

LUTON DEFEAT WELLINGBOROUGH.

HARD GAME FOR LEAGUE POINTS.

The United League games with Wellingborough are the only two which have yet been played by Luton. The outcome has been that four League points and six goals to none have been obtained in the two encounters. The scoring is not so heavy as last season on the part of Luton, a fact which is attributable in large measure to the undoubted improvement which has been effected in the calibre of the Wellingborough side. That the team is considerably stronger than last season was demonstrated when the men visited Luton a fortnight ago, and yet further proof was afforded on Monday, when the game was a hard-fought one. The Wellingburians had visited Southampton on the Saturday and had tasted defeat. On the Luton side Docherty and McCartney were on the injured list and so E. Stonebridge (of the Reserves) was pressed into service and made the journey to Wellingborough, Ekins resuming at outside left in lieu of Little. The players travelled by the 11.56 Midland train, and consequently had some time to wait in Wellingborough before the match started.

There was only a small crowd when the game commenced, large numbers of persons having been attracted by the holding of Rushden feast and a game in the Midland League between Rushden and Kettering. The sides lined up thus:—

Wellingborough: Goal, Robinson; backs, Lewis and Gaiter; half-backs, A. J. Murrell A. J. Martin, and Elson; forwards, Walker and Barker (right), Murray (centre), Davis and Mellor (left).

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

Referee: Mr. Rudkin (Loughborough); Luton linesman, Mr. T. Little.

Losing the toss, Luton faced the sun, this being exactly the same commencement as in the corresponding game last season. A foul against the visitors was awarded early, a decision being given against Ekins for off-side immediately after when that player accepted a pass from Gallacher. The homesters advanced in good order; but Davies was successful in checking them, the right back repeating this performance just later. The locals were persistent, and in a minute or two the ball found its way over the Luton line. Next the "stripes" got away and from a centre by Gallacher Gaiter miskicked, while McInnes, with the goal at his mercy, tamely headed over. Clark got clear cleverly

and shot hard, though a trifle wide. Gallacher was the victim of the undue attentions of his foemen, the home side being penalised in consequence. Davies took the kick and McInnes was adjudged off-side on receiving the ball, though how the referee could have come to such a conclusion puzzled many of the spectators, for there were at least three men between the left-winger and the goal. This, of course, was a bad mistake. Davies was deservedly punished for hacking an opponent when close to goal, Clark clearing from the free-kick. A foul on McInnes was noted by the responsible official; but the visitors did not obtain much advantage from the free-kick. Williams cleared finely from Martin. The home lot again came up in good style; but the strangers' defence was always superior to the Wellingborough attack, and so the latter was repeatedly beaten back. A foul on Coupar was duly punished. Thereafter Williams kicked out from goal, and Coupar was once more roughly treated. McEwen jumped in in the nick of time and stemmed a great rush by the home forwards, this being the best run of the day. Williams saved grandly from the Wellingborough left wing, while at the other end the Luton forwards were punished for fouling Robinson. Coupar was similarly penalised; but the visitors rallied to the attack and forced a corner, which was well placed but did not prove productive. Ekins was hereabouts presented with a capital chance of scoring; but he shot outside very weakly. Williams saved well from another hot attack, and the homesters followed up with a determined onslaught which continued for an appreciable space of time. At length neat play by the Luton right enabled the siege to be raised. Clark obtained possession excellently and shot very hard, though without success. Davies and McEwen got in one another's way just now, with the result that the "blues" very nearly scored. A foul against the locals did not deter them, for they were soon in the Luton half once more, this time the ball finding its way over the bar. A couple of corners accrued to the Wellingburians and from the second of these Williams effected a capital clearance. Clark obtained possession smartly; but Gaiter robbed him and kicked into touch. Soon afterwards Stewart sent in well, Robinson banged the ball on to Lewis with the result that it rebounded and found its way into the net. This was a fluky goal and very hard luck for the locals. Just afterwards Williams saved a beauty at the cost of a corner, and a big struggle ensued, some difficulty being experienced by the Luton defenders in getting the ball away. The visitors had a splendid opening presented to them; but none of the forwards were up, and so the chance passed without being utilised. Half-time arrived with the lead in favour of Luton with the score standing thus:

LUTON 1; WELLINGBOROUGH, 0.

Early in the second moiety one of the home halves gave a smart exhibition, though he finally sent out very tamely. Luton went away at a good pace, off-side against McInnes eventually putting the stopper on. The Wellingborough forwards managed to burst through and to find themselves in the enviable position of being unhampered close to Williams's charge; but to the general amazement the opportunity of scoring was not taken advantage of, the leather finding its way out of play. Walker was responsible for an attempt which soared skyward, and then the home lot were pulled up for tripping McInnes, this being equalised by a foul against Coupar. From a throw-in danger threatened the Lutonians, Stewart clearing admirably. Ekins received a good pass from the right and seemed to be almost certain to score, when he sent out wildly. At the leaders' end a like performance was witnessed. From a centre by Ekins Gallacher shot hard and when the ball had rebounded into play Clark pounced on it and sent in an attempt which had no better result than to strike the bar and so go out of play. The effort, however, was one of the best of the day. Gallacher was nastily fouled, though without the referee perceiving the offence, following which Clark ran the ball out. Gallacher had his revenge shortly afterwards by scoring splendidly from a pass by Ekins. A foul on Coupar was visited in the customary fashion, and later on McInnes shot capitally when he had received from Ekins. Clark gave a pretty exhibition and Coupar atoned for some fouling by becoming responsible for a well-intentioned shot. A corner was forced by Ekins, McInnes subsequently sending behind the goal-line. Walker sent wide of the mark, following which Gallacher gave a grand exhibition, beating Gaiter and centreing brilliantly. Unfortunately nobody was close enough up to take advantage of the pass. Clark again distinguished himself by putting in a useful shot, while Stonebridge cleared well, this being one of the few occasions during the game when the left half showed to advantage. Davies was out-manceuvred by an opponent; the back obviously thought that the ball had gone over the line, but it was not the case and the home left winger promptly swung it into the centre. McInnes was luckily thereabouts, and so no disastrous consequences followed. The homesters once more pressed strenuously, though with the same result as formerly and Barker followed up by sending just over the cross-bar. Robinson dealt neatly with a long-range shot from one of the leaders and he repeated this soon afterwards. Gallacher shot very wide when it seemed certain that he must score, the goal being quite open. The homesters forced Davies to concede a corner, and another flag-kick was given by Perrins in attempting to clear. Williams saved magnificently on three occasions, the shots being all of a taxing character. Again the Wellingborough forwards came with a will and McEwen headed at the expense of a corner, from which Williams cleared finely. A foul on McInnes was succeeded by yet another corner off McEwen. Maintaining the pressure the locals forced a further corner; but the Luton defence was impenetrable. As the end approached the Wellingburians struggled gamely to better their position, though without avail, the visitors defending magnificently. The result of a finely-fought contest was as follows:

LUTON, 2; WELLINGBOROUGH, 0.