather was sent over the bar. Jack broke away on the left, but his progress was soon stopped, and the East Enders made their way towards Dickerson's charge. The slippery state of the ground was demonstrated very conclusively by the manner in which the men tumbled about. The light Lutonians had the advantage in this respect, and they were by no means slow to take it. One of the Millwallians evoked an appreciative plaudit by getting the ball away cleverly when he was lying at full length on the frozen surface. Gallacher caused some laughter by the determined manner in which he charged Davis; but the latter was not to be beaten, and accordingly the ball rolled harmlessly over the line. A foul against McCrindle for holding an opponent was awarded, and after some good passing by the Luton front rank Howe sent in capably, a corner being secured in consequence. Another minor point of a like nature fell to the strangers almost immediately and the "reds" gamely struggled to force the ball between the posts, but it eventually went sailing above the uprights. This appeared to be a grand opening, and from the grand stand it seemed that the "reds" should have scored. A third corner to the same side was noted, and the rapidity with which these kicks were obtained will suffice to show which team was having the best of matters just now. Davis relieved in good style from Prentice, and a little later Gibson was called upon to give a sample of his powers, which he did to the complete satisfaction of at least the Millwall section of the onlookers. Continuing to take full advantage of the wind the Lutonians gave the opposition defence plenty of work, and more than once they came within an ace of scoring. They had apparently warmed up to their work and were admittedly playing far better football than their adversaries, the passing amongst the forwards being very pretty. Gallacher centred splendidly on one occasion, and though Graham relieved it was only at the expense of a corner. Geddes was deservedly punished for a nasty foul on Chesher, and subsequently Gallacher sent in well from a pass by Galbraith, the attempt missing by about a yard. Yet another corner to Luton was awarded, and from a capital centre by Jack the ball was forced through, Finlayson seeming to be the last of the crowd of "reds" to touch it. This success came after the game had been in progress about 10 minutes, and it can be vouched for that the supporters of the Lutonians did not forget to cheer; indeed, the applause was pretty general round the ground. Some excitement was caused on the grand stand by a couple of ardent admirers of the respective teams getting at loggerheads, and the disturbance was not quelled before blows had been struck. Meanwhile Millwall had made their way to the Luton end, and they gave Dickerson plenty of work in the next minute or two. The custodian was badly charged after disposing of the ball on one occasion, but no official notice was taken of the occurrence. The leaders again went down, their short passing continuing to be very good. For once in a way the Millwall lot abandoned their usual tactics and went in for long passing, which certainly did not pay. The little "reds" were doing as well as the frost-bound ground would allow them. After Jack had once more become prominent, Prentice was hurt, but the cessation of play was very brief. The visitors narrowly escaped disaster just after; Dickerson ran out and missed the ball, an open goal being presented to the "dockers," but McEwen rushed up in the nick of time and cleared with a grand long kick. A couple of fouls against Luton were duly punished, and subsequently Prentice burst through the opposing defence, but he finished up with a tame shot. Luton once more attacked strenuously, but without avail, and then the home eleven made a resultless excursion into their opponents' territory. Geddes, who had been singularly quiet, rushed up and sent in a shot which went just over the bar—fortunately for Dickerson it was too lofty, for it would have been impossible for him to avert a score. Davis relieved finely from the visitors' forwards, but the display of himself and his companion was singularly irregular; first they would kick magnificently, and then a bad miss would be registered to them. An attempt from the Millwall left struck the net, and then the "blues" were penalised for fouling in mid-field. From the free-kick a further sturdy attempt was made by the Town Club men to improve their position, but the home defenders were now fully on their mettle and were not to be beaten. Successive throws-in along the line enabled Millwall to advance steadily, but a foul against them spoiled all the good effects of these efforts. Dickerson was called upon to clear his lines, and then a severe misfortune fell to Millwall, Mackenzie being compelled to leave the field owing to an injury to his head sustained in a heavy fall. Roars of laughter were called forth by an incident which happened just afterwards. Galbraith broke through splendidly and had only the custodian to beat, but when that player came out at him "Gally" charged him, with the result that he got the worst of the bargain and landed on his hands and knees a yard or two further on, while Gibson coolly disposed of the leather. The home keeper, when charged a little later, pushed off a man with his arm, but no notice was taken of the offence. The events of the next few minutes might be briefly summed up in the statement that the game was all in the Millwall confines and that the home defence was sorely taxed; indeed, it was frankly admitted that the Luton display was vastly superior to that of their foes. Try as they would, however, the "reds" found it impossible to lodge the ball in the net, though it was forced over the line on several occasions. At the other end Geddes handled the ball and the customary appeal was made to Mr. Bourke, but no notice was taken and the ball was smartly centred. Dickerson attempted to save, but the leather bounced on to the cross-bar and down again into play, Wilson promptly assisting it between the posts, while Dickerson had no possible chance. This success of the home side was enthusiastically cheered. The point was doubtless smartly obtained, but it was nevertheless unsatisfactory for the reason stated. Jack was shortly afterwards pulled up for fouling, and the same player a little later sent into the side of the net. Fouls by both sides were duly punished, and half-time arrived just after with the totals standing thus:

