

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. SOUTHAMPTON ST. MARY'S,

Played at Southampton on Saturday. Result :—

Southampton St. Mary's 2 goals.
Luton Town 1 goal.

The teams were as follow :—

RIGHT.		LUTON TOWN.	LEFT.	
		J. Dickerson (goal).		
		McCartney.	McEwen.	
Birch.		Stewart.	Watkins.	
Gallacher.	Coupar.	Galbraith.	Parkinson.	Ekins.
O				
Turner.	Angus.	Parrell.	Baker.	Naughten.
Marshall.		Littlehales.	Dale.	
		Taylor.	Meston.	
		Cain (goal).		
LEFT.		SOUTHAMPTON.	RIGHT.	
		* * *		

Referee, Mr. A. R. Bourke; linesmen, Messrs. W. Thomson (Southampton), and G. H. Barford (Luton).

If you are playing football this season you will require a pair of good boots. Get them made at Skelton's, Wellington-street.—[ADVT.]

Luton, in their more important matches, have, year after year, been the victims of the cruellest luck, but I think it will be generally agreed by those who saw the match at Southampton that they touched bottom in this respect on Saturday. Poor old Reds!

Their misfortunes commenced in less than ten minutes from the kick-off, when Dickerson got his knee put out and had to be carried off the field. That was bad enough in itself, but the effect it had on the team was worse. It not only destroyed their confidence, but it put the extinguisher on just when they were in their most dangerous mood.

Still, even that was as nothing compared with the effect which a couple of decisions of the referee had upon them, the first of which was the disallowing of a goal scored by Galbraith on the ground of off-side. Whether Mr. Bourke was or was not correct in his ruling is a moot point, but the Luton players were convinced that he was not, and their feelings were ruffled accordingly.

But the other decision, that allowing Southampton's first goal, was one which I must honestly say I have never before seen equalled on a football field. I have seen some very bad goals allowed—in the old days, before the advent of goal-nets, I saw the winning goal of a cup-tie given to a shot which passed high over the cross-bar—but with all these borne in mind, I must still say that the first goal awarded the Saints on Saturday fairly takes the cake.

It happened thusly. Baker put in a long shot which was going wide of the mark, and Naughten, who was standing on the goal-line close to the upright, put up his hand evidently thinking the ball was out of play and with the intention of stopping it for the goal-kick. The ball, however, dropped from his hand in front of goal and went through, no one dreaming of staying its progress.

But to the surprise of everyone on the field, and to the consternation of the Luton players, Mr. Bourke gave it as a goal, and when afterwards told of his amazing mistake, he said he thought the appeal was made by Luton for off-side, and not on account of hands.

As a matter of fact, the goal was an illegitimate one both because of off-side and of hands. How on earth could it have been other than off-side, seeing that Naughten was actually on a level with the goal-post, and facing the field when he handled the ball?

And as for the hands, it was "gross, open, palpable as a mountain." The hand was elevated above the head to the full extent, and when in contact with the ball was seen in every part of the field. It was seen at the Press table by everyone of the scribes, it was seen, I believe, by everyone of the spectators on the ground, and even Dickerson, who was then at the window of the dressing-room at the extreme end of the field, saw distinctly.

I don't wish to say any more about the matter now, but merely to point out that when it is possible for such an error as this to arise on the part of a referee who probably has more practice than any man in the South, it is a question whether the time has not arrived for overhauling the rules of the game and having neutral linesmen to assist the referee in all League matches and Cup-ties.

Saturday's game had been looked forward to with a good deal of interest both at Luton and Southampton. The Saints, it was true, had only won one of five League matches played, but as they had all been away from home, the record perhaps was not a matter for wonderment.

It was generally felt that in this, the first match on their own ground, they would make a big bid for victory, and under the circumstances neither the Luton people nor the Luton players felt confident of the result. If Luton did win, it would be a feather in their caps and a crusher for the Saints, and if the contrary verdict were obtained, well, it would not be much to brag about on the one side or to crow about on the other.

