



Football



SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON V. CLAPTON.

THE AMATEURS ANNIHILATED.— BIRCH'S BOOTS A BANE TO LIEUT. SIMPSON.

It was the last club match of the season at the Spotted Dog, Upton, on Saturday, and the visit of Luton attracted a crowd of nearly 4,000. Unfortunately, the weather was most unfavourable, and a heavy shower in the middle of the game made the pitch muddy and slippery. The Reds turned out as usual, but Clapton played a Reserve left wing, lacking Milton, who is down with the bronchitis, and F. Hughes, who has only played twice this season, Tillett, Watts, and sundry others. Stanley Briggs had promised to play, but was kept away by a slight injury.

It fell to Luton's lot to lose the toss, and the start was made with the elevens as under, Luton mustering full strength:—

Luton: Williams; McCartney and McEwen; Watkins, Stewart, and Docherty; Gallacher, Coupar, Galbraith, Birch, and Ekins.

Clapton: Earle; Cook and Hay; W. Boning, A. B. Mayes, and Morgan; Heath, Brown, Langhorne, E. Boning, and Beecroft.

The referee was Lieut. Simpson, and Messrs. F. Scott and H. Percy took the line.

As usual, the amateurs went away with a rush, and Beecroft and Brown in turn showed up. Heath got offside, and Earle saved from the free-kick. Play became very fast, and the ball passed rapidly from end to end. Things looked promising for Clapton when Williams was twice called upon by Heath, but the Reds soon pulled themselves together. After McEwen had sent the ball up, Gallacher finished a run with a smart cross-drive; Ekins centred grandly from close on the goal-lines, and Coupar smartly headed through No. 1 for Luton after 7 minutes' play. It was a well-got goal, and deserved the applause it received.

Inspired by this success, the Luton forwards continued to mean business, and passed prettily despite the heavy ground. Alas! Galbraith missed a first-rate opening, and the Stripes next had a spell of attacking, but both Luton backs defended finely. The home team had the first and only corner before the interval, but it came to nothing. Hands against W. Boning was well placed by Docherty, but Earle fisted away. The second goal of the day was not long in coming. McEwen sent the ball ahead, and Ekins, completely beating Hay, ran by the big

Scot like a hare, and gave Earle no chance. Thus were Luton two up!

About ten minutes before half-time a terrific downpour of rain drenched the players, and the pitch became near akin to a swamp. In spite of that, the same hot pace was maintained, and a burst brought the Clapton forwards close in front of the Reds' goal, Williams saving splendidly a dangerous shot by E. Boning. Luton smartly retaliated, and Gallacher was responsible for a fine centre, which Ekins gently touched through, Earle seeming quite "flabbergasted." But it was wet, awfully wet!

The fun soon became as fast as ever in the remaining five minutes, for Stewart nearly got clean through, but his shot "cannoned away"—fortunately for Earle, who would have been beaten anyhow beyond a doubt. Birch made an equally good attempt before the cross-over, when the score stood—

LUTON	..	..	3 goals
CLAPTON	..	..	0

Just as at the very start, Clapton distinguished themselves on resuming with a desperate spurt into Luton quarters, Heath sending in a terrific shot, which bounced behind off William's foot. The old Crouch Ender was, however, given offside, so no harm was done. Two offsides against Luton, and a foul by Langhorne—the gentleman who weareth the handkerchief—on Stewart, and two corners to the Reds' were the next incidents. Williams ran out and kicked away from a single-handed run by Brown. Another corner to Luton, and Stewart, getting the ball as it "cannoned" off a Clapton back, forced a hot and strong onslaught; Birch dashed right through and shot the ball past Earle, who stood helpless, in remarkably quick time. Thus came Luton's 4th goal after 12 minutes, and the crowd could not help applauding.

Hay could get little show against the Luton forwards, and had to yield a corner, the result being that Earle saved a beauty from McCartney. McEwen stopped a break-away by Beecroft, and only 5 minutes after the last score, Ekins raced down the field, and Morgan missing the ball, Galbraith sent out to Gallacher, who registered No. 5 with a very clever shot into the top corner of the goal. The feat was a notable one, and from a difficult position.

To vary the one-sidedness of the game, Clapton paid a brief visit to Luton quarters, Cook placing close in goal a foul against McEwen on Langhorne. Then the home side had a wonderful piece of luck in the shape of "hands" against Luton thrice in rapid succession. After a corner in the visitor's favour, Lieut. Simpson adjudged Earle to have been fouled by Galbraith, but worse followed.

The Clapton goal was again severely threatened, when Earle accused Birch of scraping down his leg with illegal studs. Lieut. Simpson at once called upon Birch to show his boots, and, after a hasty inspection, ordered the Luton forward to retire. This created somewhat of an uproar, and the Reds protested in vain.

About 17 minutes remained, and though only having ten men, Luton now put their best leg foremost. A very questionable foul was given against Docherty, and Clapton made most strenuous efforts to score. After taking the free-kick, Cook shot across goal, and a score seemed certain, as Brown had only Williams to beat, but the latter effected a brilliant save amid cheers from every part of the ground. Immediately afterwards, Ekins made a single-handed run straight through the home defence and scored No. 6, the shot rebounding into the net from the far post. It was a splendid goal, and Ekins got an ovation.

Some 13 minutes remained, and Clapton mustered up strength for a final effort. Brown rushed past McEwen, and things looked blue for Luton, as the Clapton forwards swooped down on Williams in a line. Once again, however, the ex-Evertonian cleared marvellously, a shot coming from Beecroft. The time sufficed for half-a-dozen more attempts by the Luton vanguard, but nothing further was done, the final score being:—

LUTON	..	..	6 goals
CLAPTON	..	..	0