

FOOTBALL.

LUTON DEFEAT CLAPTON.

AN EASY VICTORY.

On Saturday the Lutonians made their last Southern League journey away from home, the "Spotted Dog" at Upton being the venue. The match was with Clapton, and it was the first of the season between the two clubs. It will be remembered that Clapton had not been doing very well in the League contest until the previous week, when they scored an unexpected and brilliant victory over Royal Ordnance. The Clapton and Luton clubs had met on several occasions but the Londoners had never succeeded in winning, and the brilliant form which the Lutonians have recently been displaying gave promise that they would be able to still further increase their chances of securing permanently second place on the League table.

The start was, as usual, delayed by the non-appearance of some of the homesters, and it was considerably later than the advertised time when Lieutenant Simpson took charge of the following elevens:—

Clapton: Goal, H. Earle; backs, H. J. Cook and W. Hay; half-backs, W. Boning, A. B. Mayes and E. W. Morgan; forwards, J. J. Heath and E. D. Brown (right), E. G. Langhorne (centre), E. Boning and A. Beecroft (left).

Luton: Goal, Williams; backs, McCartney and McEwen; half-backs, Watkins, Stewart, and Docherty; forwards, Gallacher and Coupar (right), Galbraith (centre), Birch and Ekins (left).

The Luton linesman was Mr. E. A. Bartford.

The visitors lost the toss and Galbraith started with the sun shining full in his face. The homesters went off with a determined rush and the Lutonians were beaten back so well that in the first half minute the Clapton men got near enough to goal to send over the line. Maintaining the pressure Clapton enabled Stewart and McCartney to display brilliant defensive ability, while Hay also did well. The home combination were still pressing determinedly when a delighted shout went up from the spectators, many imagining that the ball had gone through. The goal was not captured, though, for E. Boning was declared to be off-side; in fact, to go a step further, it may be said that the leather did not go through the posts at all. The Lutonians at length asserted themselves, and so strongly did they press that after a throw in Gallacher was enabled to send in a beauty which unfortunately travelled somewhat wide. Ekins gave Earle considerable trouble with a splendid centre, while Williams at the other end cleared grandly from the Clapton forwards. This performance was followed by a laughable incident, McEwen and two of the Clapton men falling in front of goal. The home lot, it should be conceded, were playing extremely well, and the visitors' defence was being sorely taxed. However, the Lutonians proved themselves equal to all the demands made upon their skill and resource just now. Heath dispatched a good one at the Luton citadel, and it was unfortunate for the homesters that this went behind the goal-line. McCartney in the meantime was displaying grand style, and he elicited high encomiums from the onlookers by his sure kicking. To provoke praise from an opponent is an achievement, and McCartney is entitled to plume himself accordingly. When Williams had been forced to handle once more came the first downfall of the home fortress. Gallacher centred smartly to Galbraith, who miskicked; but Ekins secured and centred so accurately that Coupar had no difficulty in heading through. Judging by the applause which greeted this feat it was apparent that there were a goodly number of sympathisers with the Luton men on the ground. Following this reverse the Claptonians attacked and forced behind, while in a brief space Williams was observed to save brilliantly from a hot attempt by the home front string. Hands against Gallacher was succeeded by a strong attack in the Luton half, Stewart eventually clearing admirably. The "reds" subsequently broke away and paid a visit to Earle's end, where Coupar relieved the custodian of anxiety by shooting wide of the uprights. The inside right man was lavishly applauded for pretty passing and then Gallacher sent over with a long one. The first foul was awarded against Galbraith amid the customary tokens of disapprobation from the crowd. The Luton centre man was once more in evidence just after, for he sent high over from a magnificent centre by Gallacher. The last-named was unfortunate enough to misjudge his distance a little later. Ekins distinguished himself by excellent play and Earle was compelled to bestir himself to clear his lines after a centre by the outside left, while Ekins immediately afterwards headed over from a pass by Stewart. Birch was pulled up for getting off-side and Langhorne shot very wildly. "Gally" was slightly injured, following