The Luton team travelled to Southampton on Friday, putting up at the Bedford Hotel, which was reached just before eleven o'clock. Mr. S. Pakes was the committeeman in charge, and he had a comparatively easy task, the gentlemen under his care not giving him the least anxiety from the time they left Luton to the time they returned.

Luton were without Docherty, who was still unable to play on account of his injured ankle, and the services of J. Dickerson, of St. Albans, were requisitioned in the place of Jack. The Saints had made one or two alterations in their team, the wisdom of which was justified by the event.

The interest felt in the match at Southampton may be gathered from the fact that quite six thousand people assembled to witness the proceedings. The spectators there are still a very good lot, but, alas, they have deteriorated since last year, their partizanship being much more pronounced than formerly.

Golf! Golf! Golf!—Scarlet Golf Jackets, green facings, to order, from 12s. 6d. to 25s. 6d.; also the Payne-Galloway Waterproof Golf Cape, the only perfect Golf Cape made.—To be had only of S. Bassett, Gentlemen's Tailor and Complete Outfitter, 28, Wellington-street, Luton.—[ADVT].

Luton won the toss, and kicked down-hill, the ball being set in motion just before three o'clock. The Reds at once went off with a dash, and tremendous excitement was manifested by the onlookers as to the result of the assault on the Saints' citadel.

"Well played, Luton," was generally shouted as one attempt after another was made, and a shot from Stewart, following upon a centre by Gallacher, elicited loud applause, the ball going just wide of the mark. At this time, I believe Luton's success would have given unqualified satisfaction, the spectators evidently being inclined to treat the efforts of their own men somewhat ironically.

When it was seen, however, that the Saints could play, as they quickly showed they could, feeling began to veer round, and the Southampton players were vociferously cheered. Turner, on the left, soon got in evidence, and a splendid centre of his, McEwen headed away just in the nick of time. After Luton had been to the other end, Turner got clear again, and to a shot from him Dickerson gave a corner.

A period of very exciting play around the Luton goal followed, and once the ball actually hit the post. It was in this scrimmage that Dickerson got hurt. He had run out and in attempting to kick the ball, his and Angus' legs crossed, the consequence being that the Luton custodian's knee was put out, and he had to be carried off the field.

The Saints, remembering their experience at Clapton the previous week, and in obedience to the demands of the spectators, generously allowed Luton another goal-keeper, and M'Crindle, who had fortunately accompanied the team as twelfth man, was given his first experience between the sticks. During the first half he had to play in his ordinary boots.

Gallacher forced a corner, which was not improved upon, though McCartney put in a fine long shot, which Cain fisted out. Almost immediately a foul was given against the Saints, and Watkins taking the kick, put in a beauty, and the ball glancing off the heads of both Parkinson and Meston before it reached the net, a goal resulted.

What Cain said to Meston, I don't know, but he looked unutterable things. The Saints after this made desperate efforts to equalise, and the Luton defence was somewhat severely tested. Then Gallacher got down again and centred to Galbraith, who scored with a splendid shot, but the whistle had sounded for offside.

Luton pressed again, and from a centre by Gallacher, Ekins got away and a score seemed inevitable, but the left winger was deliberately tripped by Meston from behind when about six or eight yards from goal. A penalty kick was awarded, and this was undertaken by McCartney, who put in a fast screw shot, but unfortunately the ball travelled just wide of the mark. Mac didn't like it a little bit. He says that was his first penalty kick and it will be his last.

Luton got down again several times, but there appeared to be a little too much excitement in the front rank, and things did not work nearly as well as they would have done in a friendly. The half-backs also were not in the best of form.

The attacks of the Saints were chiefly made from the left wing, Turner showing first-rate form, but eventually Baker, on the right, got in a long shot,

from which a goal was credited to the homesters in the manner before described. It was a shocking affair, and was enough to take the heart out of any team.

