

THE UNITED LEAGUE.

LUTON v. KETTERING.

A DRAWN GAME.

The Luton men had a stiff task set them on Saturday in visiting Kettering to play off their United League fixture, for the "Ketts" have a reputation of being very hard to beat on their own ground. It was hardly expected that the visitors would bring home two points, but they succeeded in bringing one. The visitors were without Burbage, Barker and Durrant. F. Hawkes (a Reserve) was given a trial at centre forward. The Luton team was: Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy; Clifford, Holdstock and Williams; Brown, Blessington, Hawkes, Dempsey, and Saxton.

Kettering won the toss, but this was of no advantage to them. The home team pressed at the outset, and after 10 minutes' play Pollock took a shot which just skimmed the bar. Play was now transferred to the other end, and Williams sent in a hot shot which Baldry had great difficulty in keeping out. A good run was made by the home forwards, but this finished up by McMain sending behind. From a pass from Saxton, Dempsey very nearly scored. A couple of fouls against Luton gave McMain a fine chance, but he failed to take advantage. Brown next made a good run, and tested Baldry with a beauty. Half-time was soon afterwards called, when the score stood:

LUTON, 0 ; KETTERING, 0.

On crossing over Luton were the first to get away, Baldrey saving a fine shot from Saxton. After some good play by the Luton forwards, Brown found the net with a splendid shot. This made Luton liven up a bit, and soon afterwards Saxton scored a second goal, but the point was disallowed. A foul was given against Luton not far from goal, and in the scrimmage which resulted Draper scored for Kettering. Some of the escapes of the Kettering goal were really marvellous, and towards the end a good deal of excitement was caused, the Luton men making strenuous efforts to get the lead. No further scoring took place, and when the whistle sounded for time the game stood:

LUTON, 1 ; KETTERING, 1.

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

The visit of the Lutonians to Kettering on Saturday was more productive than I had hoped, for I had heard much of the prowess of the "Ketts." To return with a League point was a first-rate performance on the part of the "blues."

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The Northamptonshire men have a very powerful support in the shape of the peculiarities of their ground. Knowledge of those trickinesses of the pitch is worth a goal to the side possessing it.

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The game was a stoutly-contested one, as the score indicates. It was ever thus in the matches between Luton and Kettering. There have been some splendidly-fought contests at Kettering to my knowledge. One of which I have a very pleasant recollection produced the very finest exhibition of goal-keeping it has been my lot to witness.

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The football was excellent on Saturday throughout. Both sides were strongly represented. I am glad that the Luton players are taking the United League more seriously than was the case a month or two ago.

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There were some very tight battles in the Southern League on Saturday. Curiously enough all the home elevens won. Swindon came a cropper at Millwall and the 'Spurs bit the dust at Reading, while New Brompton distinguished themselves by defeating Portsmouth.

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The full League results were:—

α Millwall	4	bt	Swindon	0
α Southampton	2	bt	Bristol City	1
α Reading	3	bt	Tottenham Hotspur	1
α Gravesend	4	bt	Watford	2
α New Brompton	2	bt	Portsmouth	0
α Bristol Rovers	2	bt	West Ham United ...	0
α Queen's P'k Rangers ...	3	bt	Chatham	0

α Home teams.

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Southern League table:—

	Played.	Won.	Lost.	Dr'n.	For	Agst	Pts
Bristol City	13	9	2	2	33	12	20
Southampton	11	9	1	1	26	13	19
Bristol Rovers.....	11	8	2	1	25	10	17
Portsmouth	11	8	2	1	23	11	17
Millwall	13	8	4	1	30	19	17
Reading	11	4	3	4	12	8	12
West Ham United ..	11	5	5	1	17	12	11
Queen's P'k Rangers	11	4	6	1	18	17	9
Tottenham Hotspur	9	3	4	2	13	12	8
Luton	9	4	5	0	13	12	8
Kettering	10	3	5	2	14	20	8
New Brompton	11	3	6	2	13	17	8
Gravesend	10	2	6	2	11	30	6
Watford	11	2	8	1	11	25	5
Chatham	11	2	8	1	7	31	5
Swindon Town	11	1	8	2	6	23	4

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To-morrow (Saturday) the Lutonians are entertaining the Gravesenders. This team created a mild sensation by thrashing Watford on Saturday. The general opinion concerning their visit to Luton, however, is that they will leave some points behind them. I see no occasion to quarrel with the idea.

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By the way, it will be observed that the "blues" are sadly in need of League points, though they are no worse off in that regard than their old rivals the 'Spurs. If the Lutonians can succeed in winning to-morrow they will have maintained their position very well.

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It is scarcely likely that we shall gain many more points ere the end of December. We ought to beat Chatham at home; but visits to Southampton and Kettering cannot be expected to yield many points.

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Then there is the cup-tie to think about. The Queen's Park Rangers flattened out Chatham at Kensal Rise; but then the Lutonians ought to be equal to that sort of performance. It will be remembered that the "blues" ought to have done better when they visited the dockyard town.

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It must not be thought that the "blues" have on this occasion a very easy task on hand. True, they ought to win—especially after having got the better of the Rangers on their own pitch—but the victory will have to be worked for. The Rangers' team is one that I have a very hearty respect for.

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The Reserves continued in their winning vein on Saturday, when the Stantonbury lot were their latest victims. The margin was not so large as usual; but it sufficed.

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A writer in the *Herts. Express*, referring to the match between Luton Reserves and Hitchin Town said: "In the second half Barnes went forward in place of Cooper, and perhaps because of this weakening of the home defence Luton managed to score one goal by which margin they were in the end successful. The

visitors of course had much the best of the game, but they found the Hitchin halves and Worbey and Smith very hard to beat. The last-named kept out many hard shots. The Hitchin forwards suffered in combination from the changes, but were occasionally seen to advantage. The Luton men, as usual, were inclined to be rough."



The last sentence calls for some defence of the Reserves. It is not true that the Lutonians are usually "inclined to be rough." I have witnessed their performances on more than one occasion this season, and have never observed such a tendency.



The Reserves play a sturdy, dashing game—and the point is that they are for the most part too strong for their opponents. It is a pity that those who are thus defeated cannot admit so much and abstain from maligning their opponents.



I do not desire to whitewash our men when they deserve censure. They may have displayed an inclination towards roughness at Hitchin—I was not present and therefore cannot say—but I must emphatically state that if they did it was contrary to their usual habit.



The same writer—possibly with more justice than can be urged for his other utterance—lets down an erstwhile favourite somewhat roughly when he says: "Barker, the old Hitchin centre-forward, played in that position for the Reserves, but showed very little of his proper form, and generally speaking, Norris was more than his equal." Poor Barker; poor Reserves!



It seems to me that the writer responsible for the notes referred to has not yet recovered from the splenetic feelings with which he regarded the "capture" of Barker and other players by Luton. Surely it is high time such a cause of dispute were forgotten. There is no good reason why Luton and Hitchin footballers should be at loggerheads, and one of the things that were written about the dispute had better been left out.



I notice with pleasure that Perkins (who formerly figured in the Luton goal) is complimented for his magnificent display for Liverpool against the United at Newcastle on Saturday. Some of his saves were wonderful.



Dow, another ex-Lutonian, was playing for Middlesbrough at Woolwich on Saturday, and he is also singled out for special mention. A writer in the *Athletic News* says: "We have seen Dow play better games for Luton, but he still wants a lot of beating."