

LUTON TOWN v. WALSALL.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town 6 goals.

Walsall nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Williams, goal; Docherty and McEwen, backs; Perrins, Stewart and Birch, half-backs; Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, Little and McInnes, forwards.

Walsall: Bunyan, goal; Peers and C. L. Aston, backs; Wilks, Caesar Jenkyns and Taggarts, half-backs; Hodson, Aston, Devey, Johnson and Griffin, forwards.

Referee, Mr. Beardsley (Plumstead).

* * *

Ever since Luton were so badly beaten at Walsall, there has been "a sort of a kind of a" feeling that matters would be to some extent adjusted when the Saddlers paid the return visit. At least, that feeling prevailed up to Friday evening, but when it became known that in addition to Ekins, McCartney and Davies would be unable to play, things assumed a different aspect, and it was felt that defeat and not victory was the more to be expected.

* * *

Walsall, too, had been doing particularly well in their recent matches, their games away from home against some of the strongest teams in the League having been lost by only a goal. Perhaps it was the fear of defeat which kept the people away from the Bury Park on Saturday, for though the day was brilliantly fine, the attendance did not exceed a couple of thousand.

* * *

I am more inclined to think, however, that the wretched amount of patronage bestowed on the fixture was due to the miserably inadequate arrangements for advertising the affair. This is a subject I have harped upon until I am thoroughly sick of the whole business, and I can only say that if an ordinary venture were conducted on the same lines, the proprietor would speedily find himself under the necessity of making the acquaintance of the Official Receiver.

* * *

Devey set the ball rolling punctually at three o'clock, and at first it seemed that the worst fears of the local people were likely to be realised. The opening exchanges were very tame, and the visitors had slightly the best of matters. Then a grand run on the Luton left and a centre by McInnes provoked a burst of applause, which was renewed when Stewart sent in a beautiful shot, obliging Bunyan to give a corner.

* * *

Gallacher placed nicely, McInnes headed in, and after a bit of a scrimmage, the ball was hustled through. Just prior to this, a dirty bit of business by Caesar Jenkyns, McInnes being the victim, called forth loud expressions of disapproval, and some very uncomplimentary things were said. The visitors next made an incursion, but Luton again assumed the aggressive, and Little putting in a fine middle, Coupar was given offside, though there were two, if not three, men between him and the goalkeeper.

* * *

Walsall showed a decided inclination to indulge in rough tactics, and McInnes was very badly fouled by Peers just outside the twelve yards' line. Nothing came of the free kick, but in the melee, Peers sustained some damage to his nether garments, and had to retire to the dressing room to change.

* * *

Shortly after this, Docherty got in a fine return, and Donaldson scored with a magnificent shot, but to the intense disgust of the spectators, Mr. Beardsley disallowed the goal, after consulting only one of the linesmen. Dissatisfaction with Mr. Beardsley's decisions had been increasing almost from the kick-off, and the refusal to allow this goal was the culminating point, the consequence being that the officials were afterwards subjected to a good deal of badgering by the crowd.

* * *

Another goal was not long in coming, however.

the crowd.

Another goal was not long in coming, however, for after Johnson had headed over the Luton crossbar from a centre by Hodson, the homesters made tracks for the Walsall citadel, and Donaldson was fouled. Perrins' free kick was a beauty, taking precisely the right elevation, and skimming into the goal off Stewart's head.

A corner for the Saddlers was the next thing of note, but Little headed away, and Donaldson almost made a clear opening from a pass by McInnes. A foul against McEwen gave the visitors another chance, but Docherty relieved the pressure, and Gallacher went away at a rare bat. Just as he was closing into goal, however, he was fouled by both Taggarts and Aston, and from the penalty awarded, Stewart easily registered a third goal.

Twice Walsall succeeded in getting in the vicinity of the home goal, but were then driven back, and Little was responsible for a lovely shot, which Bunyan saved just under the bar, having to give a corner. Nothing resulted from this, and Coupar and Gallacher both sent behind from further attempts, but then Birch put to the front again, and Stewart scored goal number four with a lightning shot.

Play from now up to the interval was about evenly divided, and Williams once brought off a good save to a shot from Johnson. Luton also threatened danger two or three times, but there was no alteration in the score when the teams crossed over. Luton pressed for a time after the restart, but subsequently slowed down considerably, apparently being satisfied with the lead they had obtained.

They were always a bit too clever for the visitors, but far too much dribbling was indulged in for goal-getting purposes. I don't know that the spectators had any right to complain, because dribbling and short-passing make very pretty football, and when goals are not urgently needed, there is really no reason why the players should not go in for a little artistic work.

Now and then, Walsall broke away, and Williams had two or three smart shots to save, Devey especially sending a very difficult one, but Dick did his work with an easy assurance which was enough to take the heart out of the opposing forwards. Luton, on their part, were not altogether content with holding their adversaries in check. Once there was a severe struggle in the mouth of the Walsall goal, Little and McInnes also tested Bunyan with good shots, and Gallacher gave him so warm a handful that he was obliged to concede a corner.

At length, after half-an-hour's play, Little did the trick with a very fast shot, which went through off Peers. The spectators were highly delighted with this, as it just equalised matters so far as the two matches were concerned. A good bit of play by Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, and Stewart, was the next feature, the ball being taken right down the field without a Walsall man touching it, but Gallacher's shot went wide of the mark.

We had just made up our minds that all was over, as regarded the scoring, when Birch put in a good centre, and Little, letting fly with a terrific drive, Bunyan handled the ball, and then let it slip through his legs into goal. Thus Luton fully avenged their Walsall defeat, and left off with a goal to the good.

There's no mistake about it, taking the game all through, Luton performed very finely indeed. I have already said that Williams did his bit in rare style, but the surprise of the match was the excellent form shown by Docherty at back. He and McEwen played up splendidly, tackling well and kicking cleanly, and the only time they were beaten was when Devey got through.

The half-backs also showed to advantage. Birch did his work well, Stewart was in capital form, and Perrins, though naturally a little unsteady at first, more than justified his inclusion in the team. My own opinion is that Perrins is just the man wanted in our defence, owing to his speed. Davies has undoubtedly played some splendid games at half-back, but nature

clearly built him for a back, just as she meant McEwen, grand a back as he is, for a half-back.

* * *

As to the forwards, Donaldson, Coupar, and Gallacher all played up with great spirit and determination, and with great success, in spite of the fact that none of the goals allowed came from that quarter. McInnes was as smart and irrepressible as ever, and Little showed vastly improved form, his shooting being especially good.

* * *

Bunyan, in goal, performed well for the visitors, and the backs played a fine game, Peers doing a heap of work. Unfortunately he resorted to very shady tactics at times, and was the recipient of a caution on that account. Jenkyns was quite out of it in the first half, but came on better in the second, and the other halves proved themselves good workers, but not good feeders. Devey, perhaps, showed best form among the forwards, though all were fairly smart.

* * *

Mr. Beardsley was certainly guilty of many sins, both of omission and commission, in the first quarter of an hour or so, but subsequently he did very much better.

* * *