

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. WATFORD.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town	2 goals.
Watford	nil.

The teams were as follow:

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

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

Referee, Mr. F. H. King; linesmen, Messrs. Nat Whittaker and A. Trotter.

It may be that on the principle of fortune favouring the brave, Luton are going to have a good time this year. Most people will concede that the directors have shown a considerable amount of pluck—of course, I am speaking of the old ones, and not of any brand new importation—in sticking to the ship as they have done, and in doing their best, notwithstanding the unfortunate experience of previous years, to provide a real good team. Fortune certainly favoured them on Saturday in the way of delightful weather, and the consequence was that something like four thousand spectators turned out to witness the watch between Luton and Watford.

A large number of supporters of the visiting Club had been expected, but many of them appear to have gone to London the previous week to see the encounter with the Queen's Park Rangers, and they could not face another Saturday afternoon's outing. The Watfordians, I believe, numbered only about three hundred, but there was a very fair sprinkling of Albanians and others, and the gate altogether totalled just over the hundred pounds, which is not so bad considering the times.

The game had been looked forward to with a good deal of interest, for when Luton meet Watford, then comes the tug of war. The visitors were without Hare, the old Arsenal man, who had dislocated his shoulder the previous night in a cycling mishap, but otherwise both teams were at practically full strength, though Saxton had to be put at inside-left for Luton, and Durrant once again figured at outside.

Don't forget E. Scott, 20, Inkerman-street, repairs clocks, watches, and jewellery.—[ADVT.]

Luton won the toss; but there was not much in it. As a matter of fact, Watford started off with a slap, dash, and a bang, for after Brown had neutralised a nice run by sending terribly wide, a visit was paid to Ord, and Roger had to save from Colclough. The Hertfordshire men kept pegging away, and were assisted by three or four free kicks, but at length Luton responded with some effect, and Blessington shot wide.

Presently a long shot by Williams resulted in a corner off Nidd, and Brown placing beautifully, Durrant landed the ball in the net, though if he did not handle the leather in the course of the transaction, I am very much mistaken. Still, the referee did not notice any infringement of the rules, and the goal counted, Luton thus being placed one up ten minutes from the start. Watford retaliated strongly, but Wilcox, when beginning to look dangerous, shot wildly over the bar. They next secured a corner, which was not turned to account, and play then became of a less exciting character.

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Not much combination was shown on either side, and several free kicks did not add to the attractiveness of the display. A well-placed kick by Lindsay led to a smart attack on the Watford goal, and another very promising-looking assault was frustrated by a foul given in favour of the defenders. A bad pass by Brown was eventually the means of giving the visitors an opening, and after Ord had saved one decent shot, Williams gave a corner. Varley placed, and a foul against Williams aggravated the danger. Farnall kicked, and then receiving back again, shot just over the bar.

Luton replied with a corner, through the instrumentality of Burbage and Brown, and Roland placing, the centre-forward and Saxton almost succeeded in rushing the goal, but Hammett cleared in capital style. Towards the finish of the first half, Hammett caught a shot from Williams, and in trying to avoid Blessington, who charged, he threw the ball into the net.

The referee, however, disallowed the goal on the ground that the custodian was not in actual contact with the ball, but whether he was right or no in his decision it would be difficult to say. Anyhow, it was a lucky let-off, and Watford celebrated it by forcing a corner and making sundry other demonstrations in front of the home goal. But as the interval drew near, Luton again asserted the upper hand, and Brown shot an inch or two over the bar, whilst there was another likely-looking rush just as the whistle went.

Luton therefore crossed over with a lead of one goal to nil. It was not much, but it was something to go on with. On the re-start, Saxton went away nicely, and was only stopped by a bad trip by Good. Lindsay took the free kick, and Clifford put in a lovely shot, just above the cross-piece. The Watford play afterwards deteriorated considerably, the forwards seeming to be quite unable to raise a gallop.

From a centre by Durrant the ball hit the upright, and Watford had another piece of luck when Burbage got pretty well clear, and was badly tripped by Nidd, just outside the twelve yards' line, whilst a little later Williams hit the bar. Ord once had to save from a header by Colclough, but for the most part play ruled in favour of Luton, and eventually Saxton, receiving from Blessington, placed the issue beyond all doubt by scoring a splendid goal. Nothing further was done in this department, and so Luton were left the winners by two goals to nil.

It was not a great game, so far as science was concerned, and combination was for the most part conspicuous by its absence. That, however, is nearly always the case in matches in which the excitement runs high, and there was some excitement on Saturday, for the three hundred Watford spectators were evidently thoroughly determined that their team should not be beaten because of the lack of exhortation and encouragement.

But the game differed from most of its kind in that it was absolutely free from anything like roughness. There was not a serious foul throughout the whole match, and I should think the referee never had an easier game to handle. In previous encounters there had been far too much of the rough-and-tumble, and the complete absence of unfair tactics on this occasion was a credit to both teams.

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In comparing the two teams, one can only say that Watford started in very promising fashion, but they did not last out anything like as well as Luton. In the first quarter of an hour, the Hertfordshire men looked like giving their opponents a very severe fright, to say the least, but in the second half it was quite clear that they had shot their bolt, and had the Luton forwards been a little more together, the verdict at the finish would have been much more decisive than it was.