

THE UNITED LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. LOUGHBOROUGH.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town 1 goal.

Loughborough nil.

The teams were as follow:—

RIGHT. LUTON TOWN LEFT.

Williams (goal).

McCartney McEwen.

Davies. Stewart. Docherty.

Gallacher. Coupar. Galbraith. McInnes. Ekins



Ward. Jones. Brailsford. Andrews. Ron Is.

Shelton. Hamilton. Mumford.

Thompson. Blackett.

Monteith (goal).

LEFT. LOUGHBOROUGH. RIGHT.

Referee, Mr. G. West, Kettering; Linesmen, Messrs. Gibbs and E. A. Barford.

Probably never before had so distinguished a company assembled to see a Luton football match as that which came together on Saturday. I say to see a football match, but of course it was not the game which was the attraction, but the ceremony which preceded it. In view of the success attending Saturday's function, the committee, no doubt, would like to arrange a similar affair every week during the remainder of the season, but possibly that would prove too big an order.

The ordinary crowd reached very respectable dimensions, the spectators altogether numbering rather more than four thousand. There was one thing, however, which I must say was far from satisfactory, and that was the way in which the people were packed together at each end of the ground, while the terraces were comparatively empty. I know money is urgently needed, but nothing will justify the state of things referred to.

I don't blame the committee for getting every penny they can, but this policy, if carried too far, very often results in what is known as killing the goose that laid the golden egg. People, if they consider themselves badly treated, will stay away altogether, and I for one should not feel disposed to blame them. Let the committee take warning in time. Having placed the stand on one side, they cannot hope to reserve the terraces on the other except on very special occasions.

The ceremony of opening the ground lasted just half-an-hour, and when the teams lined up, his Grace the Duke of Bedford set the ball in motion. As it turned out, however, the game was not quite worthy of the occasion. Play was never of a particularly brilliant description, and the defence on each side was always a little too good for the attack.

For a time, the ball was trundled up and down the field without either goal being threatened, but from a free kick undertaken by McCartney, Docherty got in a good shot, which Coupar sought to convert, but unfortunately he headed in the opposite direction to that intended. Directly afterwards, however, Luton forced a corner, and as a result, Ekins shot over the bar. The Loughborough forwards made spirited attempt to get to the other end, but were pulled up by McEwen, who placed to Galbraith, and Gallacher ultimately receiving, nearly did the trick, but his final shot took too elevated a course.

The visitors responded, and Ward, after getting the better of a bout with McCartney, put beautifully across the mouth of goal, but Williams was first on the ball, and effected a clearance. A lovely dropping shot by McInnes was the next feature, but Monteith fisted out. Again McInnes and Stewart tried hard to break through the defence, but without effect, and a foul against the Luffs was not turned to account.

Docherty next gave Monteith an anxious time, once landing the ball just over the bar and on the net, and then putting in a regular teaser in the way of a bouncing shot. Gallacher also distinguished himself with several attempts, and Galbraith, receiving from a free kick, put in a lovely shot which Monteith saved in wonderfully smart fashion. Gallacher hit the upright just as a foul had been given against the visitors, and Davies then placed beautifully. The Luffs cleared, but McEwen returned right into the mouth of goal, and a corner resulted. After this had been taken, Galbraith, Coupar, Stewart, and Ekins got in very hot shots, but in each instance the ball rebounded off men who happened to be in the way.

ball rebounded off men who happened to be in the way.

For a change, the Luffs went to the other end, and William saved well from Andrews, just as the whistle sounded for a foul. Docherty sent across to Gallacher, and the latter almost got clear, but Blackett ran across in the nick of time, and saved by kicking behind. Nothing came of the corner, but a moment later Docherty placed, and Galbraith headed on to McInnes, who put in beautifully, Monteith, however, bringing off a fine save.

Then a foul was given against the visitors, close up, and McCartney kicking hard and straight, the ball found its way through a forest of legs and into the net. The referee awarded a goal, which Loughborough evidently did not like, but as far as my observation went, I should be inclined to say that Mr. West was quite correct. Immediately afterwards Luton were down, and from a centre by Ekins, Gallacher shot and Coupar put on the finishing touch, but was given offside. The first half wound up with a tremendous scrimmage in the vicinity of the Luton goal, but eventually McEwen cleared, and the interval found Luton leading by a goal to nil.

In the second half, play was more evenly divided, but no scoring took place, and the homesters were returned the winners by a goal to nil.

Taking the play on the whole, Luton were undoubtedly the better team, but still, I cannot say that they were worth much more than the one goal which marks their superiority on paper. They had by far the larger part of the play in the first half, and more than held their own in the second, but the forwards made comparatively few openings for themselves, and the openings they did have were for the most part badly taken.

There can be no getting away from the fact that while our defence is as strong, if not stronger, than ever it was, the attack is nothing like as deadly as it was, say, during November and December. As proof of this, I need only mention that while in the fourteen matches which have been played since the beginning of January, we have scored 44 goals for to 13 against, in the sixteen played during the last two months of the year 67 goals were scored for to 18 against.

McInnes and Gallacher were the best of the forwards on Saturday. The halves, as usual, rendered excellent service, and it would be difficult to say which was the most effective of the three. McCartney, perhaps, proved himself the most reliable two first-rate backs, and Williams did all that was required of him in goal in a workmanlike manner. But I sincerely wish that some of the Luton men would not talk so much. It makes things very unpleasant, and often has the effect of setting the referee's back up. Besides, the words that are wafted to the spectators are not always of the most agreeable kind.

All the Loughborough forwards were fairly smart, but none were exceptionally brilliant. Hamilton, was a useful and energetic centre-half, but Thompson and Blackett at back, and Monteith in goal were the mainstay of the Loughborough team. Blackett used to play inside right, and has only taken the back position since Hardy was placed on the injured list. He acquitted himself splendidly, and his speed enabled him to put the stopper on Ekins again and again.

The gate amounted to about £100, and the donations, including the Duke of Bedford's £50, to something like the same sum.

At Northumberland Park on Saturday Millwall beat Tottenham Hotspur by 3 goals to 1, and on Wednesday, at Loughborough, the Arsenal were beaten by four goals to nil. The League table now reads as follows:—

					Goals.	
	Pl'd.	Won	Lost	Dr'n.	For	Agst. Pts
Millwall Athletic..	11	8	1	2	35	21 17
Luton Town.....	10	7	1	2	34	12 15
Woolwich Arsenal	13	6	3	4	27	31 15
Loughborough....	10	5	1	4	24	20 11
Rushden	12	5	1	6	23	31 11
Wellingborough ..	11	3	2	6	16	33 8
Kettering	10	1	3	6	14	21 5
Tottenham Hotspur	9	1	2	6	18	22 4

WOOD GREEN TRACK.—Good Friday. Great professional Cycling and Athletic Festival. Admission, one shilling. (See advt.)

The Luton Stanley made a draw with Bedford Town at two goals all, at Bedford on Saturday. Christ Church and Grosvenor College also met on the College ground on Saturday, a good game resulting, and each side scoring once.