

FOOTBALL.

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON BEAT READING.

Saturday was another anxious day for Luton footballers, for the team had to meet the Reading eleven in the Southern League competition. When the sides met at Reading on Oct. 20 the "reds" won narrowly by three goals to two. That game was of an unpleasant nature, for McEwen and one of the Reading men were ordered off the field, while Gallacher sustained an injury which incapacitated him for some weeks afterwards. The Reading players have been doing extremely well lately, their heavy defeat of the Old Westminsters proving them to be in fine fettle. There was a good attendance to witness the game on Saturday, the number present being estimated at about 2,000. The atmospheric conditions were of the best, while the ground was in as good a state as could be expected. Chesham stood down owing to illness, and the visitors mourned the absence of Shea, their crack back, and Deane, their captain. Despite these absentions, however, they were confident of making a good show.

It was a quarter of an hour behind time when the referee (Mr. J. Albert, Chatham) took the players in charge as under:—

Luton Town: Goal, E. Bee; backs, A. Collins and J. McEwen; half-backs, J. Watkins, R. McOrindle (capt.) and A. Howe; forwards, W. Gallacher and J. Finlayson (right), H. Galbraith (centre), W. Prentice and J. Jack (left).

Reading: Goal, M. T. Cannon; backs, C. White and S. D. Justins (capt.); half backs, A. W. White, W. Knight and J. Warburton; P. Mills and J. Stewart (right), J. Dickenson (centre), F. Kelsey and F. Fletcher (left).

The linesman were Messrs. J. Bennett (Luton) and A. W. A. Webb (Reading).

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A. W. A. White (Reading).
The home captain was successful in the spin of the coin, and he set his adversaries to face sun and wind. The Reading men started well, McEwen being called upon to clear with a long kick in the first minute. Returning to the charge the strangers once more went close, the ball ultimately finding its way over the line. Another good attempt was made immediately, Watkins relieving in good style. The "reds" were not long content to submit to this sort of thing, and when they once succeeded in breaking away they attacked with a vengeance. Scarcely five minutes had elapsed from the start when Galbraith finished up a capable effort by breaking through and scoring neatly from a splendid pass by Jack, though White missed execrably. This early success was naturally lavishly cheered. From another fine centre by the outside left Gallacher sent just outside the post. Reading rushed to the other end and from a corner conceded by Watkins they managed to draw level, Dickenson being responsible for the final kick. Finlayson shortly after sent in a good one, and then Prentice sent over the line in attempting to lower Cannon's colours. This example was followed by Jack, and just after A. W. White gave a corner off Galbraith. McCrindle headed in splendidly, and Cannon was required to put forth all his ability in clearing, which he did in remarkable fashion. Another corner led to a further attack which had a similar ending, Cannon effecting another grand save. An off-side decision eventually raised the siege. Galbraith forced a corner, and after hands against Reading near goal the home centre man had several shots at the visitors' uprights, though none took effect. This was hard luck indeed, for each of the attempts deserved a better fate. Gallacher was exhibiting magnificent style on the outside right, and hereabouts he sent in one which Galbraith headed just wide. Watkins hampered Collins considerably while the latter was attempting to clear, and it was a distinct slice of luck for the homesters that no bad result accrued. An attack by Reading compelled McEwen to kick hard, and then Cannon was once more vainly tested by Gallacher, the ex-soldier acquitting himself splendidly. A decision against the strangers led to a strong attack on their citadel, and Watkins sent out. Jack managed to obtain a corner, Gallacher unaccountably missing to avail himself of a splendid opening in front of goal. Three free-kicks against the strangers in rapid alternation did not tend to improve their position. One of these produced some laughter, Stewart sent a hot one at Bee, who cleared beautifully; but the Reading man was off-side, and so the effort was altogether superfluous. When McCrindle had given a corner Bee was forced to handle the ball, though the home custodian was not nearly so hard tried as his Reading adversary. Finlayson struck the bar with a beauty, and Prentice headed in from the rebound, Cannon saving cleverly. Again the keeper came well out of the ordeal, his tester this time being McCrindle. A couple of decisions against Luton were observed, and then the home captain shot grandly, Cannon being hard put to to prevent the leather from going through. Justins kicked over his own line in defending and Gallacher once more compelled Cannon to handle, a further corner resulting. Gallacher shot somewhat badly from the extreme wing, and after hands against the visitors Collins came through in good style. Fletcher struck the net at the Luton end, and after Jack had sent behind two of the Lutonians missed right in front of goal. In the next minute or two Reading were penalised for handling and for a foul on Galbraith, and that player was stopped once for getting off-side. McCrindle sent in capitally, and the Reading front string had a try at Bee's charge, the missile finding its way over the bar. Prentice was responsible for another unsuccessful attempt, and Galbraith struck the bar with a particularly clever long one, while Gallacher kept up the attack by striking the net. Finlayson and his partner essayed more shots, and a little later the first-named was nastily fouled. McCrindle presented Cannon with another handful; but Reading escaped luckily, and a free kick for hands was similarly unproductive. Prentice headed in, and a little later Galbraith put himself off-side by intercepting a shot from the foot of his captain. As the interval drew near shots were rained in persistently, most of the forwards trying their luck; but Cannon defended so brilliantly as to frustrate all these designs. Thus when half-time came the record stood thus:

Luton, one; Reading, one.

A minute from the re-start Prentice headed over from a centre by Gallacher, this transpiring just under the bar. Collins made a mistake which would have proved fatal but for the cleverness of Bee, and after the homesters had been stopped for fouling Knight lodged the ball in the net, though unfortunately for his side it had not touched the necessary second player. McCrindle sent out, and the next points of interest were three fouls, one of which was against McEwen and the others against Reading. Jack was once more off-side, and thereafter Galbraith repeated his earlier performance, goal the second coming from his toe. Gallacher failed to improve upon a well-judged pass from Jack, but Prentice made amends for this by sending past Cannon at a great pace, so that the home combination were thus put well ahead. Fouls against either side were noticed, and then Stewart, despite appeals for off-side, rushed away to the other end. A great scrimmage ensued near Bee, and Stewart sent the ball into the net. The applause which greeted this performance had barely died away when Galbraith once more made himself conspicuous, this being his third goal. Dickenson headed over, and subsequently A. W. White sent in a shot which appeared to many to go under the bar. Fouls were awarded against the respective teams, and afterwards Galbraith narrowly missed hitting the mark. Finlayson headed in capably, and Collins was generously applauded for a good run. Subsequently both ends were visited in turn, and minor points fell to the rival elevens. White was hurt a trifle; but no lengthy suspension of the operations was requisite. Jack was spoken to by the referee on one occasion, while Prentice was given off-side when he had headed through. The same player managed to beat Cannon when that custodian had saved cleverly once, this making the fifth notch which had to be put to the credit of the homesters. The "reds" went great guns towards the finish, and they came very close to further augmenting their total; but Cannon's effective display was responsible for keeping down the adverse score. The eventual result was as follows:—

Luton, five; Reading, two.

The homesters fully deserved this pronounced win; indeed, but for the grand show between the posts by Cannon their score must have been far heavier. The forwards exhibited extremely good style, and amongst the half-backs McCrindle rendered himself conspicuous by sending in some very fine shots at goal. One or two of the Reading players incurred the displeasure of the crowd; but on the whole the game was pleasantly contested.