



## Opening of the Football Season.

LUTON v. WELLINGBOROUGH.

A DRAWN GAME.

Great interest was taken in the first appearance of the new Luton Town football club yesterday (Thursday) afternoon, in a United League game against Wellingborough. The weather was most favourable, and about 2,000 spectators were present. The teams were:

*Luton*—Perkins; Moore and H. Williams; C. Ford, Clarke, and Crump; Durrant, Hewitt, W. G. Ford, McInnes, and Ekins.

*Wellingborough*—Shawley; Blackburn and Robson; Murrell, Martin, and Davis; Hall, A. Williams, Scrivener, Robinson, and Hyde.

Mr. J. Stark, of London, the referee, made the start punctually at 5 o'clock, Kemplay taking the line for Luton.

Wellingborough won the toss, but there was nothing in it. Play soon became lively, and ruled almost entirely in Luton's favour, but the Wellingborough defence was smart. Hewitt was early conspicuous, and Durrant sent in a clinking centre, which Shawley saved. The visitors were hard pressed for some time, and Clarke narrowly missed with a terrific drive, which produced the first corner.

Durrant placed splendidly, and Hewitt headed twice in quick succession into the Wellingborough goal, but the keeper was on the alert and threw away cleverly. At last, Wellingborough had a turn, and Davis sent in a hard shot, which Moore cleared, but Perkins had to save from amid a bunch of Northants' forwards directly afterwards.

Play became more even, and the visitors were contesting every inch of ground. A low shot from McInnes grazed the post and went behind off Shawley, but the corner was unproductive. A nice pass from McInnes gave Ekins a run, but George was ruled offside, and "Mac" then made a couple of disappointing misses.

A grand save was made by Perkins from Hall, Wellingborough afterwards getting a corner, and the Luton custodian cleared brilliantly at close quarters from Scrivener. The visitors' right wing made another quick dash, but Hyde headed across goal behind. When Luton did attack, their forwards lacked sting and luck. W. G. Ford shot too high within only a dozen yards, and Clarke then struck the side of the net.

Thanks to McInnes, Luton forced another corner, and directly afterwards Clarke was fouled, but the free-kick availed Luton nothing. Another rush was made by the visitors' forwards, and Crump had to pass back to Perkins. For a while the Wellingborough Williams and Hewitt were off the field owing to injury. At last, Luton had a fine opening, but Durrant centred right across goal close in, and McInnes sent the ball over the bar, W. J. Ford wringing

his hands in despair. Just on half-time, the visitors retaliated briskly, and from a free-kick for off-side, Perkins had to fist away, and Hall just missed. After another corner to Luton, Williams just cleared from Robinson, who had the ball at his toe.

INTERVAL, NO SCORE.

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On changing ends Durrant shot right across goal. Within three minutes of re-starting, C. Ford "skied" the ball across near his own goal, Scrivener rushed up, and Perkins only partially clearing, Hall scored No. 1 for Wellingborough with a high shot. Luton worked hard to get on terms, and forced four corners in succession, Shawley just kicking out a beauty from Durrant and Clark aiming at the moon.

W. G. Ford had hard luck in having a splendid attempt spoilt by a "cannon," and then 10 minutes after the first score, tremendous enthusiasm was caused by Hewitt's equalising for Luton, with a grand low shot from Durrant's pass. Shawley had no earthly chance of saving. Cheered on by the crowd, both teams forced the game, and Perkins made a marvellous save when prostrate in his goal.

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The game continued to be most exciting, and it was wonderful how the players endured the hot pace. From a centre by Hall, Hyde netted the ball just as the whistle blew "offside," and Ekins had a similar fate. Durrant was playing inside, and Hewitt, from the wing, nearly grazed the cross-bar. Despite two more corners, Luton could not penetrate the Wellingboro' defence. After a foul on Ekins, Shawley kicked out a shot from Durrant, while Perkins cleared well a difficult high shot. "Hands" against Clark spoilt another corner and the Luton goal was threatened by a foul against Williams, but, happily, Perkins saved. The end came

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## NOTES.

"Not bad, but not so good as I expected" will be the verdict of most Luton football enthusiasts on yesterday's game. It is a curious coincidence that last year's season commenced with a disappointing draw of 1-1 against Burslem Port Vale and this was no better performance than yesterday's, so there is not much ground for grumbling on that comparison. But when Wellingborough visited Luton last year, they lost by 4-0.

It was a very fast and exciting game. Of course, the dry ground favoured a lively pace, and both teams had a trying preliminary couter. Brilliant combination was not to be expected and play was rather scrambling at times, but all 22 men strained every nerve for victory.

Wellingborough have vastly improved on last season's eleven. Only the halves remain of the old team, and I certainly think their new line of forwards the best they have ever secured. Hall hails from Lincoln, Williams from West Bromwich Reserves, Scrivener from a Birmingham club, Robinson from Finedon, and Hyde is an old Grimsby player. They showed surprisingly good combination for so early in the season, and were very fast. In goal, they have a smart new man in Shawley, who hails from a junior local club at Harrowden. Robson well maintained his Millwall form, and had a sound partner in Blackburn, late of the famous Rovers of that ilk.

Calculating by the number of corners, Luton ought to have won easily, but no one will deny that Wellingborough made a splendid contest of the game. I was sorry to see Ekins entirely "off," but Hewitt and Durrant were most successful on the right, the old Burslem man doing a wonderful amount of clever work. The local right-winger gave a highly creditable exhibition, and his centres were generally accurate.

W. G. Ford worked hard in the centre but had no luck in shooting and needs to get more accustomed to his wings. Considering the weakness of his partner, McInnes did finely. For combination, however, the visitors' five were certainly superior.

The halves did most of what was required of them and I hope to see Crump much more effective. The backs were outshone by the Wellingborough pair but did many good things, and will, doubtless, improve. Neither goalkeeper could have saved the goals scored, and Perkins was very safe.

It would be fair to wait until the Woolwich and Tottenham matches are over before pronouncing any decisive criticism on the new team, and one can only hope for the best, at present.