

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN V. GRAVESEND.

LUTON GAIN ANOTHER VICTORY.

The initial visit of Gravesend to Luton on Saturday afternoon in the above League was awaited with considerable interest by the supporters of the local club. A slight difference between Gravesend and the League Committee at the beginning of the season operated adversely to the Club, but the men are now beginning to show their true form. Their latest victory in the League was the defeat of Watford, on Saturday week by 4-2, after being 2 goals behind at the interval.

Previous to the match the Luton team were photographed in their new colours on the ground. The directors again tried an experiment by placing Saxton in the centre, and on the form he displayed, it would be as well to keep him there, for he has proved the greatest success of any that have played so far in that important position. Durrant was again in the field, taking the outside left position. The visitors were at full strength, and gave the Luton team a hard game. The weather, which was dull and threatening during the early part of the day, fortunately turned out fine, and a crowd of some 2,000 turned out to witness the game. The teams lined up punctually at 2.45, as follows:—

Luton—Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy; Clifford, Holdstock and Williams; Brown, Blessington, Saxton, Dempsey, and Durrant.

Gravesend—Hamilton; Lockie and Warburton; Parkinson, MacAvoy and Bigden; Jury, Russell, Pugh, Madden, and Penney.

Referee—Mr. F. Crabtree (Ealing).

Luton won the toss, and kicked with the wind, which was very slight, in their favour. Gravesend, however, were the first to get away, but Russell shot behind. Luton then had a try, and a dash by Saxton nearly resulted in a goal, Lockie just clearing. Going to the other end, the visiting forwards were soon attacking in earnest, and from a foul against Clifford, Pugh beat Ord from the "free," thus opening the score five minutes after the start. This reverse surprised the Luton men, and they set about their work in fine style, and three minutes after the last score Dempsey equalised for Luton with a fine shot.

Play was now very fast, and Brown had hard lines in not scoring from a nice pass by Blessington. McCurdy cleared a dangerous centre from Penney, and offside against Saxton spoilt a good run by the home forwards; Ord cleared a centre by Penney, and a foul on Russell by Holdstock was fruitless, Penney being given offside. MacAvoy shot over the bar from a corner, and Blessington missed an open goal from a beautiful centre sent in by Durrant. The latter was causing Lockie a lot of trouble, and he made several fine sprints. Offside against Saxton was of no avail to the visitors, and a lightning drive by Saxton just went over. Brown shot behind from a pass by Saxton, and Durrant also put behind.

Holdstock cleared a free for a foul against Blessington on Bigden, and Durrant forced a corner off Lockie, from which Brown gave Luton the lead after half-an-hour's play. Hands against Brown was fruitless, and two fouls against Gravesend was not turned to account by Luton. A pretty run by the visiting forwards was spoilt by Penney running the ball out, and going to the other end, Durrant forced a corner off Lockie, but Hamilton was fouled and the kick came to nought. Saxton was playing with fine dash in the centre and caused Hamilton to give a corner but Blessington got offside, thus the effort was nullified.

Luton continued to have the best of matters, and Durrant shot behind from a nice pass by Dempsey. Good play by the Gravesend forwards was nullified by MacAvoy shooting over the bar, and a foul throw against Clifford came to nought. After Saxton had cleared a foul against Luton, he made a fine dashing run, and beat Hamilton with a splendid drive, making it 3-1 for Luton. A doubtful foul against Clifford was fruitless, and the interval score was—

Luton 3 goals, Gravesend 1.

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On crossing over, the visiting forwards at once got away, but McCurdy cleared. Luton again took up the attack, and Durrant made a good try to increase their lead, but the ball was cleared. Offside against Penney was of no avail to Luton, and a mis-kick by McCurdy almost spelt disaster, but the ball went behind. A nice run by the Gravesend forwards was spoilt by Jury getting offside, but coming again Russell caused Lindsay to clear, which he did in fine style.

Luton again assumed the aggressive, and Warburton cleared a dangerous centre by Durrant, and Brown forced Hamilton to give a corner from a judicious pass by Blessington, but Williams shot behind from the kick. McCurdy stopped Russell just as he was getting dangerous and offside against Durrant spoilt another chance of increasing Luton's lead. Hamilton saved well from Blessington, and good play by Holdstock was not improved upon by Luton. The visiting forwards caused the home defence to be very alert at times, and Lindsay had to clear smartly from Pugh.

The Luton forwards were making some fine onslaughts on the visiting defence, and good play by Williams resulted in Blessington beating Hamilton for the 4th time. A foul against MacAvoy was fruitless, and from a centre by Brown, Durrant hit the bar with a brilliant shot. Hamilton was fouled in clearing an attack by the home forwards, and Blessington made a good try, the ball just going over. Williams shot over the bar from a free-kick for a foul against MacAvoy on Saxton. Lindsay cleared a dangerous centre by Penney and Brown ran out a nice pass from Blessington. Ord cleared a long shot from Bigden, and hands against Russell was spoilt by Clifford kicking behind.

