

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE

LUTON TOWN v. ROYAL ORDNANCE.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result :

Luton Town..... 3 goals.
Royal Ordnance nil.

The teams were as follow :—

RIGHT.		LUTON TOWN.	LEFT.	
		Bee (goal).		
Che-her.			McEwen.	
Watkins.		M'Criddie.	Collins.	
Gallacher.	Finlayson.	Howe.	Prentice.	Jack.
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T. Bryan.	F. Bryan.	Kirk.	Brown.	Gollan.
McKenzie.		Stewart.	Muoro.	
G. Bryan.			W. George.	

Gilmer (goal).

LEFT. ROYAL ORDNANCE. RIGHT,
Referee, S. R. Carr; linesmen, Messrs. Knight
(Luton), and H. Sawyer (Royal Ordnance).

The committee must have been delighted with the large number of people who wended their way to the Dunstable-road ground on Saturday. It was feared that the gate would not be a big one, owing to circumstances with which we are all too familiar, and it was a surprise to find two or three thousand spectators round the ropes when the kick-off took place.

The weather was beautifully fine, and the temperature was a delightful contrast to that which prevailed on the preceding Saturday. Stranger still, however, than the fact of so many people turning out to witness the match was the extraordinary enthusiasm they evinced. They commenced shouting at the outset, and they kept it up pretty well all the way through.

They were terribly anxious to see a change in Luton's fortunes, and they were hungering and thirsting after goals. Not so the referee. Mr. Carr seemed to be fearful of too large a score being totted up, and when a goal was credited to Luton there was no mistake about its having been got.

Six times the Reds got the ball into the net, but on only three occasions were the goals allowed to count. In one case particularly the decision of the referee seemed a very hard one, and that was when Gallacher terminated a magnificent piece of work by putting the leather by Gilmer. Mr. Carr may have had good reason for giving the free kick which neutralised Gallacher's performance, but it was certainly not apparent to outsiders.

Generally speaking, I have been very pleased with Mr. Carr's refereeing, but on Saturday he did not seem to be himself at all. I think perhaps the state of the ground interfered somewhat with his progression, and this may have had something to do with it. His movements were certainly much slower than usual.

The turf truly was in a terrible condition, the playing pitch being like a quagmire. The contestants kept their feet pretty well, but when they did go down they got fairly smothered, so much so that before the conclusion of the proceedings each man carried enough soil on his person to grow a crop of mustard and cress.

The Ordnance team was not quite identical with that which beat Luton at Maze-hill, Peter Conolly being an absentee. George, the old war horse, who played centre half in the first game, this time went left back with a special view to looking after the Luton right wing. Before the match had been long in progress, I fancy he would gladly have surrendered his job to someone else.

The kick-off took place soon after three o'clock, Luton having won the toss and playing up-hill with the sun at their backs. Howe, for the first time since he has been with us, figured among the forwards, taking Galbraith's place in the centre.

As with the Caledonian match last week, a full kick was given at the start against the Ordnance for illegal kick-off, and McEwen sending well up, Luton pressed for a time, but eventually Tom Bryan got away with a pretty run and put in a decent shot, which Bee disposed of.

Luton responded vigorously, Prentice figuring prominently in the heading department, and then Howe sent up nicely, but before Gallacher could take advantage, McKenzie cleared.

The visitors getting down to the Luton end, Collins in clearing sent across his own goal, and Tom Bryan put in beautifully, Luton having all their work out out to clear. A foul against Collins, who tripped Gollan, gave the Ordnance another chance, but Chesher relieved.

Soon afterwards Gallacher worked his way up the field and sent in a grand shot, which Gilmer punted out. Collins next forced a corner, which Jack placed splendidly and Collins put just over. Then Luton got up again, and Finlayson forcing his way through a scrimmage, put by Gilmer in the neatest manner possible.

Great cheering rewarded this success, and encouraged thereby, Luton went at it again, and Collins sending up, after some effective work by Prentice and Jack, Finlayson headed just over the bar.