very windy. Gally was slightly injured, following which Gallacher and Watkins shot capably, while Hay cleared well. Coupar sent in a weak one, and thereafter Docherty handled the ball. McEwen returned from a good kick by Hay, and afterwards Galbraith missed badly when right in front of goal. Hands against E. Boning led to McCartney sending over the goal-line. Another of Ekins's centres was not turned to account, and a free-kick against Luton was the next item of importance. McEwen gave away a corner in clearing, and a minute or two after one of the homesters was penalised for holding an adversary, McCartney sending out once more. Gallacher got through in fine style; but his terminal shot was not a good one. Subsequently the strangers attacked in excellent fashion, and for some minutes the story was wholly one of sturdy pressure by the Luton contingent. Docherty sent in two or three times and Stewart returned. The ball seemed certain to be forced through; but the backs and goal-keeper covered themselves with honour, and the goal was saved. It was McCartney, by the way, who eventually raised the siege by sending out. E. Boning was somewhat hurt through colliding with McCartney; but after being attended to by an ambulance man who was on the ground he was enabled to resume. Either side was penalised thereafter—Clapton for hands, and Luton for a foul. The next point of interest was an addition to the total of the leaders. It was made by Ekins, who got away splendidly and finished up with a grand goal. Earle was completely beaten by the shot; in fact, he had no chance of stopping it. The homesters next threw away a capital opportunity of avenging themselves partially. They managed to get close to goal, both Luton backs being passed, and then the ball was tamely sent behind. The spectators were justified in feeling annoyed, for the failure was a miserable exhibition of lack of combination. Stewart was stopped by the referee for jumping—a very smart decision by the way—and Langhorne shot wide from the free-kick. A very nasty foul by Boning on Ekins was noted. Two of the Clapton players got through; but Williams cleared splendidly. Soon afterwards the ball was well centred from the Luton right, and Ekins lost no time in sending it into the net. The leaders attacked very hotly after this, Stewart, Galbraith and Coupar experiencing hard luck in failing to score. The last-mentioned was especially unfortunate, for at least a couple of his attempts fully deserved to score. Rain was now falling heavily and this did not tend to improve the condition of the ground, which had been found to be very greasy. The large crowd who lined the ropes suffered a good deal of discomfort in consequence, and a forest of umbrellas were hoisted. The state of affairs at the interval was:

LUTON, THREE; CLAPTON, NONE.

Clapton went off with a rush after the resumption; but the sting was soon taken out of their attack. Hay evoked a good deal of merriment by sending into some adjoining gardens, while Heath sent ridiculously wide of the object when shooting at goal. A nasty foul on Stewart led to a corner, from which Gallacher landed the ball on the centre of the bar. Another corner on the left wing was just as unproductive, and then at the other end Watkins headed away in front of goal from a good one. Just after Birch eluded the defenders and scored a good goal. A corner was thereafter conceded by Hay and McCartney sent in a beautiful shot which was just wide. From a pass by Galbraith Gallacher notched a lovely goal. The referee occasioned some surprise by awarding a foul against McCartney for what appeared to be a legitimate charge. Following an off-side decision against Birch Heath sent into the side of the net. Hands against McEwen was followed by a foul against "Gally" on the score of impeding the custodian. McEwen was again adjudged to have handled the ball, though on this occasion the fact that his face was smothered with mud made it difficult to believe that the ball had touched his hands. Following a good one from Gallacher, who took advantage of a well-judged header by Stewart, came a further foul for impeding the keeper. To the astonishment of all the referee ordered Birch off the field, and until the game ended the cause was veiled in mystery. It was then discovered that Lieut. Simpson deemed the studs on Birch's boots illegal. Playing with only ten men the "reds" continued to have the best of matters, and soon Ekins made the best run of the day. He got off at a tremendous pace and beat Hay easily, finishing up by sending the ball past Earle very neatly. Thereafter various minor decisions were noted. Towards the end the Claptonians attacked well; but they were unable to lower the colours of Williams, who gave a very fine exposition of custodianship. The final result was as follows:—

LUTON, SIX; CLAPTON, NONE.