Luton, one; Millwall, one.

After the resumption Mackenzie came on and

After the resumption Mackenzie came on and was loudly cheered. The "reds" defence had an anxious time for some minutes, the homesters taking full advantage of the wind and pressing continuously. A foul against Collins was equalised by one against Mackenzie, and thereafter Jack and Prentice went away smartly down their wing. Galbraith obtained possession and transferred to Prentice, who sent miles too high when right in front of goal. This let-off appeared to stimulate the Millwallians, who had certainly not been exhibiting that dash and brilliancy which is stated to be the distinguishing feature of their play. Galbraith was badly fouled, and McGrindle sent too high when taking the kick. Another foul by Millwall led to the referee cautioning H. Matthews. Collins sent in well, but danger was averted, and then Galbraith narrowly missed with an excellent long shot. A foul against Jack was rapidly followed by another against the same side, the latter being near goal. Luton defended brilliantly, however, and McEwen especially played well. Three free-kicks were awarded against the "reds," and then Gallacher experienced terribly hard luck, a very fast shot from his foot being diverted by Davis—more by lack than judgment, it was confessed. Hands against Luton was followed by another foul against Collins. Davis took the kick and sent behind, a feat which was received with great laughter. Mackenzie sent too high at the Luton end, and immediately after a beautiful centre by Gallacher was got away by Graham in marvellous fashion. McEwen and Wilson collided hereabouts, and a brief stoppage of play became requisite owing to the latter being slightly injured. When the "blues" were near the visitors'

citadel the ball went across to Geddes, who tumbled down when taking it. Another foul throw by Matthews led to a free-kick, but the Luton attack was beaten back, and a great struggle ensued near the fortress of the "reds," this being as unproductive as its forerunners. Another chance was thrown away by Luton, and off-side decisions were given against the respective sides. With a lovely long shot Gallacher beat Gibson and thus put the visitors one up, a feat which was warmly applauded. Collins was once more pulled up for fouling, and the same player conceded a corner, which proved unproductive. Hands and a foul by Millwall were duly taken cognisance of, and then Jack had a good attempt. A couple of fouls were noticed, and later on Dickerson saved finely twice in succession. As time went on the "reds" pressed, but towards the close of the game the "blues" beat them back and attacked strenuously. It seemed to most of the spectators that two points were to be credited to Luton, for the Athletics were playing like a beaten team; but the unexpected again came about, and half a minute before the whistle blew Jones rushed in and made the scores level amid frantic cheers from the home contingent of spectators. The final score was :

Luton, two ; Millwall, two.

The result was in some sense disappointing, for everybody agreed that the sterling display which Luton gave merited a better fate than an equalisation of the totals in the last minute. However, the draw was infinitely more acceptable than a defeat would have been, and inasmuch as it was obtained on the Millwall ground it must be accepted as additionally praiseworthy. All through the game the "reds" showed infinitely better style than their opponents, their forward play especially putting that of their opponents completely in the shade. The game was not unpleasant, though fouls were frequent; but the majority of these were by Millwall. Mr. Bourke had a difficult task, but he discharged it very satisfactorily, and it is pleasing to know that no serious accidents befell any of the players.