

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

WATFORD DEFEATED.

It had been confidently expected in Luton that the men from Watford would be beaten when they came to this town on Saturday to fulfil the first of the Southern League games between the clubs. Saxton and Burbage were engaged on the Luton side, and the only absentee of importance from the visiting eleven was Hare, an accident depriving Watford of his services. This weakening rendered necessary a sorting up of the visitors' ranks, Ferne being let in on the left wing. The day was grand and there was a very large attendance, the 4,000 or so spectators including a good muster from the Hertfordshire town.

The teams were as follows:—

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy, Clifford, Holdstock and Williams; Brown and Blessington, Burbage, Saxton and Durrant.

Watford: Hammett; Cother and Nidd; Farnall, Good and Jeffrey; E. A. Varley, Wilcox, Price, Colclough and Ferne.

Referee: Mr. F. H. King (London).

Luton won the toss, and at the start Brown secured possession, but steered wide. Watford went off at full speed to the other end but lost the ball, while shortly afterwards Ord fisted away well. A foul against Luton was quickly followed by another. Varley was in splendid form hereabouts. A third foul was awarded, and then the homesters were adjudged off-side. Ord rushed out and cleared, McCurdy in the meantime playing a fine game. When the game had been in progress some 10 minutes a corner fell to Luton, from which Durrant scored. A free-kick was immediately afterwards given against Watford. Ord saved splendidly just afterwards at the expense of a corner. Brown went off well and the ball found its way to Durrant, who travelled to the other end at a great pace. Luton were once more penalised for fouling. The game was fast and full of incident, both sets of players being palpably excited. The homesters had not yet settled down to a cool, precise game. The backs on both sides were playing in grand style. A foul against Watford produced a warm attack by Luton; but the ball found its way behind. Durrant was given off-side in front of goal, following which McCurdy gave a corner. Ord cleared well. Nidd was showing splendid form. The ball found its way over the home goal, and later on Wilcox steered wide. Some long kicking was indulged in by the backs, and afterwards a corner was presented to Luton by Jeffrey. Another attack by Watford was productive of a foul against the home contingent. Blessington sent a beautiful pass across to Brown just afterwards; but unfortunately Brown sent out. Hammett brought off a clever save, after which Durrant shot over the bar. Lindsay distinguished himself by some superb kicking and Durrant put in a good shot which travelled a trifle wide. *Ord gave a corner. Blessington sent through after a grand shot by Williams, the point being disallowed after some disputation on the ground of impeding the goalkeeper. Lindsay gave a corner, and a foul against Watford followed. Ferne missed a capital opening. Just before the interval a magnificent shot by Brown went just outside the corner of the goal. When the sides crossed over the teams were in these positions:

LUTON, 1; WATFORD, 0.

A nasty foul by Watford immediately after the restart was noticed, following which Clifford sent over the bar with a beauty. Cother headed away from Lindsay, and Durrant, pouncing upon the ball at once, sent a bit wide of the mark. The visitors were pulled up thrice in a few minutes for off-side. Brown steered over the cross-bar, and Durrant struck the side of the net with a good effort. Williams sent into the net while taking a free-kick for a foul; but the ball had not touched a second player, and so there was no score. Some of the Watfordians who had been placed on the grand stand had been indulging in vile language and at this stage the police were fetched to them. The name and address of one of the offenders was taken, after which there was little ground for complaint. A corner to the homesters produced a strong attack, Lindsay eventually sending behind. Fouls against both sides were awarded, and then Burbage was seen to be off-side. A superb shot by Williams struck the bar. Luton were at this stage having all the best of the game. Ord next fisted away well, this being the first time that the Watford men had been dangerous in this half. Later on, when various free-kicks had been awarded, a corner was presented to the enemy by Lindsay. Brown sent behind and Durrant missed by inches with a lovely shot. From a well-judged pass by Blessington, Saxton was presented with an open goal, and he scored the second goal. This was 10 minutes from the close. The remainder of the play was not remarkable for brilliancy. The Luton lads managed to hold the upper hand, despite the utmost efforts of the strangers, and so when the end came the totals were:

LUTON, 2; WATFORD, 0.

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

The victory of Luton over Watford was thoroughly well-deserved. We had heard much of the prowess of the Herts. brigade and admired their display at Kensal Rise; but most of us held the opinion that they would succumb at Luton—an idea which proved to be well founded.

