

LUTON AND THE LEAGUE.

CRUSHING DEFEAT FOR WELLINGBOROUGH.

The Wellingborough men had done so well in the United League competition prior to Saturday that their visit was looked forward to on that day with anticipations of witnessing a close game. The match was the only one in the United League during December, and it formed the first meeting of the sides this season. The weather was not of the best, and the ground was thinly powdered with snow; but for once in a way there was a good attendance of spectators. It is certain that had it been known that the locals would perform so brilliantly as they did there would have been a much larger attendance. It is not wide of the mark to aver that the Lutonians have never performed more brilliantly this season than they did in the first half at least, and the spectators were naturally delighted with a display of form that was good enough to beat most clubs.

It was a few minutes after the advertised time when the following turned out :—

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

Wellingborough : Goal, Robinson; backs, Holmes and Steele; half-backs, Howe, Murrell, and Heapy; forwards, Walker and Drage (right), Murray (centre), Little and Mellor (left).

Referee : Mr. C. D. Crisp; Luton linesman, Mr. H. C. Fryer.

The home captain won the toss, and it was not long before the Lutonians settled down. Securing from the kick-off the forwards made their way up by means of excellent work by Galbraith, and after a clever centre by Ekins the centre forward sent just over. "Gally's" next performance was to lodge the ball in Robinson's hands. Good play by McCartney resulted in Galbraith gaining possession and giving more trouble, the defenders kicking out in saving. Mellor rendered himself conspicuous by going off smartly and shooting into Williams's hands. Next a magnificent centre by Ekins culminated a capital sample of work by Luton, and Gallacher just failed to obtain possession. This was a distinct misfortune for the "whites," for the outside right was close to the upright and must have scored. A decision against the visitors for getting off-side was followed by another good effort by Galbraith. Some amusement was caused by a decision of the Wellingborough linesman being reversed by the referee. A splendid attempt by Coupar from a long range almost produced the desired result, while another beauty from Galbraith gave the custodian more trouble. A curly one from the foot of Gallacher almost beat Robinson. The home forwards were in great form just now, the smartness of the strangers serving to emphasise the fact. The game was being closely contested, and hereabouts the operations were well worth viewing. In a melee near the Wellingborough goal Galbraith, receiving from the outside right, had hard luck in failing to score with a very fine shot. After a foul had been awarded against Docherty Gallacher sent wide, and a long one from the foot of Ekins narrowly missed. Hands against the home outside left was awarded, and though a nasty foul on Davies passed unnoticed Galbraith was promptly pulled up for indulging in like tactics. A further grand shot by Galbraith was tipped over the bar by Robinson, and the corner which accrued to the homesters in consequence was unproductive. More hard luck was experienced by Galbraith, who was exhibiting first-rate style. When the game had been in progress about a quarter of an hour the centre man had his reward, for he then succeeded in lowering Robinson's colours with a neat shot. Just after a Wellingborough man's back happened to be in the way when Gallacher had a shy at goal; otherwise number two would inevitably have fallen to Luton. A corner to the leaders led to Gallacher dispatching a very hot one at the Northants. men's charge, while another good effort was credited to the same player in a little time. McInnes was next to distinguish himself; but his shot was unproductive and Ekins, who received from the clearance, sent wide of the mark. This had taken place from a capital centre by McCartney, who had up to now been impassable. Williams was called upon to fist away, and at the other end Gallacher forced Robinson to throw away, while shortly afterwards a further shot from the same player's foot had to be negotiated. Ekins, when in an off-side situation, sent through; but the notch was promptly disallowed. Immediately afterwards Docherty dispatched a long, dropping shot at the Wellingborough fortress which found its way into the net. The left half was generously cheered and he fully deserved commendation, for the shot was the best that has been seen on the Luton ground this season. The home captain was evidently determined to draw level with his fellow half, for in a minute or two he was observed to make his way through and shoot hard. The effort gave Robinson no possible chance, and the position was that Luton were three up. Gallacher and Coupar were responsible for more admirable shots, while one from Stewart was succeeded by a corner. The strangers thereafter made an incursion into the Luton half and forced a corner, but they found the Luton defence too much for them. A further capture of the Wellingborough citadel seemed imminent when the homesters obtained a foul in front of the uprights. From the kick out McEwen secured and dispatched the leather into the keeper's hands, a corner following. From another corner Stewart managed to head over the bar, and so when the interval arrived the totals were unchanged:—

The first point of interest after the resumption was a neat advance by the Wellingborough lot, the effect of this being spoiled by one of the forwards getting off-side. The "whites" subsequently indulged in a protracted and determined onslaught on the Wellingborough goal; several of the Lutonians had ineffectual shots, and the outcome was that the ball was cleared. The downfall of the fortress was only averted for a brief space, though, for on the next occasion that the locals went up Stewart obtained a second with a grand long shot, this bringing the home total to four. A sample of neat combination by the home forwards led to the concession of a corner, from which Stewart very narrowly missed, the ball going a yard above the bar. Next Galbraith, who received from Stewart, sent past Robinson; but he was declared to have been off-side. Williams dealt with a long one cleverly, and when McCartney had been penalised for a foul the visitors indulged in a turn at pressing, Williams being called upon to throw away during this period of pressure. After a throw in the ball was well centred at the Wellingborough end and Galbraith experienced little difficulty in notching the fifth goal for his side. The strangers again asserted themselves and once more Williams was forced to punch away. When McInnes had unaccountably failed to get the leather through Gallacher dashed in and chalked up the sixth. A corner was forced later on by Ekins; but the advantage was neutralised by Galbraith indulging in a foul. Coupar secured cleverly and centred well; but the ball rolled harmlessly across the mouth of the goal, none of the other forwards being thereabouts. Gallacher again sent into the goalkeeper's hands, and from a grand centre by Ekins McInnes headed wide. A corner to Wellingborough was unproductive, and at the other end Ekins terminated a fine run by dispatching a useful shot, which he supplemented by another when the leather was cleared. McEwen was the victim of a nasty foul, following which a corner fell to the leaders, Stewart heading wide. Howe was penalised for a foul throw and a little later a general attack by Luton was frustrated, the goal-keeper distinguishing himself by saving several hot shots. A corner was conceded eventually; but nothing came of it. A foul on Ekins within the 12 yards mark was taken cognisance of by the referee, who awarded a penalty kick. This was taken by Stewart, who scored easily. The Wellingborough men seemed greatly dissatisfied with the decision and manifested a disinclination to resume; but Mr. Crisp acted promptly and after some apparent unpleasantness operations were resumed. The game from this stage to the end was not very interesting, for it ruled almost wholly in favour of Luton. No further addition was made to the score, however, and the final outcome was :