

LUTON TOWN v. MILLWALL.

NARROW WIN FOR THE "BLUES."

Last season the games between the Lutonians and Millwall were for the most part closely contested, and it was expected that their first meeting of this season in the United League competition would partake of the same character. Most of those who bore in mind the name which the Millwallians have made for themselves as sturdy cup-fighters had concluded that Luton were in for yet another beating; but there were a goodly number hereabouts who, guided to their conclusions by the knowledge that the home team has been strengthened considerably this year, felt confident that the "reds" would be able to account for their doughty adversaries. The weather could not have been much worse than that in which the teams had to meet on Saturday. The heavy rains of the previous few days had saturated the ground, and the start was made in driving rains which continued during almost the whole period of play, while some variation was brought by a smart hail-storm. That football was possible at all under such conditions was matter for surprise. Another astonishing feature of the affair was that something like 4,000 people braved the elements, many of them standing patiently round the ropes while play was in progress. The grandstand was filled to overflowing long before a start was made, and this was one of those occasions on which the authorities could very well have done with a far larger stand. The fact that about £108 was taken in gate and stand money forms some sort of indication what might have been expected in the way of attendance had the weather been fine. It is true that 300 folks came down from the Millwall district by a special excursion train, and that there was a fairly large contingent present from places in the vicinity of Luton. These were rewarded for their trouble by witnessing what was certainly the best game that has ever been played between the clubs, there being fewer fouls and infinitely more of good play. It was rather hard upon Luton to lose the game and two League points after having had three-fourths of the play; but it only affords another proof of the statement that there is much luck in football. It should be said that prior to the commencement of operations the Red Cross Band played selections. The Luton men, who wore white shirts and blue knickers, were first to take the field, and they were accorded a very flattering reception. Their period of practice was cut short, however, for rain descended so heavily just now as to compel them to seek shelter.

Half past 4 had been fixed as the time for commencing, and at that time the teams lined up in the following order.

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

Millwall: Goal, Moore; backs, Graham and Robson; half-backs, Aitken, King, and Matthews; forwards, Whelan and Calvey (right), Gettins (centre), Davies and Geddes (left).

Referee: Mr. A. G. Kingscott; linesmen, Messrs. J. H. Hackett (Luton) and O. Caygill (Millwall).

