



Football



UNITED LEAGUE.

KETTERING V. LUTON TOWN.

A CREDITABLE DRAW.

The keen rivalry between Luton and Kettering was again manifested on Saturday, when the teams met for the first time at Kettering. Reference to previous encounters between the elevens shows that the meeting on Saturday was the 14th match since 1894. Of these, there have been 5 friendlies, in which both teams claim two victories, and 1 drawn game, and both teams scored 11 goals in those encounters.

The meeting on Saturday was the 7th fixture in which they played in the above League, and leaving Saturday's result out, Luton have won 4 and Kettering 2, and Luton claim a goal average of 12 against 5. The other two fixtures were cup-ties—one the final of the Luton Cup, which Luton won by 3-0, and the other was the semi-final of the Kettering Cup, which Luton also won by 4-1, and in the final they beat Rushden at Rushden by 1-0. It will be seen by the above that Luton can claim to be slightly superior to the "Ketts," and a large muster turned out to welcome them on Saturday.

Kettering were at full strength, but the Luton team had another change among the forwards, F. Hawkes, of the Reserves, taking the centre-forward position. The teams lined up as follows:—

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy, Clifford, Holdstock, and Williams; Brown, Blessington, F. Hawkes, Dempsey and Saxton.

Kettering: Baldry; W. H. Clarke and Draper; Roulston, Panter, and Pollock; Webb, Becton, J. McMain, Coleman and Lawrence.

Referee: Mr. H. Ward (Nottingham).

The weather was a trifle foggy. There were about 1,000 present when Luton, having lost the toss, kicked off downhill. The Luton left and centre early got down, only a bye, however, resulting. A period of midfield play followed until McMain judiciously fed Lawrence, who, however, could not make much headway. To check Brown, Draper had to kick out, and Baldry had to negotiate a long shot from Williams. From a pretty bit of combination between Brown and Blessington the latter shot over. Becton, McMain, and Pollock were responsible for a good movement, but McCurdy cleared.

Luton attacked, and after Baldry had saved from Saxton, Blessington was ruled offside. McMain was responsible for a splendid run, but aimed too high. Becton was ruled offside, and a free against the Ketts. enabled Luton to make further progress, and Blessington used his cianium to good effect only for Dempsey to shoot high over. Blessington made a gallant attempt from a pass by Brown, the ball just passing over the bar. Lawrence centred, and a corner fell to the Ketts, which Clifford easily cleared. Clarke managed to charge down Saxton's centre when he was in a dangerous position. An abortive corner fell to the visitors.

After Panter had checked Dempsey, Brown made the pace on the right, and play remained in Kettering quarters for a while. Williams let through Webb, who centred to McMain, but the old Notts County man shot by and a capital chance was lost. Baldry had to negotiate a hot shot from Hawkes. Blessington elicited applause for some capital work, but Brown spoilt the effort by reckless kicking. Clarke was forced to come across to clear from Brown a minute later. Becton was accidentally kicked in the back by Clifford, and this necessitated a stoppage of hostilities.

Panter missed his kick, but fortunately Capt. Draper was just behind and cleared. Webb called forth the plaudits of the crowd for a capital run. Lindsay, who was a tower of strength to Luton, checked Lawrence. A free to the Ketts about 14 yards' out was of no effect through Draper shooting wide. Brown made a capital attempt, but once again the shot went over. Webb was ruled offside and later Lindsay was penalised for fouling Lawrence, but the free-kick came to nought.

Half time—No score.

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Selections by the Rifle Band enlivened the interval. After a brief incursion by the visitors on the re-start, the Kettering left and centre bore down, and a foul checked their progress. McCurdy was forced to kick out from a centre by Lawrence. Williams, in trying to check Webb, sent the leather behind, but to the surprise of the onlookers Referee Ward gave a goal kick. After Ord had saved, McMmain forced a corner, and following this, Clarke placed right into the mouth of goal, where for some reason a free was given against Luton. From this Webb had the satisfaction of planting the ball into the net 10 minutes from the re-start. Two minutes later, however, the Luton men equalised in simple fashion. Brown centred from the wing, and Baldry, thinking the ball was going wide, made no attempt to save, and the leather rolled into the net.

A period of even play followed, until the Luton men had a free-kick from which Saxton centred right across the mouth of goal, two corners following. McCurdy cleared when hard pressed, and the visitors attacked spiritedly, and the Ketts. could make little headway until a free brought them within speaking distance of Ord, who had to save from the left.

Hawkes set Luton in motion, only for Pollock to return to McMmain, who in turn transferred to Webb. To the surprise of the crowd, however, he was ruled offside. The Ketts, who took two corners, were now having the best of matters, the left wing causing Lindsay great trouble. Luton had a turn, Blessington shooting wide. Lindsay fouled Becton, but the free was of no avail. Dempsey had a good chance a little later, but Baldry was equal to the occasion.

