

THE UNITED LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. MILLWALL.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Luton Town	2 goals.
Millwall	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Williams, goal; McCartney and McEwen, backs; Davies, Stewart, and Docherty, half-backs; Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, Little, and McInnes, forwards.

Millwall—Moore, goal; Robson and Davis, backs; Millar, Morrison, and King, half-backs; Jones, Calvey, Devlin, Murphy, and Geddes, forwards.

Referee, Mr. Dale (Manchester); linesmen, Messrs. Jones (Millwall) and Perrins (Luton).

On Saturday, the Dockers delighted their friends and astonished those who cannot lay any particular claim to friendship with them by making a draw with the Arsenal at two goals all. I am very credibly informed that even that result did not sufficiently represent their merits, as on the play they ought to have won easily, and would have done but for a couple of free kicks, which they foolishly yielded to the enemy. Those free kicks spelt goals, and robbed them of the victory they deserved.

The lustre which once again crowned their efforts made the meeting at Luton on Monday more attractive than it otherwise would have been. Time was, when Millwall were absolutely the best drawing team on the Luton ground, but things have altered since then, and the powers that be attached so little importance to Monday's fixture, that it was not billed to a greater extent than would have been the case with a Reserve match.

But the fifteen hundred and odd persons who found their way to Bury Park were rewarded by seeing a stubbornly contested game, the operations affording a striking contrast to the one-sided show which was given a few weeks ago at Millwall. Evidently the Dockers are looking up, and that they may continue to do so must be the earnest wish of all who knew them in their palmier days.

In the first ten minutes of the game, the visitors put in some exceedingly pretty work, for which they were generously applauded by the on-lookers. They were not quite so dangerous as Luton, however, Gallacher being the first to get in a lovely shot, which Moore just managed to negotiate. A fine bit of work by Coupar followed, and receiving from his pass, Donaldson made a beautiful burst, but took the ball a little wide of the post.

The Millwall backs next cleared well from a free kick by Docherty, but Luton trying again, Gallacher put in a grand cross shot, which appeared to have taken effect. To the surprise of the spectators, the ball came back into play. People who were in the vicinity of the goal assert that the leather hit the post supporting the net, and then bounced out again, but of course I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement.

Several hot scrimmages followed, and Little had hard luck, a shot from him striking the inside of the upright, and rebounding into play. Immediately afterwards, Coupar did not the ball, but was given offside. Still Luton pressed, and a corner was conceded them, but nothing came of it. The kicking of the Millwall backs during these few minutes was something phenomenal, for though the homesters were swarming round the goal, Moore was seldom called upon.

Calvey made a dashing run in response, but Jones, who ultimately received the pass, was off-side, and in addition to that he shot miles too high. Luton ran down again, and Gallacher put in a good one, which Moore caught and threw away. A moment later, Gallacher again swung the ball across, and Little scored with a magnificent shot, which gave the custodian no earthly chance.

chance.

This was after twenty minutes' play. Re-starting from the half-way line, Murphy was making his way in the direction of the Luton goal when he was tripped by Davies, and from a well-placed kick by the redoubtable Wiggy, Calvey headed just wide. In another attempt, Devlin almost succeeded in getting clear, but eventually the Dockers were repulsed, and Luton going to the other end, Gallacher forced a corner, from which nothing resulted.

Another brilliant centre by the Luton outside right led to another corner, and from Docherty's kick, a series of scrimmages occurred, Calvey at last being instrumental in raising the siege. A neck and neck race between Jones and McEwen was followed by the spectators with the closest interest, and Mac, after just about holding his own, finally resorted to a foul.

Davies headed away from the free kick, but the Dockers came again, and Devlin receiving from a free kick, put in a fast low shot, which Williams saved in extraordinary fashion, just getting the side of his foot to it, and thus diverting its course. The ball was then trundled down the field, and Donaldson and Gallacher made a gallant effort, working their way right into the mouth of goal, only to be deprived at the moment when success seemed to be as certain as it was deserved.

An injury to Geddes caused that player to retire for a few minutes, but nothing of note transpired during his absence, and after his return, the play kept pretty even up till half-time, Docherty and McInnes sending in good shots at one end, and Murphy and Jones being responsible for equally good attempts at the other. Thus the interval arrived with Luton leading by a goal to nil.

Soon after play was resumed, the onlookers had the pleasure of seeing a splendid bit of combination, in which the whole of the Luton forwards participated, and McInnes heading to the centre, Coupar transferred to Gallacher, who scored the second goal of the match and the hundredth of the season, with a lightning shot. The performance altogether was one of the best of the match, and fully merited the enthusiastic cheers with which it was greeted.

For some time after this, the homesters were all over the visitors, except the backs, who absolutely refused to give anything away. First there came a couple of corners, both of which were unproductive, then Gallacher sent just over the bar, and Robson and Moore next saved from beautiful shots from Coupar and McInnes respectively, though perhaps I ought to qualify the "shot" from McInnes by saying he kicked with his head.

Another corner proved fruitless, and when, as the result of some effective play by Donaldson and Coupar, McInnes headed through, offside nullified. A big race by Devlin and McCartney was the next item on the programme, McEwen eventually nipping in and bringing it to a premature conclusion, and Luton responding. Gallacher gave McInnes a capital opening, but the shot was badly directed.

What luck there was was certainly dead against the homesters, and this seemed the more noticeable when, from a well-placed corner by Docherty, Stewart headed right into goal. Apparently the ball was well over the line when Moore picked it up, but the referee turned a deaf ear to Luton's entreaty for a goal. While the locals were making their appeal, the Deckers slipped away with the ball, and Geddes got in a grand shot from the corner; but Williams was equal to the emergency. A little later, Geddes had another opportunity, and failed miserably.

