

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE LEAGUE.

WOOLWICH ARSENAL DEFEATED.

On Saturday the Lutonians surprised and delighted their supporters by inflicting a heavy defeat upon Woolwich Arsenal by five goals to two. The victory of the homesters was all the more acceptable for the reason that it brought League points and enhanced the chances of the locals finishing at the top of the list at the end of the competition. Outside Luton the notion seemed to be that the "stripes" were doomed to defeat; but hereabouts admirers of the local players were convinced that the Lutonians would give a good account of themselves, though it was at the same time conceded that they had got an extremely hard task on hand. It may be useful at this stage to state that this constituted the fourth meeting of the teams this season, two friendlies having been decided. The League game at Plumstead produced a draw, while of the friendlies each side could claim one as a victory. Thus the teams were on an equality when they took the field on Saturday. During the week the Luton committee had had a very anxious time concerning the ground. The heavy rains had by Wednesday brought it into a terrible state; but the drying winds of the three days preceding Saturday had worked wonders. After the pitch had been rolled on Friday it presented a fair appearance, though a veritable slough existed for some distance down the middle of the ground. Then it had been anticipated that the grand-stand would be ready for occupation; but the heavy weather had been all against the contractor, and the result was that only a portion of the erection had been made ready for use. It was only natural that there should be a very large attendance, the rivalry between the competing sides being very keen. Some hundreds of supporters of the Woolwich lot were conveyed to Luton by special trains at excursion fares, and when the time came for commencing these were easily identified by their bunches of red ribbons, by a bibulous tendency, by an inclination to "chip" the locals, and by an extraordinary and persistent din. There was also a large gathering of the local clans, and it was computed that there must have been over 5,000 present. The terraces were crowded and the ropes were thickly lined, while even the uncompleted skeleton of the grand-stand was seized upon as a coign of vantage by many—principally Arsenalites. The weather was fine, though dull, and there was very little wind. Shortly before the time advertised for commencing the Lutonians made their appearance; but time went on rapidly, and the Woolwich men did not turn out. Speculation became rife as to the reason for their absence, and it was not for a long time that the explanation was forthcoming that the lateness of a train had delayed their arrival.

It was close upon 5 o'clock when the sides ranged up in the following order, the interval having been filled up by the playing of selections by the Red Cross Band:—

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

Woolwich Arsenal: Goal, Leather; backs, Caldwell and Sinclair; half-backs, Crawford, Anderson, and M'Avoy; forwards, Brock and Haywood (right), Caie (centre), O'Brien and Russell (left).

Referee: Mr. J. C. Tillotson (Birmingham); linesmen, Messrs. E. Birch (Luton) and F. W. Beardsley (Arsenal).

(Arsenal).