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The way that the Watfordians started served to alarm some folks. There was no wonder, for the wearers of the stripes went off with great dash and determination. Had they been able to maintain the pace to the finish they might have won—but they did not.

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In the early part of the game the homesters compared badly with the visitors. It is always so. A team that indulges in the rushing style of play will upset the smartest combination and prevent a thoroughly good team appearing at its best.

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For some minutes after the start the strangers held the advantage. Then they were driven back and after 10 minutes' play Durrant drew first blood from a corner kick. This served to moderate the exuberance of the Watford players—and of their admirers.

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It was not until ends were changed, however, that it was made fully apparent that the Lutonians were a more capable lot. In the second portion the homesters had much the best of the exchanges and they were unlucky that the score was not heavier.

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Let me make every allowance for the splendid defence of the Watford eleven. Hammett proved himself a highly capable custodian, and Cother and Nidd played a grand game. The kicking by this pair was almost invariably accurate and always useful.

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It was remarked that the centre half was little and good—a play upon the Hertfordshire player's name that was passable. Good put in some very fine work, and was fairly well supported.

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Amongst the forwards Varley most took my fancy, though I cannot say that my admiration was very strong for any of the front rankers. Ferne was a dreadful frost at outside left.

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On the home side first mention is deserved by Lindsay, who played a glorious game. He was never found wanting, his kicks being powerful and his tackling clever. I watched him very carefully in view of remarks recently made concerning him, and can honestly say that he played in scrupulously fair fashion.

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The Watford left wingers did not relish colliding with him; but it was not because he was rough. It affords me great pleasure to be able to pay this tribute to the home captain, for whose ability as a footballer I entertain feelings of admiration. He could not have done better for his side than he did on Saturday.

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McCurdy, though not so brilliant as his partner, played a sterling game and was rarely at a loss. He is justifying the good opinion which we formed of him long ago.

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Roger Ord was not very often troubled; the backs were too much on the alert to allow of the opponents getting near goal very frequently. What he had to do, however, he did well.

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Of the forwards Brown was once more the shining light, despite the fact that he had a very fast back watching him in the person of Nidd. He occasionally postponed his centres unduly, the result being that the ball went over the goal-line instead of into the mouth of goal. This is a fault that is not very pronounced with "Roland," and I hope he will not continue it.

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Blessington was repeatedly conspicuous, and it was very pleasing to watch the way in which he fed his wing-mate. Burbage was not so successful as in the Bristol City match, though he was occasionally prominent.

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I was very glad to see Saxton score. This success should have the effect of encouraging him to yet more sturdy efforts and at the same time it should get him into the good graces of the spectators.

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Durrant was often successful in tricking Cother, and his centres were very dangerous at times. Considering the strength of the Watford defence, he must be regarded as having distinguished himself.

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There was a capital "gate," about £100 being netted. This completes a very encouraging opening month of the season.

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The crowd included a very strong contingent of folks from Watford, who were conveyed in two special trains. In speaking of their conduct I want to be fair, for the number of the visitors included some who behaved themselves.

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A large section of the strangers, however, disgraced themselves and their town by indulging in conduct which disgusted everybody. I used to think the Luton crowd was bad enough; but at the worst they never surpassed this Watford contingent for rowdiness.

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In the early part of the game a number of yelling idiots who had congregated on the grand stand made it unbearable for the ladies present by shouting out blatant obscenities. Remonstrances from civilians were of no avail; indeed, they seemed to add fuel to the flames.

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The upshot of it all was that the intervention of the police was sought and the name and address of the principal offender were obtained. This had the effect of taming down the disorderly ones considerably, and the scoring of the second goal reduced them to absolute silence.

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I was glad to see the authorities interpose; it would have been a scandalous shame had they not, even though interference had precipitated a row. The disturber might have been summarily ejected; but perhaps it was better as it was.

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Saturday's Southern League result list:—

αBristol Rovers	...	2 bt	Millwall	...	1
αTottenham Hotspur	...	2 bt	Swinden	...	0
Bristol City	...	2 bt	αWest Ham United	...	1
αLuton	...	2 bt	Watford	...	0
αSouthampton	...	1 bt	New Brompton	...	0
αKettering	...	2 bt	Queen's Pk. Rangers	...	1
Gravesend	...	1 bt	αReading	...	0
αPortsmouth	...	5 bt	Chatham	...	0

α indicates home clubs.