In the concluding stages, some good work was shown on either side, and both custodians were called upon to defend their charges, Docherty especially getting very near the mark with a shot which hit the corner of the goal. Try as they would, however, no alteration could be made in the score, and a well-fought game therefore ended in win for Luton by two goals to nil.

The visitors showed unexpectedly good form, Robson and Davis performing in really brilliant style. But for their efforts, the score would have reached much larger proportions. Moore had no possible chance of saving either of the goals, and he could have let one or two others by him without incurring much blame. King was the best of the halves, and Calvey proved himself wonderfully fast and wonderfully clever, but possibly he would have been more effective had he kept to his own place instead of roaming all over the field. Jones played a capital game, but the left wing was rather weak, Geddes, as usual, quite failing to shine against Luton.

Of the homesters, Gallacher perhaps was in the best form, but Coupar and he both combined well, and both did splendid service. Though Donaldson could do nothing in the scoring line, he worked like a nigger, and was always in the thick of the fight, whilst Little, on the other hand, shone near goal and performed less successfully in mid-field. McInnes was as smart and active as ever, and he continues to make a brave show under adverse circumstances.

Stewart was in fine form at centre half, and was admirably supported by both Davies and Docherty. The two Macs played a dashing game, and Williams in goal was unbeatable. The refereeing was smart, and on the whole the affair from start to finish was a very interesting one, though perhaps there was not enough goal-getting to satisfy the voracious appetites of some of the spectators.

The following is the League table up to date—

					Goals		
	Pld.	won	lost	drawn	for	agst.	pts.
Luton.....	11	10	0	1	38	5	20
Woolwich Arsenal	8	5	2	1	21	11	12
Tottenham	10	5	2	3	21	22	12
Kettering	7	4	1	2	15	14	9
Southampton	7	3	2	2	13	8	8
Rushden	8	4	0	4	16	17	8
Millwall	12	2	3	7	17	22	7
Wellingborough ...	11	2	1	8	11	34	5
Loughborough ...	8	0	1	7	4	24	1

Of course, all interest at Luton is now centred in the coming Cup-tie, and nothing but a fine day is needed to ensure a record attendance. Speculation is rife as to what the result will be, and since the Grimsby match, considerable confidence is expressed as to Luton's ability to pull it off. It must not be forgotten, however, that while Luton were vanquishing the Mariners, the Wanderers were at Everton beating the Toffeemen in a Lancashire Cup-tie. That was a splendid performance, though it was robbed of some of its glory by the fact that Everton had a man placed hors de combat ten minutes from the start.

* * *

The following note from "Pearson's Athletic Record" may be of interest:—: Bolton Wanderers do not like coming up to Luton for their English tie. They are on the down grade, and at present have a team which is largely crippled. Somerville got badly kicked last week, J. Miller has his ankle in a terribly weak state; T. Miller has a wrenched knee, Jack and Wright have each damaged legs, and so on. Their greatest reason however, for looking forward to the visit with doubt is that they know most of the men in the Luton team; and, as one of the Wanderers said to a "Record" man the other day, "They are players who know how to play and who know how to go all the way."

* * *

The Luton men are continuing their training at Wheathampstead, and there is every prospect of their turning out perfectly fit. The team, however, will not be definitely picked until Saturday morning, but it is pretty easy to guess what that team will be. I understand that the greater number of the reserved seat tickets for the stand have been disposed of, and those who want to sit with the select had better hurry up. The arrangements for trips from London have fallen through, the Midland Company not having the enterprise to do it on their own account, and the Club directors not being willing to run the risk incurred by guaranteeing three hundred.

* * *

The Arsenal postponed their League match with Rushden on Monday, in order to have the benefit of a full week's training for the Cup-tie at Burnley.

* * *

You can take this as correct:—That a party of twenty, comprising officials and the Bolton Wanderers' team, are making the journey from Lancashire for Saturday's match at Luton. That the gates will be open at one o'clock; kick-off at 2.45. That nine Tottenham officials are coming to "check the gate" in the interests of Bolton. That the Red Cross Band will be present. That shareholders are to be called on for another half-crown per share.

* * *

A match had been arranged for Saturday, between the Cee Springs and Luton Stars; about one o'clock, however, a telegram was received at Leighton, stating that the Lutonians had missed their train. It was expected that they would come on by the next, but they failed to put in an appearance, therefore the people who had assembled on the ground had to go away disappointed.

* * *

1898 NEW GOODS now arriving for the season. Ties, Hats, Shirts and Underwear all of guaranteed quality and carefully selected designs. City prices and City Styles at S. Bassett's, 28, Wellington-street.—[ADVT.]

* * *

A meeting of the Luton and District League was held on Tuesday evening, under the presidency of Mr. Tofield. There were two protests before the meeting, but neither of them was upheld. Caddington alleged that their game with the Stars was finished in darkness, but the referee (Mr. D. Dockrill) attended, and said he could see, and the meeting took his view of the matter. Houghton Regis complained that the colours of the Dunstable Reserves were not right, and that short time was played in the match. The referee (Mr. W. Andrews) said he could distinguish the colours, and that the teams played full time. Leagrave wrote intimating that they would withdraw from the League, but it was decided to request them to reconsider their decision, and remain, and it was understood that a meeting would be called to consider the matter. The referees for the month of February were appointed.