Darkness was approaching and it became difficult to follow the play. Saxton made a good attempt from a fine header by Dempsey, and Durrant spoilt a good chance by fouling Hamilton. The goalkeeper saved well from Brown, but directly after he was beaten, a centre by Brown being rushed through. Holdstock headed behind from a corner well-placed by Brown, and when everyone thought the game was over, the visiting forwards made a run to the other end, and from a centre by Jury, Penney, in the semi-darkness, succeeded in beating Ord. The whistle went for time directly after, and Luton retired victorious with the score—

Luton 5 goals, Gravesend 2.

NOTES.

The game was a very good one, being full of interest up to the finish. The dash and energy with which the visitors opened play took the Luton team by surprise, but on getting settled down, they always held the upper hand. It was a hard game throughout. A unique feature of the match was that both goal-keepers were old Arsenal men, while the visiting centre-half, MacAvoy, has also appeared in the Arsenal ranks.

Of the home team, Ord in goal, had more to do than has fallen to his share of late, but he seemed in his best form. This is the first occasion on which two goals have been scored against him on Luton ground this season. Lindsay was always to the fore, his kicking and clearing both being very effective. McCurdy was out of form during the first half, but played better in the latter portion of the game.

The half-backs were not so effective as usual, and dallied with the ball too long. Williams was the best of the trio, and put in a lot of effective work, and it was owing to some fine tackling on his part that Luton gained their fourth point. Holdstock had a tough customer to deal with in Pugh, and on two or three occasions the latter got the better of him. Clifford also had a warm wing to look after in Penney and Madden, and could not make much progress with them.

Of the forwards Saxton was best, and his fine speed served him well on several occasions. With more accurate shooting, he will be hard to beat in the centre. The two "B.'s" also played a nice game on the right. Durrant, who appeared for the first time since his accident at King's Lynn, showed fine form, but Dempsey, though trying hard, failed to make a big show.

The Gravesend team have a good custodian in Hamilton, and he cleared his lines in clean style on several occasions. Both backs kick clean with fine precision, Lockie being the best. The half-back line is strong, and they broke up the combination of the home forwards. MacAvoy

in the centre played well throughout, both with his feet and head, and several times caused Ord to clear.

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Bigden and Parkinson were in good form, and stuck to their respective wings incessantly. This was the strongest part of the team. The forwards are quick and lively, and caused the Luton defence some anxious moments. Pugh led his men well in the centre, and both pressed and shot with fine judgment. A good man also is Penny, but he had a tough customer to deal with in Lindsay. His partner, Madden, also played a decent game, as did Russell and Jury, who, by the way, is a reserve man, but he has been showing much good form of late that he has played with the first eleven during the last few weeks. The referee was satisfactory.

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The other Southern League games on Saturday produced some tight struggles, and the surprise of the day was the defeat of Southampton by Swindon at home, by 2 goals to 1; Millwall annexed two points at the expense of Watford on the ground of the latter by 2 goals to 1; Tottenham just managed to beat Kettering at Gilpin Park by 1-0, the goal being scored 6 minutes from the finish; New Brompton were successful against the Queen's Park Rangers at New Brompton by 2 goals to 1; Bristol City defeated Chatham at Bristol by 4 goals to 0; Portsmouth defeated the Bristol Rovers at Portsmouth by 1 goal to nil; and West Ham United succeeding in defeating Heading after a hard struggle by 1 goal to 0.

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The cartoon of local application in the "Football Star" on Saturday night caused much amusement in football circles, while a portrait of Lindsay, the Luton captain, was also interesting.

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To-morrow (Saturday) Luton is engaged in the English Cup, the Queen's Park Rangers opposing the local team in the divisional final of the above Cup. It will be remembered that last season the same teams again met, when the result was a draw of 1-1 at Luton, and at Kensal Rise in the replay Luton were defeated by 4 goals to 1. As Luton have already defeated the Rangers in the League by 3-1 at London, it is confidently expected that they will prove victorious on this occasion. A record "gate" should be secured, providing the weather is fine.

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Writing of the above in the "Football Star" "Westerner" says:—"A gain the West London team have to travel to Luton to oppose them in the divisional final of the English Cup. I am pleased to note that the Rangers' executive have wisely chartered an excursion train for the supporters at 2s. 6d. return. The man who would quibble at the Rangers' team at present would be hard to please. There is plenty of weight, speed and skill among the forwards, and their defence is one that will take some beating down South, and there are more unlikely things happening than the Rangers avenging the Southern League defeat sustained at the hands of Luton earlier in the season. It is possible I may be in error, of course, but I rather fancy that since that unexpected event, the Rangers have made considerable improvement, while the Bedfordians have not maintained that form, and, indeed, have been slightly on the down grade. I also recognise that choice of ground means a great deal on Saturday, but should last season's result be repeated, no one in West London will have cause to complain."