It will be perceived that Ekins appeared for the home side for the first time this season, while Gettins played at centre forward for Millwall. The visiting captain won the toss and set the homesters to face the hill. Galbraith set the ball rolling in a particularly heavy shower, and at once the home forwards set off towards the Millwall end. Following some tricky play by McInnes Gallacher obtained possession in good style and, passing Robson neatly, the outside man sent just over. It seemed to many that there would have been a much better chance of scoring had Gallacher centred instead. From the kick-off the ball was rapidly returned and once more it was sent over the strangers' line. Galbraith next secured as the result of pretty play by McInnes, and the centre man shot tremendously hard. Moore managed to steer round the post and a corner followed, a lovely centre by Gallacher being cleverly headed away by Graham. Some close play followed near the Millwall goal, and in a minute or two Stewart robbed Gettins very neatly in mid-field. From a foul throw against Matthews Davies placed the ball right in front of Moore and Ekins headed over. A mistake by the Luton linesman as to a throw-in was not allowed to pass unnoticed. When in a good position Ekins slipped at a critical moment, and a big bombardment of the "blues'" goal followed, this being ultimately put an end to by Gallacher sending wide. Luton were now having the best of matters and Moore's berth was no sinecure. Ekins sent over the line hereabouts and after more pressure by Luton Stewart sent out. Although the game was extremely fast the men were by no means indulging in foul play; indeed, up to now the operations had been remarkable for the excellent spirit which was being manifested. One of the first fouls in the match was awarded against Docherty, and this point was noteworthy inasmuch as it enabled the Millwallians to advance for the first time into the home territory. They were soon repelled, however, and the Luton forwards, who were playing a very pretty game, raced away to the other end. Ekins sinned again by sending high over the bar. From a free-kick against the home right back for handling the ball McInnes cleared well, and Gettins directly afterwards sent very wide at the home end. Williams saved grandly from the namesake of Davies, who had received from Geddes. Another foul throw against Matthews led to a grand centre by Davies, some seconds of suspense to Moore elapsing ere Gallacher sent the ball out. A mis-kick by Davies enabled Geddes to get possession; the outside left centred smartly, and Gettins sent high over. It was at this stage that a hail-storm swept over the ground, though so far as the pace was concerned there was no sign apparent that the players were discommoded thereby. A couple of fouls were awarded against Millwall, the second being given by Matthews, who hooked his leg round Gallacher's leg. In taking the free-kick Davies placed the ball some yards higher up the field; but Mr. Kingscott was on the alert and after allowing the player to take the kick he ordered the ball to be brought back to the right spot. The incident caused a good deal of amusement, the spectators having already formed a very high estimate of the referee's ability. From the kick the ball went in well, and Docherty sent just over the bar. A decision by the home linesman against Luton in respect to a throw-in was overruled by the referee, much to the delight of the crowd. Ekins lost the ball just now through dallying, and hands against Luton did not tend to improve matters. It should be interpolated here that Graham was playing a very fine game and that Watkins was also exhibiting excellent form. Yet another foul throw was given against Matthews; but this time Davies managed to kick the leather over the goal-line. It must be said that all present were delighted with the display which Davies had given up to now, his kicking being clean and well-timed while his judgment was irreproachable. Just now he was one too many for Gettins, who was singularly ineffective. For a few minutes at this time the rain ceased, though only to fall with redoubled force later on. From a well-judged centre by Ekins McInnes just missed scoring; a score seemed inevitable, but the inside right fell just as he was steadying himself for the shot. Galbraith gave Moore a particularly hot one to deal with, and after a free-kick against Millwall McInnes handled the ball with the usual result. A neat centre by Coupar enabled Gallacher to dispatch a tremendous shot at the Millwall goal; but by some means Robson's leg got in the way of the ball, and so no score resulted. Gettins got away well on one occasion but was stopped for off-side, while a like decision pulled him up again just after. Hands against Davies looked dangerous; but McInnes came to the rescue again. From a good centre Geddes sent out badly. It should be said that Millwall were now having somewhat more of the play than formerly. At the Millwall end the ball travelled right across the goal from a centre by Gallacher, none of the others being near enough to secure it. From a corner conceded by Moore Ekins centred well, only to see the leather got away cleverly. Stewart pounced on the ball and returned at a fast pace. Moore dropped the ball under the bar, but managed to recover it in time. McEwen was applauded for a good exhibition, and he fully deserved the compliment. The "blues" shortly afterwards got down well and Calvey shot; he was pulled up on the ground of off-side, however, though the ball subsequently found its way into the net. Immediately afterwards Davies got away and scored, his namesake having miskicked. The success came when the game had been in progress about 35 minutes. The locals were undeterred by this reverse; on the contrary they seemed to be stimulated to further efforts. A corner was forced by Gallacher, and from a free-kick Watkins was responsible for a hot one which was tipped over the bar by Moore. From the corner, which was placed by Gallacher, Stewart headed through amid great enthusiasm, this taking place three minutes after the visitors had scored. Following this equalising of the totals the play became tremendously fast. A grand centre by Ekins was spoilt by a foul by McInnes, and a fine shot from the outside left forced Moore to give a corner. Fouls against Galbraith and McEwen were noticed; the latter was near goal and danger seemed to threaten the local arms, but King sent laughably wide. The exchanges until the interval were fairly even, and when the whistle sounded the state of affairs was:

LUTON, 1; MILLWALL, 1.

After their splendid show in the first half it seemed that the Luton men, who now had the best of the ground, would stand a good chance of winning. Early in the second moiety a foul was awarded against the home captain and McEwen, in endeavouring to clear, narrowly missed heading through his own goal, the ball striking the post. Williams came out and cleared at the expense of a corner. This was splendidly placed and a second corner fell to the strangers, though without result. A grand burst by Ekins led to the concession of a corner by Millwall, and from this Stewart headed behind. A further corner came, Ekins being knocked off the ball when he seemed certain to score. Galbraith met with similar hard luck, and then a splendid overhead shot by Ekins was well saved by Moore. The "blues" came up in good style but infringed the off-side rule, and when the locals got dangerously near Robson sent into touch. McInnes obtained Luton's seventh corner, and a beautiful shot by Docherty fell right in front of goal. Millwall secured a corner as the result of some pretty play on the left wing. A neat centre by Ekins was productive of a similar point. Just afterwards Millwall were stopped for fouling and Gettins had a few words with the referee thereupon. The visitors' centre was adjudged off side when close to goal. However, the strangers made amends for this by scoring just after. The forwards had gone up well and the ball was scrimmaged through in lucky fashion, Calvey apparently touching it last. When Ekins had experienced wretched luck with a magnificent effort, the Millwall left became dangerous; but Davies kept them off. Williams cleared well afterwards. Following a foul by Graham on Coupar Docherty centred finely and Gallacher sent into the net. The point was disallowed for off-side, and many were of opinion that the decision was correct. Following various minor

decisions Gettins dispatched a red hot one at the Luton goal, and the custodian had a good deal of trouble in negotiating it. Later on the leaders broke away again and Geddes, who was being nursed by Watkins, sent across smartly. Three of the Millwall forwards were right in front of goal, and Whelan had no difficulty in registering a notch. Subsequently the Millwall men had a good deal the best of the exchanges and it seemed that Luton were hopelessly beaten. Towards the end of the game they rallied, however, and Ekins scored a beautiful goal three minutes from the end. From this stage until the close the "whites" struggled gamely to get on terms, but without avail. The outcome of a grandly fought contest was:

MILLWALL, 3; LUTON, 2.