Luton, however, immediately endeavoured to re-establish their lead, and a beautiful overhead kick by Galbraith resulted in a corner. Ekins placed, and Watkins headed in in fine style, but ultimately Southampton succeeded in driving off their assailants, and in turn became the aggressors, M'Crindle having several very difficult shots to deal with. He came out of the ordeal splendidly, a save from Angus just under the bar being especially noticeable.

But at last, McCartney failing in an attempt to deprive Angus, the latter getting rid of the ball just in time, Turner obtained possession and working his way in gave his side the lead with a grand screw shot. The applause which greeted this performance was tremendous, and it was certainly well merited.

Fouls against Galbraith nullified two good centres by Ekins, the second of which was the outcome of a fine piece of play, and when the interval arrived, the Saints were still leading by two goals to one. Although, the lead had been established in such a remarkably fluky manner, and though, on the actual chances offered, the majority should have been the other way about, credit must be given the Saints for excellent play.

They had without doubt, given a better exhibition than Luton, keeping their heads better and playing with more precision. In the second half, however, the game underwent a change, and the Reds playing uphill, were all over a better lot than their opponents, whose staying power was not equal to the strain put upon them.

As nothing was scored on either side during the last forty-five minutes, it is not necessary to go into details. But twice at any rate, Luton ought to have scored, once from a centre from Ekins, Gallacher receiving close into goal and putting over the top. The second time the ball was worked right on to the goal line, the custodian was on the ground, and there was nothing to prevent the leather going in the net, but Parkinson must needs go and knock the ball in with his hand. Mr. Bourke was "not taking any" this time and the goal was disallowed.

If everybody had had their rights, and if the clear chances had been taken, Luton should have returned the winners with three or four goals to spare, but nevertheless the Saints played a much better game than I had anticipated, and in the first half were better together than their rivals.

It was not until Luton had had time to work off a little of their excitement that they began to show anything like their true form, though the spirit with which they began and the fact they were playing down-hill made them dangerous at the start.

As far as can be seen, Ekins was in the most brilliant form among the forwards, but he was absolutely starved by his partner and never got the ball unless he went for it himself. The few runs that he had were worth seeing, for he got through almost every time. Parkinson played a very poor game altogether, and was the failure in the front string.

The halves were not quite up to their work at first, but improved later on. Birch, perhaps, was the weakest of the three not being as smart in his tackling as the others, and the feeling of those Lutonians who saw the match was very strongly in favour of giving Parkinson a rest, and letting Birch have a trial among the forwards. It is well-known, of course, that he was a forward until last year.

The backs in the second half played a remarkably sound game, but in the first portion McCartney was a trifle too impetuous. M'Crindle as I have already said, came off splendidly in goal, and much credit is due to him considering the circumstances under which he performed.

The thing which puzzles me is how such a team as the Saints could have been beaten by such elevens as Reading and Olapton. I fancy the management on the out matches must have been a bit lax. Certain it is that on Saturday they gave a very smart exhibition. Angus and Turner made a powerful left wing, the outside man especially being a wonderfully good man. The halves were nothing great, but Taylor played a splendid game at back, and his partner likewise rendered good service.

The Luton men left Southampton by the 6.20 train, catching the 10.20 out at St. Pancras. Dickerson, who had the knee put in at Southampton by Dr. Bancroft, came to London by the same train, and then went to his home at Hertford.

Now's the time before you get a cold. Place your order for an overcoat with S. Bassett, 28, Wellington-street. The cheapest tailor in Luton. Style and finish second to none; see my patterns and prices before ordering your Overcoats, Suits, and Trousers elsewhere.—[ADVT].

In the other Southern League matches, Millwall, on their own ground, were only able to beat Reading by two goals to nil, Royal Ordnance defeated Clapton by five goals to two, and New Brompton journeyed to Ilford and beat the Essex men by two goals to nil. The Southern League table now reads as follows:—

Goals