

Football.

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. GRAVESEND.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	5 goals.
Gravesend	2 goals.

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

Gravesend: Hamilton Lockie and Warburton; Parkinson, McAvoy, and Bigden; Jury, Russell, Pugh, Madden, and Penny.

Referee, Mr. F. Crabtree, Ealing.

Luton were in a very good mood on Saturday, and their win by the substantial margin of three goals was a creditable one, because the Shrimpers have a capital team, who played a smart and clean game. It was an interesting game, with little cause for dissatisfaction on anyone's part in the matter of play, though there was one thing upon which the spectators had reason for a grumble before the end of the game, and that was the darkness.

The kick-off should have been timed half-an-hour earlier if light was the only consideration, but possibly those responsible had a thought also for the convenience of the public, for 2.15, although not a whit too early in one respect, would doubtless not have suited the majority of spectators, for most working-men do not leave their employment earlier than one o'clock on Saturdays. As it was the attendance was very meagre indeed until a few minutes before the kick-off, and even when the turnstiles had ceased to be used there were only about 1,500 people present.

Lindsay won the toss, and set the visitors to kick off in the direction of the railway goal. Gravesend very soon began to display their capabilities, and the game was not many minutes old when Ord was called upon by Pugh. Then Luton took a turn, Saxton feeding Durrant, who tried a long cross shot, but it went wide.

Neat work by the Gravesend forwards transferred the scene of action, and Madden was badly fouled by Clifford, and to this was attributable a goal for the visitors, Warburton taking the kick, from which Pugh was able to touch into the net, the game being only some ten minutes old.

Play had hardly re-started, however, when Lindsay landed the ball well up among the forwards, Dempsey easily converting into a goal, and placing the sides on level terms. This was followed by a period of attack by Luton, spoiled, unfortunately, in two or three instances, by the culminating efforts of individual players.

Brown, for instance, found himself with an open goal, yet he shot right across the mouth, and neither Dempsey nor Durrant was near enough to repair his mistake. Then Durrant, after a good run, centred nicely, and the ball went begging. Next, Clifford put Blessington in the way of scoring, and getting through, he appeared to have the goal at his mercy, but the leather annoyingly hit the post with a bang and bounded out of play.

Very shortly afterwards the inside-right gave Saxton an opening, and he sent over. Long kicking took the leather to the other end, where Holdstock got in a little headwork, and Ord dealt effectively with a shot from Bigden. From this Luton's left got away and forced a corner. Williams placed with judgment, and Brown smartly slipped in with his left and scored a fine goal, thus giving Luton the lead.

The home side were quickly on the warpath again, and twice free kicks fell to them within easy distance of their opponents' goal. From the second of these, McCurdy narrowly missed scoring, Lindsay giving him the ball, which he banged straight for the net, and which was only turned aside at the expense of a corner. This was uneventful, but Brown was soon down again, Lookie, however, clearing from his centre.

Luton's extreme wing men next in turn forced corners, but ensuing from the first Hamilton was fouled, and from the second Williams sent over the bar. Gravesend now endeavoured to improve their position, and in the course of play the right back was so set on goal-getting that he worked his way down almost to the left corner, where he received a hot reminder that he was out of position, the ball cannoning with his cheek from the foot of Lindsay, and, like certain Christmas fruit, it "goes without saying" that it was full of flavour.

A foul by Blessington gave Gravesend the opportunity of being too near to be pleasant, when Clifford relieved by kicking out. From the throw-in Luton got away, and Saxton skilfully working his way through, put Luton three up in good style. Nothing else occurred before the interval, and the home side crossed over leading by three to one.

Gravesend, who were game all through, could never be allowed much rope. They were very quick on the ball, and upon the lightest chance they were off, because they were always on the alert. McCurdy, for instance, made rather a bad miss, and before he could recover, an opponent was trundling the leather away, though he was pursued so hotly that he had no time to shoot straight. At times, Luton were inclined to hold their opponents too cheaply, and the result was an occasional anxious moment, though if Lindsay was about, confidence was very soon restored.

Brown, who at the worst of times takes a lot of catching, made a pretty canter down the wing and centred, but although Durrant made a big effort to turn it to account his only reward was a sprawl in the attempt. Shortly afterwards, receiving from Holdstock, Williams ran down with the ball at his feet, cleverly evading at least two men, and finishing up with a well-directed shot which scored.

Still Luton pressed, and a scrimmage resulted from a very good try by Durrant, who hit the bar, but in the struggle the goalkeeper was fouled, a free kick resulting. Holdstock was doing extremely useful work, and from one of his passes Blessington put over. The home side continued

to press, and judging from the shouts of those behind the goal, got near scoring, though from the centre of the grand stand the play was difficult to follow on account of the gathering darkness. Hamilton apparently made several saves, but eventually the ball was rushed through.

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The game looked as though it would end without further alteration, when shortly before time Gravesend managed to retaliate. Lindsay, doubtless owing to the uncertain light, quite misjudged the ball, and Madden chalked up number two for the visitors. Nothing further resulted, the hour for whistle-blowing finding Luton winners as stated.

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The experiment of Saxton in the middle was more successful than that of the previous week, but Dempsey was a weak spot, and it looks as if an improvement might be effected by substituting Barker in the centre and placing Saxton with Durrant. The latter played a capital game, as did also Brown, while Blessington did useful work. He did not shine so well, however, as against Kettering.

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Luton have a good string of half-backs, and generally speaking, they take a lot of beating. Williams was in his best form on Saturday, and the other two were good. Of the backs, Lindsay maintained his reputation of being entitled to full respect from his opponents, but McCurdy, until well on in the game, was not comfortably at home in his kicking.

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Taken all down, Gravesend are a very even lot, and a team deserving well. They are keen on the ball and impart a lot of rush into their play, but for all that they combine very well. Lockie at back gained for himself a favourable opinion from the Luton crowd.