

THE UNITED LEAGUE.]

LUTON TOWN v. BRIGHTON UNITED.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Brighton United 5 goals.

Luton Town 3 goals.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Perkins, goal; Clarke and Moore, backs; C. Ford, Ralley, and Hewitt, half-backs; Durrant, McInnes, W. Ford, Brock, and Ekins, forwards.

Brighton—Bullimier, goal; Carter and Caldwell, backs; Low, Farrell, and Longair, half-backs; Davidson, McLeod, McArthur, Willock, and Malloch, forwards.

Referee, Mr. G. West, Kettering.

The reverses which Luton have recently sustained had a very appreciable effect on Monday's gate, not more than six or seven hundred spectators putting in an appearance. Disasters seem to be crowding one on the other, and what with the indifferent display of some of the men who are sound in wind and limb, and the incapacity of those who are not, things are coming to a pretty pass. Dow, Crump, Kemplay, and of course Williams, were all unable to turn out against Brighton, and I am not sure that Sharp was not kept out from the same cause.

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Now to crown all Clarke has met with a serious accident. Precisely how it happened I am not in a position to say. Just before the finish of the first half, Clarke and Farrell came into contact, the Luton man being on the ground and Farrell keeping his feet. As Farrell left Clarke, the latter cried out in pain, and as there had been a fouling touch only a minute earlier, it was assumed by the spectators that the injury had been deliberately inflicted, and there were loud and angry demands for the Brightonian to be turned off the field.

It is difficult to say whether there was any justification for the execration of the onlookers, but it is certain that a good deal of roughness had been shown by the visitors, and for this the referee and the spectators themselves were largely to blame. There is nothing more likely to stir up ill feeling than a constant nagging of the players, and I am sorry a good deal of this on Monday emanated from persons who ought to have set a better example. But when once the ill-feeling became manifest, then the referee should have acted with some firmness, and this was just where Mr. West failed.

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The game itself does not call for a very long description. Luton had the best of matters at the start, and Charlie Ford sent in a beautiful shot, which was well saved by the custodian. Durrant next got right clear, but shot tamely, and Bullimier easily disposed of it. Brock then forced his way through, but once again the shooting was weak. He, however, headed in beautifully from a centre by Durrant, and Durrant followed on by forcing a corner, but it was all without avail.

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So far Luton had had practically all the play, but Brighton it was who scored. And this is how it happened. Moore had the misfortune to head the ball in the wrong direction, and from the corner which was thus conceded, Davidson placed and McArthur headed a splendid goal. This rather took the heart out of the homesters, and the visitors were soon in the neighbourhood of the Luton goal again, where Moore had to work desperately hard to clear. Soon afterwards, Clarke in trying to stop a rush on the left fell down, but Perkins ran out and cleared.

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Luton replied with some vigour, and had very hard lines in not equalising, a shot from McInnes being knocked against the bar by Bullimier, who then luckily cleared before a Lutonian reached the spot. The homesters got away again, but were given offside in front of goal, a decision which was more than questionable. Indeed a good many thought the referee was under the impression that the ball had gone behind when he blew his whistle, and then gave offside to cover his mistake. Another sin of omission on the part of the official was the means of giving Brighton their second goal, Davidson not being pulled up for offside when it was very clear that he was so, and the result was that a centre was put in from that wing from which McArthur scored a beautiful goal. A minute or two later they were not quite so lucky, Davidson having an open goal, after Perkins had run out and failed to clear, and then only hitting the post.

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At the other end D

At the other end Durrant made a fine run, but was twice deliberately held by Longair, the second time within the twelve-yards' line, and there were loud appeals for a penalty. The referee, however, awarded a free kick for the first foul, and this was not turned to account. Fouls followed in quick succession against Low, Caldwell, and Farrell, and then occurred the unfortunate accident to which I have referred, and as a result of which Clarke had to be carried off the field. After this, McInnes came within an ace of scoring from a centre by Ekins, and at the other end Perkins twice saved by the skin of the teeth, as it were, the interval arriving with Brighton leading by two goals to nil.

In the second half William Ford went centre-half, and it was largely owing to the life that he infused into the game in that position that Luton were able to do a good deal of the pressing. The homesters soon forced a corner, and then from a free kick Moore hit the bar with a bouncing shot, the ball dropping in front of goal and no one being able to give it the finishing touch. From a well-placed corner by Hewitt, however, Durrant scored with a very neat shot. Encouraged by their success and by the cheers of their supporters, Luton continued on the aggressive for some time, two or three corners falling to their share, but at length the visitors took up the running again, and after Perkins had made several capital saves he had the misfortune to present the Brightonians with a very soft goal. He caught the ball, and in attempting to throw it away let it slip from his hands into the net.

This seemed to settle the verdict, and the more so as almost immediately McArthur, who was palpably offside, was allowed to score another goal. But Luton were not done with yet. A corner was first of all tried without effect, and then William Ford was responsible for a grand effort, robbing two men in fine style and then putting in a shot which Brock was able to convert, owing to the custodian being unsuccessful in clearing. Brighton made a very spirited response, and Perkins brought off some remarkably lucky saves, at one time bringing the ball out from somewhere suspiciously near the inside of the goal. At last Davidson beat Moore and put in a centre from which Willock scored a fifth goal.

Time was now getting on, and the game seemed practically over, when a surprise came in the way of a penalty, Low, I think it was, handling the ball from a shot by Hewitt. W. Ford was entrusted with the kick, and he made no mistake. Luton put in one more effort, but it was fruitless, and the game ended in a victory for the visitors by five goals to three. On the whole they perhaps deserved their win, for they were a wonderfully well-balanced eleven, and it was a pity their rough tactics in the first half should have made the proceedings so unpleasant. The forwards particularly were a very smart lot.

The Luton men, as was to be expected under

the circumstances, played a very ragged game but strangely enough, they seemed to do better with only ten men than with the full complement. Perkins, apart from his fatal mistake, did some good work, but the back play was a bit erratic. Ralley showed good judgment, both at centre-half and when he took Clarke's place at back, but he seemed to be lacking in pace. C. Ford and Hewitt both performed better than on their last appearance, but were still apt to attempt too much, and in the early part of the game Ford came into painful contact with Hewitt on the latter's side of the field. The forwards gave only a moderate exhibition.