

LUTON TOWN v. ILFORD.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Luton Town	1 goal
Ilford	1 goal.

The Luton team was identical with the field against Clapton on Saturday, and the Ilford team was as follows:—

Cosburn (goal).		J. H. Porter.	
Drummond.		Craig.	
Regan.	Watts.		
E. C. Porter.	Linaud.	Graham.	King. Thompson.
Referee, Mr. T. Saywell (Chatham); linesmen, Messrs. E. W. Ash (Luton), and E. Markland (Ilford).			

It is just over two months ago since Luton made such an exhibition of themselves at Ilford, and the match on Monday had been eagerly looked forward to at Strawopolis as a means of enabling the Lutonians to avenge the licking they received in the first match.

The Ilfordians on the other hand, fresh from their victories over Clapton and Chatham, came down with the full assurance of adding one if not two more points to their total in the League list. No Lutonian would have dreamed that they had any earthly chance of doing either one or the other, and that they succeeded in accomplishing the least ambitious part of the task they had set themselves does seem inexplicable.

A draw on our own ground with Ilford! Goodness gracious, what are we coming to? We shall be receiving a challenge from St. Albans next to settle the question of superiority with them. It sounds preposterous, but if we keep on at the rate we are going now there wouldn't be so much in it after all.

Luton have given a good many indifferent displays this season, but never one to beat that of Monday. It was perfectly pitiable to see how hopelessly disorganised they were. At one time, it was said that Luton's strong point was their combination. What the strong point is now it would be difficult to say.

Where their weakness lay on Monday was much more capable of explanation. It was in the half-back division. This has been noticeable before, but never so palpable as on this afternoon. "Where are the half-backs?" was the question asked again and again, as the ball was returned over the heads of the Luton forwards when they were going for the Ilford goal.

And there was only too much reason for the question I have before called attention to the gap between our first and second lines, but I must confess to the source of weakness, which this has been to the team never presented itself so forcibly to me as it has done in the last two or three matches.

But on Monday, with the exception of a few long shots put in by Watkins towards the finish of the game—when he did play up very finely—the half-backs took absolutely no part whatever in the attack. They worked hard enough in defence, but then something more than that is expected of them.

Time after time, the Luton forwards got in front of the Ilford goal, but the attacks were robbed of all their force because the half-backs remained at the other end of the field. Had the halves been in their places, the ball would have been returned into goal, when the forwards were dispossessed, but as it was the Ilfordians had any amount of free kicks in the centre of the field.

Saturday's match made it tolerably clear that lack of concentration in attack is the great failing of the Luton team, and Monday's game proved it to demonstration. The forwards do not exhibit the good understanding they once did, and though they make a long pull, and a strong pull, they do not pull altogether.

Now as to the match. The Ilfordians were not as strongly represented as at the first meeting the most noticeable absentee being T. N. Perkins, the Cambridge University man, who so materially helped the Essex men to win, the only time he played for them. Gallon, too, was another absentee, but it seemed likely that the team would be strengthened by the inclusion of Charlie McGahey, who had come down to take J. H. Porter's place at back.

With the "punctuality" characteristic of amateur teams, Ilford did not put in an appearance till four o'clock, the time fixed for the kick-off, and it was nearly 25 minutes after the hour before they stepped into the arena. This was very annoying to the spectators, as so many of them had with great difficulty snatched a short time from business in order to see the match.

Every effort was made to induce the Ilfordians to come on sooner. The referee whistled, and first one and then another of the Luton Committee went to ask them to hurry up, while as a last resort, Mr. Saywell himself went to the pavilion to fetch them, as he could not get them on the ground by any other means.

Graham at last set the ball rolling, Luton having won the toss. The visitors started with only ten men, in consequence of McGahey not having brought his togs. As it appears he cannot play unless in full regimentals, his place eventually had to be taken by J. H. Porter, the gentleman who was originally chosen to partner Drummond.

