

LUTON v. RUSHDEN.

UNITED LEAGUE POINTS FOR LUTON.

Luton Town entertained the Rushden team on Monday, and administered a decisive beating by five goals to none. When the sides met at Rushden a fortnight previously the margin in the score was so small that it was thought the game on Monday would be closely contested, the reputation of the "Rushers" being to play strongly. The outcome of the meeting was an unexpectedly easy win for the home combination. On this occasion McCartney was prevented from playing by an injury to his leg, while a trial was given to Catlin at centre-forward in lieu of Little, so that the Luton side was not at full strength. The Rushden executive had also made a couple of changes in the visiting eleven. The weather was not very inviting; but there was a fairly good muster of spectators, this being doubtless attributable to the excellent position which the Lutonians occupied in the League.

The start was made fairly punctually, the opponents taking up their positions thus:—

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

Rushden: Goal, George; backs, Ambridge and Lilley; half-backs, Clarke, Bailey, and Dunkley; forwards, Denton and Warner (right), Bedingfield (centre), Sale and Bamford (left).

The referee was Mr. T. W. H. Saywell; linesmen, Messrs. W. Cox (Rushden) and E. F. Walsh (Luton).

The home captain obtained choice of positions, and decided to start from the railway end, this giving him the advantage of a stiff breeze. It at once became apparent that the ground was heavy and rain-sodden, this militating against good football. Luton first showed up prominently, a good bout of passing enabling Ekins to shoot, which he did far above the bar. Rushden came down well and beat Davies, McEwen being compelled to give away a corner to prevent a score. The kick was accurately placed; but nothing came of it, the defence being reliable. At the other end Ekins experienced hard luck, his effort producing a corner which was not turned to account. Again the "Rushers" advanced, Bedingfield finishing up the run with a capable attempt which travelled wide. A good kick by Davies placed Gallacher in possession and the outside right sent in one of his patent hard drives, this being as resultless as those that had preceded it. Another from the foot of the same player was followed up by a beauty from Coupar, while a capital header by Stewart found its way over the bar. Ekins next forced a corner, from which Perrins sent out, while from a swinging centre by the outside left Coupar secured and steered wide of the mark. A somewhat soft one from McInnes induced George to give away a corner, which Docherty failed to improve upon. Taking a nice pass from Catlin, Coupar missed by very little, McInnes being adjudged off-side when he headed in smartly immediately afterwards. A hot one from Ekins found its way across the goal, much to the chagrin of the spectators, who imagined that it was certain to produce the downfall of the visitors' goal. Dunkley was deservedly applauded for an especially smart dodging run in the course of which he beat two or three of his opponents and centred well. George very nearly missed a teasing shot from Coupar, while Ekins, accepting another useful pass from Catlin, once more sent in too loftily. Rushden soon afterwards found their way into the vicinity of the Luton fortress and though Bedingfield was presented with an open goal Williams managed to effect a clearance, this being a first-rate performance. The visitors returned to the attack determinedly and the home defence was severely tested, the clearance which ultimately came being of a somewhat lucky nature. Docherty evoked laughter by knocking the ball down with his hands. Following some scrambling play Catlin sent on to Ekins, who failed to score, though his shot caused George to bestir himself. The operations were not very interesting for some time after this, play being far from scientific and the defence on both sides open to criticism. The attack, indeed, was so smart that both goals had very narrow escapes. Catlin subsequently secured a flag-kick and from a like kick which accrued immediately George saved splendidly from the home forwards. McInnes broke away well and was badly fouled when not far from goal. Loud demands for a penalty-kick were made; but Mr. Saywell contented himself by awarding an ordinary free-kick, which led to Stewart breaking up a stout attack by sending over. Following a further corner George fisted out smartly, Docherty returning with a very fine shot which almost had the effect of opening the score. The referee reversed a decision of the Rushden linesman amidst approving cheering, and then came another corner. It was a further flag-kick that brought the first score to Luton, a big struggle ending in three of the home forwards rushing the ball into the net, Ekins appearing to touch it last. The first foul in the game came just after, Docherty being the victim of the transgression. Williams was hard put to a little later; the ball cannoned off an opponent when he had kicked away and a score seemed certain for the strangers, when the keeper jumped in and cleared cleverly. Clarke was pushed over heavily by Ekins on to his face and the Lutonian was duly punished. Nothing of first-rate importance transpired from now to the midway stage, when the scores were:

LUTON, 1; [RUSHDEN, 0.

Catlin, though doing useful work, had not been a conspicuous success in the centre, and nobody was surprised to find that in the second half he and Coupar changed places. The effect of this re-arrangement soon showed itself in a distinct improvement in the home combination. The visitors started the second moiety in dashing style and it was not long ere Davies gave a corner. Docherty was justly applauded for a couple of admirable exhibitions; indeed, the left half was playing in sterling fashion. Not many minutes had elapsed from the time of the re-start when Catlin wound up some pretty passing by beating George easily. Stimulated by this renewed success the home lot got together and attacked smartly, a corner being obtained. Again the captain demonstrated how loftily he can shoot at times, and so the goal escaped on this occasion. Dunkley caused Williams some anxiety with a fine shot, the home keeper experiencing a deal of difficulty in saving. Following a flag-kick McInnes, who took an accurate pass from his wing-mate, almost succeeded in increasing the home lead. Once more the "whites" (Luton, by the way, were arrayed in white) attacked and another narrow escape of the Rushden citadel was chronicled. A momentary cessation was necessitated by Coupar unintentionally injuring an opponent with his elbow. The visitors were pulled up for fouling, and after a strenuous onslaught the homesters managed to score, Gallacher being the executant with a drive which would have beaten any custodian. Bailey was "chipped" for fouling Couper and received the customary visitation of the referee's displeasure. Perrins checked a determined rush of the visitors, though only by presenting them with a corner, a second flag-kick falling to them at once. Ekins at the other end neatly tricked Bailey and Ambridge and centred so well that Coupar had little difficulty in registering a fourth notch. While in the neighbourhood of the visitors' posts McInnes, taking advantage of a corner kick, hooked in well, George giving another corner in saving, while a third successive flag-kick fell to Gallacher. The locals were now giving the Northants. lot a taste of their quality with a vengeance, the operations being for the most part confined to the Rushden end. A tremendously fast one from Stewart was well saved, and then came a couple more corners. Next Williams was visited; but the visitors were not suffered to remain a great while at this extremity, the home forwards rapidly transferring the scene of the operations once more. Misses were noticed from Gallacher and Stewart, while Catlin failed to accept an easy chance after a corner to Rushden. The inside right atoned for this soon after, however, by once more beating George, this happening after a further tight scrimmage. From a lovely centre by Ekins Catlin headed into the net and was promptly adjudged off-side, this performance being repeated just after, save that the ball did not on this occasion find its way past George. Bedingfield shot well but much too high. Towards the close the visitors appeared to wake up, and so strongly did they attack at one period that three corners were forced in rapid alternation. Try as they would, though, they were unable to effect any change in the appearance of the score, so that when time arrived the Lutonians had preserved their unbeaten record in the United League with the following figures:

LUTON, 5; RUSHDEN, 0.