The home captain won the toss and elected to play from the Gas Works end. No sooner had the Arsenal kicked off than the homesters went down and Ekins sent high over. Again they advanced and threatened danger. The Arsenal forwards next broke away and Stewart conceded a corner in clearing, this proving resultless. Ekins got off well, but his concluding shot was neatly cleared, while a capital header by Gallacher was not productive of the good effects desired by Luton. Brock steered very wide and Galbraith was pulled up for fouling, the ball being sent over the line by Caldwell. Crawford was punished for fouling and from a brilliant centre by McInnes Gallacher completely beat Leather and registered the first goal of the day. There was a great outburst of enthusiasm at this. Docherty gave the custodian a very hot one, and Stewart followed this up by a beauty from a distance which again lowered the Arsenal colours. The Lutonians in the crowd cheered themselves hoarse, and there was some justification for their jubilation in the fact that both points had been notched in less than 10 minutes from the start. The home players were stimulated by these early successes and the onlookers were on good terms with themselves. Hands against the Arsenal was balanced by hands against Stewart, and from the second of these free-kicks Williams was so hard pressed that he conceded a corner. McEwen followed this example when attempting to clear, and the "reds" thereafter attacked strenuously, Crawford eventually sending over the bar. Mr. Tillotson made a mistake just now in penalising Galbraith for an alleged foul, for "Gally" seemed to have been more sinned against than sinning. Ekins was responsible for a magnificent run and a shot which was well saved, while later on Davies saved well from the Arsenal left-wingers. The "reds" pressed strongly subsequently and a corner was forced, following which Williams effected a marvellous save. A splendid run by Gallacher was spoiled by Galbraith getting off-side, a foul against McEwen following. Hands against Anderson led to a fine exhibition by Davies, while later on Gallacher sent behind from a centre by Ekins. A foul on Docherty by Haywood almost brought disaster to the visitors, McInnes shooting hard when the kick had been finely taken. Leather was this time on the alert, however, and effected a capital clearance. The Woolwich right-wingers broke away excellently and centred to Russell, who missed an easy chance. Not so the Lutonians, for at the other end Galbraith sent on to Gallacher, who scored with a grand long shot which dropped just under the bar. The Lutonians now held a very comfortable lead, and they were evidently on good terms with themselves. A foul against the Arsenal led to a smart centre by Docherty, while McCartney dispatched a long one at the Woolwich goal which the keeper had great difficulty in keeping out. McCartney was deservedly pulled up for fouling Russell. Gallacher got clear after a nice pass by Coupar and sent in; but one of the "reds" managed to interpose his face in the nick of time. Gallacher was badly fouled, and in taking a free-kick Davies placed over the bar. Ekins pounced on the ball after a clever pass by Galbraith and raced off at top-speed; but Sinclair was one too many for him. Gallacher shot somewhat badly when he seemed to have a good chance. Immediately afterwards Coupar accepted a pass from "Gally" and notched the fourth point with a grand shot. McCartney shortly afterwards effected a good clearance, and when Coupar had been penalised for fouling Williams was called upon for another sample of his ability, the forwards testing him very severely. Haywood managed to get through, though only to be stopped on account of an infraction of the off-side law. Luton now attacked strongly and Galbraith barely missed, this being the outcome of a clever run by the outside right. A corner to the leaders was unproductive. A further foul on Luton was observed, McCartney being the victim, while a little later "Mac" was again punished for falling foul of Russell. At the interval the Arsenal had failed to score, and accordingly the positions were:

LUTON, 4; ARSENAL, 0.

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Soon after the resumption Brock beat McEwen luckily ; but the left back was equal to the occasion, and before the Arsenalite could become very dangerous he was stopped. O'Brien offended against the off-side rule with the usual result, and Gallacher incurred the customary penalty by fouling an adversary. More free-kicks, some for and others against Luton, were awarded, and at length the monotony was relieved by Haywood dispatching a shot at Williams which forced the keeper to tip the ball over the bar. From the corner another excellent attempt was made, Williams behaving splendidly though heavily charged. Russell and O'Brien gave a good exhibition as the result of which the former was enabled to have a shy at goal. McCartney gave away a corner from which Stewart cleared. Russell again got in the way of McCartney and from the free-kick against Luton which resulted Haywood sent over the bar, while in the next minute McCartney gave away a further corner. From this McEwen headed over his own goal, thus presenting the visitors with another flag-kick. The Arsenal pressed strongly, though without avail just now. Following some neat play by McCartney Ekins scored a beauty, Luton now being five to the good. Galbraith once more incurred the displeasure of the referee and McEwen became the victim of reprehensible tactics on the part of his opponents. Stewart put in some extremely useful work when the Arsenal were attacking strenuously, and when the home captain had been stopped for fouling Williams saved grandly from Anderson. Further fouls by Luton men were noted ; one by McCartney was close to goal, and the locals had a slice of luck in finding it possible to keep the visitors at bay. The upshot of a very determined effort on the part of the strangers was that the ball was forced over the line. Ekins sent behind with a curious shot and subsequently Sinclair fouled McInnes nastily. McEwen was exhibiting magnificent form, a sample which he gave just now being especially acceptable. Fouls by either side were noticed by the referee, following which McAvoy seized the opportunity of having a try at goal. The effort was not productive of the desired result, however. Ekins overran himself when he looked likely to do something useful, and O'Brien overreached himself in an effort to shoot. The ball travelled wide of the upright and the player fell to the ground. He had to be assisted from the field and it subsequently transpired that he had damaged his ankle. Thus the Arsenal were left with 10 men only. Following another foul by McCartney the Arsenal pressed determinedly and Stewart only just managed to keep the ball out. Later on Haywood broke away when in an apparently off-side position and had no difficulty in reducing the home lead. The locals had apparently slackened their efforts whereas the visitors, though a man short, were playing better than ever. After a time Cais broke through and put on a second. This was all the scoring that took place. In the time that remained before the end of the game the operations were very closely contested, and neither side could claim much advantage. The eventual outcome of a splendidly fought game was a welcome victory for Luton with the following figures :

LUTON, 5 ; ARSENAL, 2.