

UNITED LEAGUE.

LUTON v. WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

HONOURS DIVIDED.

The Town club journeyed to Plumstead on Monday with only moderate hopes of success, as the forward line had to be re-arranged wholesale owing to Coupar's being unfit. Consequently the result came somewhat as a pleasant surprise, and the draw was highly satisfactory, for it makes Luton's championship of the United League practically assured.

The low-lying Manor Field was on this occasion basking in sunshine and the dense fog, which cut short the previous game, was out of sight and mind. The crowd numbered about 1,500, and Mr. Peters, of Kettering, made a start at 3 15 p.m. with the following teams:

Luton: Williams; McCartney and McEwen; Davies, Stewart and Docherty; Gallacher, Little, Donaldson, McInnes and Durrant.

Arsenal: Ord; McAuley and McConnell; Haywood, Farrell and Anderson; Brock, McGeoch, Hunt, Hannah and White.

The home side kicked off and Gallacher at once gave the Arsenal backs some anxiety, Donaldson then shooting wide. Ord saved from Little and McConnell cleared a beauty from McInnes. The visitors made a promising start, indeed, and were decidedly the cleverer team. The Woolwich right next made a rush and Williams cleared from Hannah. Donaldson was working like a horse and was unscrupulously fouled by his opponents. Mr. Peters ultimately penalised Haywood, but, on the whole, was woefully blind to the Arsenal's sins.

After White had missed badly, Gallacher got across a fine centre and Durrant scored an offside goal. The Luton lad had had few chances up to the present but gained confidence as the game proceeded, doing some very useful work at times. McAuley, however, adopted the unsportsmanlike tactics of placing him frequently offside. After Luton had shown some good defence, Gallacher and Donaldson dribbled through to within a few yards of Ord, but "Billy" aimed too high. A foul was given against McEwen for innocently touching an opponent's shoulder, but McAuley placed the free-kick poorly and nothing resulted.

Luton replied smartly, and after Ord had saved a "header" from Little, Stewart sent in a terrific shot which must have scored had not one of the backs fisted the ball out of goal. Of course, a penalty was given, and though Ord came out and made a frantic dive as Davies took the kick, Luton easily scored No. 1 after 32 minutes' play. This was good business for Luton and brightened up a rather dull game considerably.

The Arsenal made a big effort to equalise and their supporters roared "Goal!" as Brock got clear, though palpably offside, but Williams saved his shot grandly. McEwen averted danger from a corner and the Luton back division had a very busy time. Just 3 minutes before the interval, McAuley placed a foul against Docherty well into goal-mouth and a desperate scrimmage followed. In the excitement, Stewart seemed to kick into his own goal, Williams partially saving, but, anyhow, the crowd soon saw the ball in the far corner of the net, and rejoiced accordingly. Half-time score:

LUTON	..	..	..	1 goal
ARSENAL	..	..	..	1 goal

So far Luton had fared well, and their prospects improved considerably when, directly after crossing over, Durrant forced a corner, and from Docherty's flag-kick cleverly succeeded in scoring No. 2. This was an "eye-opener" for the Arsenal, and their supporters became rather worried as to the outcome. Haywood was playing a very rough game, and fouled McInnes badly. Donaldson was penalised for some unknown offence, and from hands against

Anderson, the visitors had a good opportunity. By dashing play, McInnes got absolutely clear, but the backs just managed to spoil his shot.

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A number of free-kicks made the exchanges rather monotonous, but the Arsenal were working very hard. Farrell put in a tremendous shot, which luckily rebounded, and from a corner the Woolwich men struck the cross-bar. For a time, Luton did some kicking out, and the play became vigorous. Mr. Peters, however, was very unfair in his decisions, the slightest infringement by Luton being punished, while the Arsenal were permitted to foul with impunity. A deliberate foul by Haywood on Durrant within the 12 yards' line passed altogether unnoticed !

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Things were now looking hopeless for the Arsenal, and when Docherty walked leisurely to the touch-line to throw in, the crowd hooted derisively. Gallacher got in a fine run, which was checked in the nick of time. Mr. Peters made another blunder in giving "hands" against McEwen when Brock had kicked the ball straight upon his chest, and even some of Plumstead folk protested. For a while, Luton pressed, but the Arsenal made a big rush in the last 5 minutes. Instead of passing back to McCartney, who was ready, Stewart needlessly gave a corner, and from this the Arsenal equalised, the result being :—

LUTON	..	..	..	2 goals
ARSENAL	..	..	..	2 ,,

NOTES.

Luton went to Plumstead on Monday with a doubtful sort of forward rank, and before the game most of us were not very sanguine about winning. Indeed, a draw was contemplated with equanimity, so that, after all, the team did very well, and we all came back satisfied. On the play, however, the result was disappointing, for when everything pointed to a certain victory for Luton, the Arsenal just managed to draw level through an unfortunate mistake by Stewart.

The Woolwich Reds always play up desperately until the last minute, and it was this that saved them from defeat. What clever football was seen in a rather dull match came from Luton, but the Arsenal worked much harder in the second half, when several of the Luton men, Stewart especially, seemed "fagged." But, of course, we must make allowances for the great struggle against Newcastle.

The referee treated the visitors very unfairly, and while penalising Luton for the merest technicalities, passed over unnoticed some glaring fouls by the Arsenal, Haywood being a conspicuous offender. There is no need for individual comment on the players. A special word, however, is due to Durrant, a local lad, who deserves every encouragement. It was no small thing to give him his first trial in such an important match, but he did splendidly, though playing against the stronger part of the Woolwich back division.

In Coupar's place, Little played well in the first half, though not so effectively afterwards, and Donaldson exhibited his usual dash, enduring without murmur a wonderful amount of knocks and buffetting. Both McInnes and Gallacher were consistently hard workers. Though occasionally taxed by the heavy rushes of the Arsenal forwards, the Luton defence did well all round, with no special brilliance.

The Arsenal team was nothing great, and indeed a prominent Woolwich shareholder was lamenting to me that the team is really no better than two years ago, despite their improved position in the Second League. For class football my informant unhesitatingly gave the palm to Luton, and I think he is right. On Monday's form no one would have dreamt in their wildest moments that such a team had scored 5 goals to nil against Luton in two successive League games. I think the only man worth mentioning on Monday was McAuley at back.

Luton are now almost certain champions of the United League. The table below shows that we have only two more games to play (Arsenal home and Loughborough away), and have scored 24 points out of a possible 28, two being dropped at Kettering, and one each at Plumstead and Tottenham. The Arsenal are 10 points behind, but have 6 more games to play, so that if Luton lost both their remaining matches and the Arsenal won all theirs, the Woolwich men would be two points ahead at the end of the season. But I think that is hardly possible, as the Arsenal have yet to visit Kettering, Tottenham, Southampton and Luton, and play Loughborough and Wellingborough at home. So let us pride ourselves on our big lead.