Ilford were the first to get down, and Bee had to save from a soft one. Fouls against Watkins and Craig respectively led to nothing particularly exciting, and then a splendid centre by Gallacher, who ran round J. H. Porter in very pretty style, evoked enthusiasm. Jack forced a corner, and placing beautifully from the flag-staff, Cosburn had to punch out.

Gallacher then secured another corner, and undertaking this himself, Prentice received and headed in finely, Cosburn saving by steering over the bar. Gallacher placed again, and the forwards sticking well together, Prentice headed in grandly, giving Cosburn no chance whatever.

A goal within five minutes looked decidedly promising, but success must have got into the heads of the Luton players, for after this they seemed to fall all to pieces, the half-backs playing in one part of the field, the forwards in another, and McEwen trying to combine the duties of back and half-back, and goodness knows what beside.

Play for some time was uneventful, and beyond a little mild excitement arising from free kicks, of which there were plenty, there was nothing to call for notice. From a throw-in M'Crindle made a hot shot, but Galbraith accidentally got in the way, or rather could not get out of it, and the ball went behind off him.

Edgar Porter was responsible for a smart run, managing to get by McEwen. Collins obliged him with a corner, from which McEwen cleared. Soon afterwards Graham obtaining from a throw-in, put in a clinking shot, which Bee just tipped over the bar. Regan placed from the corner, and someone sent in a hot shot, the ball hitting the cross-bar and rebounding into play.

Bee again had to save from a good 'un, and hands against Howe close in did not improve matters, but once more McEwen cleared. At this juncture the spectators, to infuse a little life into the game, resorted to the expedient of cheering the Ilfordians. It may have eased the feelings of the shouters, but it altogether failed in its effect on the players.

Things dragged wearily on, until Gallacher made affairs a bit livelier with a splendid centre, from which Jack got in a beauty, J. H. Porter saving by heading over the bar. Jack took the corner kick, and Prentice receiving from another middle by Gallacher, headed just by the post. The next item of interest was a pretty piece of play by the Luton right winger, but it was unfruitful, and the call of half-time found Luton still leading by a solitary goal.

Up to this point the play of Luton had been dreadfully disappointing, but the spectators flattered themselves that amends would be made in the second half. Alas, the expected improvement did not take place, the Reds continuing at sixes and sevens right up to the end.

After the interval, play for a time ruled very tame, and then Finlayson and Gallacher made a good run, the latter getting in a splendid shot, which Cosburn skilfully negotiated. A little later a flukey free kick by Drummond gave Jack a clear goal, but the shot was a weak one, and the custodian saved, while a foul against Prentice relieved the pressure.

Ilford now responded, Edgar Porter doing the travelling, and a foul against Howe close up gave Regan an opportunity. He kicked hard, and the ball went through off M'Crindle. The spectators cheered, feeling it only wanted this reverse to put Luton on their mettle, but they were doomed to disappointment, the play continuing to be of a straggling nature.

A capital centre by Gallacher Prentice headed just by the upright, and then Gallacher tried a shot on his own account, Cosburn having to fist out. Another spell of uninteresting play followed, and then Luton ought to have taken the lead again, Prentice being placed in possession by Gallacher, and having the goal at his mercy.

His shot was a tame one, and Cosburn turned it round the post. The corner was followed by a second, which was not improved upon. Shortly afterwards Drummond had to save from a good attempt by Watkins, and then Gallacher got in a magnificent shot, the ball crashing up against the post and shaking the whole framework.

Luton now pressed much more vigorously, Watkins particularly showing up with some fine work, but the Ilfordians, knowing it was getting near time, fought desperately hard to keep Luton out, and in this they succeeded, honours still being easy when Mr. Saywell gave the final tootle.

For Ilford too much praise cannot be given for the lucky fight which they made against a team which

ought to have knocked them into smithereens. Drummond especially played a champion game, and his efforts were loudly applauded, while Cosburn's goal-kicks were a marvel.

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As to the Luton men I think perhaps it will be best not to particularise. One or two of them played decent football, but the rest gave a very poor sort of exhibition, the like of which I trust it may never be my lot to see again.

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