Darkness was now fast coming on, and it was only with great difficulty that the players could be distinguished. A corner to the visitors resulted in Williams shooting wide. McCurdy conceded a corner which Webb placed behind the net. Even play followed. Clarke brought off a big kick, and this set Kettering going. Webb received attention from Lindsay within the 12 yards' line, and the referee blew his whistle. As however, he could not see the incident he threw the ball up instead of giving what the spectators thought ought to be a penalty. Roulston shot by. Offside checked Webb, and the end came with the score:—

Kettering, 1; Luton, 1.

NOTES.

A Luton supporter favours the Kettering "Telegraph" with the following comments:—"The score of one goal all is a very fair indication of the play, for although Luton's goal was a very soft thing, an undoubted point for the visitors quite escaped the notice of the referee in the early portion of the match. Saxton got in a long cross-shot which fell just under the cross-bar, and Baldry took the ball quite a foot over the line in clearing. Considering all the circumstances, Luton should be well satisfied with the result.

Kettering's ground is a big advantage to them—or, rather any visiting team is at a great disadvantage—and beyond this the Luton forward string was disorganised by the absence of Durrant and Burbage. Luton's attack chiefly devolved on the right wing, but most credit lay with the half-backs. Holdstock waited closely on McMmain all through, and the three men never let the Kettering forwards get going."

"Holy Friar's" observations are as follows:

A stubbornly contested game, and if every team had their deserts the Ketts would have won.—Luton may thank the bad light that they escaped with a draw.—Had there been a little more light on the scene the referee could not possibly have helped seeing Lindsay deliberately foul Webb in the last five minutes, and we should have had a penalty.—Lindsay played a fine game at back, though marred by too much vigour, as certain of the Kettering forwards will bear testimony.—Pollock was only "medium," but he must have one or two more trials before we criticise him too much.—The Luton players allege that Baldry, in saving from Saxton in the first half, carried the ball over the line, but the spectators behind the goal say otherwise.

themselves decidedly fortunate in taking back a point on Saturday.

It was not a very encouraging start to be greeted on entering the field with the information that Winterhalder would not play. Herbert's indisposition, coming at a time when he was so nicely settling down to his new position, is decidedly unfortunate. Lawrence played all right in midfield, but was rather slow when near goal, and that is just where Herbert's speed would have been useful.

But the unkindest pill we had to swallow was when we were robbed of a penalty about five minutes from the end. The ground was in semi-darkness at the time. Webb had run down within the 12-yards' line and was in the act of transferring to Becton when Lindsay caught hold of him and forcibly held him back. The referee blew his whistle, as though he had seen the incident, but, strange to say, without even consulting the linesmen, he only threw the ball up, thus doing a great injustice to the Ketts. Now the peculiar point is: If the referee did not see the incident why did he stop the game? Luton must consider themselves particularly fortunate on this point, as, had there been more light on the premises, nine times out of every ten in a case like this they would have had a penalty given against them.

What a splendidly built team Luton have! And their weight! I pity any poor beggar who ran against Lindsay, Clifford, or Blessington. And this weight did not prevent their moving either. Tiddy Coleman and Lawrence came in for some nasty jars against Lindsay, who, I am sorry to say, infused a great amount of rough tactics into his play, particularly after his man had beaten him, when he would turn round and deliberately trip, push, or affectionately (?) embrace his opponent. McCurdy was frequently very lucky in his clearances, nipping in and clearing by only the skin of his teeth.

The Kettering shooting on Saturday was not so good as it should be, and this formed no unimportant factor in their ability to carry off the full complement of points. It may seem strange, but it's a fact nevertheless, that Ord did not have a single difficult shot to negotiate in the first half, and only comparatively few in the second. On the actual play a draw was a correct criterion of the form shown, although if the rules had been carried out to the letter the Ketts. should have won.

Becton was the best Kettering forward. McMain found Holdstock a bit too lanky for him, and Webb was evidently not at home on the heavy ground. The strength of the Luton team was the middle line, all three playing grandly. Blessington was the best forward, but Hawkes was little more than a passenger.

I must certainly congratulate the Luton directorate on getting together such a capable eleven. I am told that the gates this season have been very good. On two occasions they reached over £90, and another time over £100. Now Kettering enthusiasts, are you not ashamed when you compare the Kettering gates with these figures? Luton is little larger than Kettering, remember. How on earth can you expect the club to live on gates averaging £25 a match? I regret to have to write in this strain, but after the poor attendance last Saturday I cannot help it."