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"Abaris," writing in the *Echo*, on Monday night, said: "Luton picked up another useful couple of points against Watford, and that in spite of the defection of Molyneux, whom I understand the Strawplaiters are transferring to a Second Division Southern League club. The ex-soldier's stay in Bedfordshire has been neither protracted nor glorious. Stoke centre-forwards when they quit the site of the gasometer-growing ground do not seem to bloom elsewhere. Farrell, Molyneux, Hingerty have during the last year or so all promised splendidly for a time, but have failed to develop in accordance with early expectations."

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A Hitchin contemporary, referring to Barker (who played for the Reserves last week) says: "The Luton club, disregarding the rule which forbids a player being approached during the season without the consent of the club he plays for, have made overtures to him, as the first result of which Barker last Saturday assisted the Reserves in their match against Hitchin Blue Cross Brigade, along with his club-mate, Barnes; and it is understood he is to have an early trial with the first eleven. Of course, if Barker should prove good enough for Luton, and should elect to become a professional footballer, none would wish him success more heartily than the players and members of the Hitchin club, with whom he is deservedly a favourite, but his loss would be a heavy one. Concerning the manner in which

Barker has been approached, the Hitchin club have addressed a remonstrance to the Luton executive, and will on anything further of the same kind happening report it to the Football Association."

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The same paper, speaking of Burbage, says: "He first came into prominence when playing for Peterborough Loco, then, on moving to Arlesey, played one season with Hitchin Town, but being unable to appear regularly, was not asked to join the eleven last winter, when he chiefly played for Arlesey. On moving to Hertford late in the season he played once or twice for Luton, and scored a goal against Sheffield Wednesday. Being now stationed at Knebworth, Burbage cannot play by residence for any team of repute, and Luton, having suffered a disappointment over their new centre-forward, found him willing to assist them against Bristol City a few weeks back. By scoring two goals on that occasion he made the club anxious to secure his services permanently, but they are not at all likely to do so. 'Bob' is several 'cuts' above the average football professional."

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The writer continues thus: "So far as the Hitchin club and Hitchin players are concerned, there seems no end to the rapacity of Luton. They have even cast sheep's eyes on Taylor, the captain, who, however, is about as unlikely to join them as the president of the Hitchin club. It is very evident that, in a football sense, Luton is no friend to Hitchin; and unhappily a former Hitchin player, now with Luton, must be held responsible chiefly for these attempts to rob the weaker club for the benefit of the stronger." A letter in the same paper gives that old member of the team "fits."

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The Southern League game to-morrow with Queen's Park Rangers ought to be interesting. The Rangers are fairly warm on their own ground.

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Molyneux, described as late of 3rd Grenadier Guards, Stoke, Bristol City and Luton, appeared for Fulham at Craven Cottage on Saturday in the Southern League division 2 match with Brentford. The supporters of the home team expected great things of their new centre forward, but Molyneux (who occasionally assisted Fulham while in the Guards) played a disappointing game, being painfully slow and ineffective. He has been signed on for a month's trial.

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Southern League table to Saturday is as follows:—

	Played	Won	Lost	Dr'n.	Goals For	Goals Agst	Pts
Bristol Rovers	5	4	0	1	12	3	9
Portsmouth	5	4	0	1	10	2	9
Bristol City	5	3	1	1	10	5	7
West Ham United ..	5	3	2	0	12	5	6
Millwall	5	3	2	0	10	5	6
Reading	5	2	1	2	7	4	6
Tottenham Hotspur	4	2	1	1	8	4	5
Southampton	4	2	1	1	5	5	5
Kettering	5	2	2	1	6	8	5
Queen's P'k Rangers	5	2	3	0	10	8	4
Luton	5	2	3	0	8	8	4
Watford	5	1	3	1	4	11	3
Swindon Town	5	1	3	1	4	12	3
Gravesend	5	1	3	1	3	14	3
Chatham	5	1	4	0	3	13	2
New Brompton	5	0	4	1	4	9	1

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I am asked to say that the Maryon Institute F.C. (Charlton, Kent) desire to visit Luton in order to play a holiday match. Their average age is 16, and they are strong.

FOOTER.