

THE UNITED LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. MILLWALL.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Millwall 2 goals.

Luton Town 1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Perkins; Dow and Moore; C. Ford, Ratley and Crump; Durrant, W. Ford, Kemplay, Boulwood and Dunmock.

Millwall: Allan; Burgess and Davis; Morrison, Stewart and Millar; Crawford, Calvey, Hill, Turnbull and Geddes.

Referee, Mr. A. Peters, Kettering.

Time was when a visit from the illustrious Dockers would have attracted a big crowd to the Luton ground, but on Monday there were never more than a thousand persons present, despite the very favourable weather. During the first part of the game it seemed that even those would not get much of a show for their money, but subsequently, when the battle resolved itself into one between Millwall and Perkins, the play became so intensely exciting that the spectators were roused to a high pitch of enthusiasm, surpassing anything seen on the Luton ground for many a long day.

Spend your money to the best advantage, by purchasing your boots and shoes at Freeman, Hardy and Willis, 38, George-street, Luton, the largest boot makers in the kingdom. New goods for present season. See windows and compare prices.—[ADVT.]

In the opening stages, there was nothing to indicate what was in store, Luton giving a moderate display and the Dockers not exerting themselves to any great extent. The visitors, who were favoured with the wind, certainly had most of the game, but the pressure was not continuous. Luton made two or three attempts, but the first dangerous shot was at the other end, where Calvey, from a throw-in, got in a beauty, which Perkins saved. A miss by Dow next gave Geddes a rare opening, but his shot went the wrong side of the net, to the great delight of the crowd, who did not forget to let Alfred know of it.

Perkins had to save a good many times after this, but at last he was beaten in a decidedly unsatisfactory way, Davis placing from a free kick, and Crawford, who was manifestly offside, putting in a shot which Perkins, scarcely knowing whether to stop it, or not, let through. The goal, however, was given. Crawford was very rightly given offside a number of times after this, but unfortunately these decisions did not remedy the original mistake.

For a time, Luton fared a bit better, chiefly through the instrumentality of Dow, who defended with great vigour and success, but the forward play had no sting in it, and the only noticeable shot was one from Boutwood. Then the Dockers came again, and some sally work ensued in the vicinity of the Luton goal, but Perkins managed to prevent any further damage, though one shot struck the crossbar. The teams therefore crossed over with Millwall leading by a goal to nil.

Luton opened the second half in rather better style, but again their efforts were very faulty near goal. Millwall retaliated, and a magnificent shot from Calvey was turned round the post by Perkins, amid approving shouts of "Good old Liverpool." Then Luton got going once more, and this time to better purpose, Crump following on a centre by C. Ford with a grand shot, which was well saved by Allan. Dimmock next got in a good one, and then the Dockers had a rare slice of luck, a tremendous drive from Ralley rebounding off Davis, who happened to be standing under the crossbar. Directly afterwards, however, a foul was given against the custodian, apparently for carrying the ball in order to avoid Kemplay, and from this Dow scored with a clinking shot which just touched one of the players in transit.

This put the Dockers on their mettle, and the rest of the game was practically a fight between Perkins and the Millwall team. The custodian had no sooner saved from a header following upon a centre by Morrison, than he had to do ditto to a similar one from Turnbull, and the celerity with which he got rid of the ball was marvellous. Then came a smart low drive from Turnbull, and this Perkins saved, whilst another shot cannoned off him and went behind. Perkins punched away from Crawford's corner-kick, and then saved in rapid succession from Crawford, Calvey and Turnbull. Another hot shot from Morrison rebounded off O. Ford, who a little later got hurt in a collision with Stewart and had to go off. He returned for a minute or two, but then had to leave again.

This rendered the Luton defence still weaker, for Ford had always been in the thick of the fray. Crawford hit the inside of the cross-bar with a hot shot which Perkins then cleared, and after that came innumerable corners, all splendidly placed by the old Arsenal man. Sometimes Perkins punched away from Gavin's centres, and sometimes from the headers or shots which followed. Then Luton created a diversion, and a couple of miskicks by the Millwall backs gave Kemplay a fine opening, but he did not stop to steady himself and sent wide.

A foul against W. Ford took the play back again, and again the Luton goal was subjected to a prolonged bombardment. With Perkins, it was a case of Dockers to the right of him, Dockers to the left of him, Dockers in front of him, volleyed and thundered, but shoot as they might, it was all the same. High shots, low shots, cross shots, straight shots, and indeed shots of every possible description were sent in, but Perkins disposed of them all. He appeared to bear a charmed life, and the spectators were almost beside themselves with delight. Then, just before the finish, and when it seemed certain that the custodian would save the game, Billy Stewart got his head to a centre by Crawford, and the trick was done, the ball hitting the post and glancing into the net.

This gave the victory to the Dockers, who fully deserved it, but the spectators regretted it more for Perkins' sake than anything else. As soon as the game was over, the people made for the custodian, with the evident intention of carrying him shoulder-high to the dressing-room, but he was a little too quick for them, and they had to be content with cheering him. It was a fitting finish to his brief connection with Luton, a connection which has been as creditable to him as it has been satisfactory to the Club.

Of the other members of the Luton team, it is only necessary to say that Dow did all that a man could do at back, but in that exciting period to which I have referred the defence was simply overwhelmed, owing to the inability of the forwards to get the ball away from goal. The halves put in all they knew, although they sometimes showed more zeal than method, but the forwards, whilst not being nearly so bad as on Saturday, were very disappointing. If the local men had shown a little more dash, and had not so often hesitated just long enough to let the other side get the ball, they might have played an effective game, as they exhibited very good knowledge. Kemplay worked hard without much success, but W. Ford was in very poor form.

The Millwall forwards were smart, with the exception of Geddes, whose frequent failures to do the right thing at the right time provoked a good deal of ironical cheering. Stewart did some useful work at centre-half, but was certainly not above his usual form, and Morrison also did well. The backs were generally safe without being brilliant, and Allan satisfactorily discharged his not very onerous duties in goal. Monday's loss removed whatever chance Luton had of escaping the bottom position in the League. They are now a point below Rushden, and I don't think they can be expected to gain points from their two remaining matches, against Reading and Millwall away.

Stirring News. Freeman, Hardy and Willis are now showing at 38, George-street, Luton, the largest and most varied assortment of boots and shoes in the district. Come and see windows, and judge for yourselves.—[ADVT.]

The new goalkeeper whom Luton have secured is G. H. Smith, of Hitchin. He is a tall young fellow, 21 years of age, and is very highly spoken of. A referee, writing of him last season, said: "He is the best local goalkeeper I have met. Under all circumstances, no matter how difficult, he is perfectly cool, and never loses his temper. He kicks very strongly. He never seems to have any difficulty with corners, and I don't think penalties have very great terrors for him." I understand he will play for the Reserves on Saturday, and on Monday and Tuesday against Burton Swifts and Watford, the latter match being at Watford. The other holiday engagement is on Good Friday, when Loughborough will see if they can take another four goals out of Luton. I hope these holiday games will be well patronised, because, as I have said before, the policy for next season will soon have to be decided upon. The directors have decided not to charge double entrance fees, but hope all who can afford it will voluntarily pay something extra for admission.