Gallacher next had the privilege of placing a corner which he was the means of obtaining, and the ball dropping just in front of goal, an exciting time ensued, Gilmer having to save twice, but ultimately Gallacher put just wide.

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McEwen undertaking a free kick for hands, had a good try for the target, and Howe breasted the ball in, Gilmer saving grandly at the expense of a corner. This was followed by another, which was placed to a nicety by Gallacher, and the ball was punched over the bar, but by whom it would be difficult to say. Luton appealed for a penalty but it was not granted; the referee deciding that it was the goal-keeper's fist which diverted the shot.

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Gallacher kicked from the flag-staff, and Prentice headed behind. Another corner, for which Prentice was primarily responsible, Jack put the wrong side of the uprights, but directly after Howe got in a nice low shot, which Gilmer successfully negotiated.

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Gallacher next distinguished himself by some splendid work but Gilmer saved from his shot. After a bit Gallacher received again, and working his way through the whole lot of his opponents, scored a fine goal, but it was disallowed on the ground that he had handled the ball.

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The pressure was continued, and Finny hit the post with a good shot, while corner after corner followed, but try how they would, Luton could not again get the sphere through, and the interval found them still leading by a goal to nil.

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The play during the greater part of this first half had been all in favour of the locals, who had been applauded in a way to which they had been quite unaccustomed for some time.

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The Luton left wing had played a very good game, Prentice working like a Trojan. Howe had not adapted himself remarkably well to his new position, showing a decided tendency to return to his old place among the half-backs. But the feature of the forward play was Gallacher's grand exhibition, his skill having been altogether too good for George, who more than once gave it up as a bad job.

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Immediately the ball was re-started, Prentice went off with the ball, and passing out to Jack, the latter worked his way to the front of the goal and shot, Gilmer having an armful. Jack followed with another, whilst Gallacher got in a beauty, just the wrong side of the net.

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Jack forced a corner off G. Bryan, but Mr. Carr again called forth the jeers of the spectators by giving a goal-kick. From hands, McEwen put down, and a desperate scrimmage ensued, but eventually the ball went behind.

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MacKenzie handled a good shot by Gallacher, and Watkins placing, the ball was put through, but the goal was not allowed, the whistle having previously sounded. Watkins took the kick again, and Prentice working very hard, screwed the ball round, and enabled Finlayson to register the second point.

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Following some good play by Prentice, Jack had a capital opening, but delayed too long, and George spoiled his shot. A grand centre by Gallacher, Prentice put over the bar. Jack dropped the leather on the bar. Luton kept the pot a boiling, and Howe nearly scored from a middle by Gallacher.

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Smart play by McEwen elicited applause, and the result of it—that is the play, not the applause—was that the Ordnance for some time got nothing better than a distant view of the Luton goal, but at length Gollan sailed away and centred beautifully, Bee for the second time during the game having the pleasure of handling the ball.

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A lovely shot by Finlayson at the other end just missed the cross-bar. Then a corner for Luton was placed by Gallacher, and Prentice made gallant but abortive efforts to convert. The Ordnance retaliated, and had the luxury of an unproductive corner, after which Prentice had his revenge. Jack receiving, muddled, and Prentice scored a lovely goal.

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Travelling down from the half-way line, Gallacher shot and Gilmer saved. Gallacher shot again and Prentice put through, but was given off-side. The decision was not favourably received by the crowd, and was certainly open to question, Gallacher having been very near the goal-line when he made his second shot.

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Still, a win of three goals to nil left little room for grumbling, and was a great deal more than the spectators had hoped for when they took up their positions. But Luton showed a determination to win from first to last, and there was no stopping them.

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Prentice's reappearance in the front rank undoubtedly made a lot of difference. He was in fine form, and played one of his trickiest games, though never dodging for the sake of dodging, but always with a view of making progress. His partner also played a very decent game.

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The right wing was very fine, Gallacher playing in a style which he has never surpassed, while Finlayson covered himself all over with glory by scoring the two first goals. Finny did some very fair shooting, too, besides this, and I hope he will do plenty more of it in the games to come. That he can do it I have no manner of doubt.