

LUTON v. WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

ANOTHER NOTABLE VICTORY BEFORE
A HUGE CROWD.

The splendid fight Luton are making for Championship honours in the United League is arousing intense interest and much enthusiasm among the club's supporters. Special importance was attached to the game on Saturday with Woolwich Arsenal and the chances of Luton's capture of two more very welcome points had been eagerly discussed during the week. The success of the Plumstead men in vanquishing the Swifts at Burton the previous Saturday augured a hard tussle.

The day was in every way favourable and crowds of Woolwich folk, with flaring scarlet favours, arrived in the town. The special train run from Plumstead, however, was extremely late and took over three hours to perform the journey, only reaching Luton at 4.30, when the start ought to have been made. The Arsenal players had then to dress and reach the ground, where a crowd of 5,000 people had been impatiently awaiting their arrival.

It was very bad management on the part of the Arsenal Committee. Common sense would have suggested the sending of the team in ample time by ordinary train, but forethought is a rare commodity with the Woolwich Directorate. The blunder not only caused an intolerable wait for everyone and made it doubtful whether the game could be finished before dark, but the hasty scramble at the end of a boring journey could have had no good effect on the Arsenal players.

Owing to the gales and rains of last week, the contractor had been able to erect no more than the skeleton of the grand stand, but some hundreds of the most venturesome spectators swarmed upon the bare frame work. It was very risky but, fortunately, no collapse occurred. The terraces were densely thronged, and the spectators thickly lined the whole field. By some oversight, I am told, the pitch was not drained, and the surface had made an imperfect recovery from the heavy rains, being churned into deep mud on one side of the touch line.

When Mr. J. C. Tillotson, of Birmingham, at last got the teams in order, they started at 4.55 as under:—

Luton: Williams; McCartney and McEwen; Davies, Stewart, and Docherty; Gallacher, Coupar, Galbraith, McInnes, and Ekins.

Arsenal: Leather; Sinclair and Caldwell; McAvoy, Anderson, and Crawford; Brock, Hayward, Caie, O'Brien, and Russell.

Linesmen: Messrs. Birch and Beardsley.

Losing the toss, the visitors commenced operations towards the railway goal; there was little or no breeze. The crowd soon gave vent to a long pent-up excitement as, in the first minute, Gallacher ran down and Ekins missed a grand chance from his centre. The Arsenal promptly retaliated and forced a corner, while from a foul against Galbraith, Caldwell netted the ball untouched. Crawford next fouled Ekins and from McEwen's place kick, Ekins dashed off; McInnes centred gloriously, and Gallacher evoked a huge demonstration by scoring No. 1 for Luton in 6 minutes.

A greater surprise was in store, for after saving from Docherty, Leather only caught a magnificent, long shot from Stewart as it had passed under the bar, and the referee, of course, awarded Luton goal No. 2. Two goals in 7 minutes was sensational scoring indeed, and the home spectators cheered themselves hoarse.

The Arsenal could hardly help being disconcerted by such an unexpected turn in the game, but they soon pulled themselves together, and forced a couple of corners. From these, Williams fisted out smartly, and then Crawford shot wildly overhead. An unfortunate foul against Galbraith was bravely cleared by the Luton custodian, and then Leather had a handful from Ekins. The Arsenal were now making great efforts. Caie and Russell got particularly dangerous, but Davies effected two splendid clearances in succession, when the least mistake would have spelt ruin.

The Woolwich men made another onslaught, and Williams brought off a truly wonderful save amid a bunch of attacking forwards. The crowd made a fitting demonstration, and the game continued to be fast and vigorous. Galbraith ran down, but was ruled offside, and then McEwen did some marvellous work in defence, which evoked a roar of applause. Unluckily, "Mac" forgot himself with a playful jump, but Calwell kicked wide. An amusing case of "hands" was given against Anderson, who smacked the ball down in mid-field. Haywood fouled Docherty, and a hot shot came from McInnes, Leather rushing out and bouncing the ball twenty yards beyond the goal. Just 25 minutes from the start, Gallacher clean beat the Arsenal keeper with a puzzling shot from the out-field, and Luton were three up!

Luton were playing with remarkable dash and confidence, as if certain of victory. The Arsenal, on the other hand, were doing a lot of good work, but lost their heads in wild, useless shooting near goal. Ekins got within an ace of scoring, but, unhappily, missed his footing, and then Leather saved from McCartney and McInnes. A foul against Anderson was placed just over, and Gallacher had hard lines in failing to score a third time. Davies was fouled, and a throw-in followed; Stewart headed up with fine judgment, and Coupar ran through and scored No. 4 with a swift "grunder."

The enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds, and it seemed as if Luton could go on scoring for ever. Less than 10 minutes remained before the interval, and in that period, the Arsenal again braced themselves for a big effort, but were magnificently frustrated by Williams. Directly afterwards, Haywood netted the ball just as the whistle had sounded for offside. From a neat pass by Coupar, Gallacher now made a grand run down the field, but Galbraith missed a rare opening, only a corner resulting. McEwen again shone in heading and kicking, but McCartney was penalised for playfully making Russell turn a somersault over the touch-line. Nothing however, came of it, and the half-time score stood:—

LUTON	..	..	..	4 goals
ARSENAL	..	..	..	0

Though the scoring so far had exceeded the sanguine anticipations of Lutonians, the game had not been so one-sided as the figures might indicate. If anything, the Arsenal forwards had shown superior combination, but their shooting was wretched. On the other hand, Luton seemed unable to do anything wrong, and with two exceptions, had seized every possible opportunity. The question was:—"Would Luton keep it up, and was it too late for the Arsenal to win?"

The second half opened decidedly in favour of the visitors, whom McEwen let in for the first time. A couple of free-kicks against Luton led to a lovely attempt by Haywood, which Williams steered over the cross-bar; from the flag-kick, "Dick" again saved brilliantly from Caie. The Arsenal pressed hard for some time, but had no luck at all. For nearly 18 minutes, the play had been chiefly in Luton quarters, and when for the first time the home forwards broke away, it was to see Ekins score No. 5.

This practically settled the game, and was the starting-point of a sad falling-off all round. The Luton men might have been saving themselves for the Kettering Cup Final, but at any rate, they relaxed their exertions wholesale. The Arsenal "came on" correspondingly, and Williams had to fist out a beauty from Crawford. The players began to show ill-feeling, and while McCartney was at loggerheads with Russell, Sinclair made a nasty attempt to kick McInnes.

Fouls became frequent, and the hazardous rushing tactics adopted by his partner left McEwen a double responsibility, the little back making two wonderful saves. A big outcry was raised by the Woolwich contingent against Davies, who nearly "floored" Caie, and then an unfortunate accident befell O'Brien, who overstrained himself at full speed and fell down, having twisted his ankle. Several doctors offered their assistance, but "Pat" had to leave the field, leaving his side only 10 men.

Luton continued their loose play, while the Arsenal plucked up courage once more. Russell being badly fouled by McCartney, the home goal had a narrow escape from Brock. Ten minutes before the finish, the expected happened, and Haywood broke the ice for the Arsenal,

though it was a palpable case of offside. The game wearily dragged on, and 2 minutes before the end, Caie scored No. 2 after Williams had saved from Russell. The Londoners naturally made the most of their tardy success, though the day went badly against them with the result:—

LUTON	..	..	..	5 goals
ARSENAL	..	..	2	„