

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

SOUTHAMPTON v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Southampton on Saturday. Result:

Southampton 5 goals.

Luton Town nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Southampton: W. H. Waller; Sharp and Molyneux; Meston, A. Chadwick, and Lee; Turner, Yates, Wood, E. Chadwick, and Milward.

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

Referee, Mr. J. Stark.

It very often happens that after an important Cup-tie, a reaction sets in, and a team which has played up to the top of its form in a memorable struggle goes all to pieces in its very next match. Sometimes the tension has been too great and the training too severe, sometimes the victory has been celebrated not wisely but too well, and sometimes the cause for the breakdown is quite unaccountable.

Whatever may have been the reason for Luton's inglorious display on Saturday, the one thing certain is that the contrast in the form shown against the Saints and against Queen's Park Rangers was as great as it ever was in Luton's palmiest days, when the Club had a team which could whack the very best of 'em one week and knuckle under to the very weakest the next.

Of course, the absence of Lindsay made a great deal of difference on Saturday, but though that player is a host in himself, I scarcely think his absence means so much. Why, Luton were beaten all ends up, and it was only now and then that they had a look-in.

There were about 3,000 spectators present when Luton started operations. Southampton pressed at the outset, and they were pressing more or less all the way through. For the satisfaction of Luton, it may be said that the Saints were showing very much better form than usual—fifty per cent. better than against Watford, is the estimate of a local scribe.

Once, however, the visitors had a rare chance. Saxton and Durrant broke away, and the former sent a long kick towards goal. Waller ran out, but instead of kicking clear, sent the ball against Saxton, who apparently had the easiest job in the world to score, but Sharp slipped back into goal and cleverly cleared the Lutonian's shot. A little later on, Saxton charging down Molyneux's kick, had another splendid opening, but again his effort was frustrated by Sharp.

Although the Saints had so much the better of the play, some thirty-five minutes had elapsed before they were able to score their first goal, and then it came from a corner, Milward doing the trick. Just before the interval, Turner crowned a grand run with a brilliant goal, so the Saints were two up when ends were changed.

The second half was very much like the first, only more so, and had not Ord been in better form than some of the others, goodness only knows how many goals would have been piled on. Roger had to save in the first minute, again he negotiated a great shot from Edgar Chadwick, and whilst on the ground he made a sensational clearance from an effort by Yates, his performance on this occasion being loudly applauded.

He was at last defeated for a third time by a header from Milward, Edgar Chadwick converted a centre from Turner a few minutes later, and Milward directly afterwards added a fifth. In a collision with E. Chadwick, Holdstock unfortunately got a kick on the ankle which necessitated his retirement, but though playing with ten men, Luton were able to save themselves from further humiliation, and the game ended as stated.

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Turner was the bright particular star in the Southampton team, but the whole lot played well. And so they ought, for I notice, from a Southampton paper, that a weekly income of £120 is needed during the playing season to keep the Club going.

In the other Southern League matches, the Spurs had the distinction of being the only visiting Club to score a victory. They went to Millwall and beat the Dockers by 2 goals to 1. Queen's Park Rangers did their best to atone for their defeat at Luton by beating Bristol Rovers by 4 goals to 3, Bristol City beat Swindon by 2 to nil, Reading overcame New Brompton by 2 to 1, and West Ham and Watford drew at Gravesend and Chatham respectively.

The "Athletic News" speaks very highly of "Punch" McEwen—Mac has evidently been re-christened since he left Luton. He played a grand game, it is said, against Liverpool on Saturday.

The Civil Service team beaten by Luton must have been a very weak one, even for the Civil Service. I notice from a Hitchin contemporary that Hitchin have just had the honour of beating the Service, and that the achievement was all the more noteworthy from the fact that "the visitors were at full strength." Inasmuch as not a single member of the team which visited Hitchin took part in the Cup-tie at Luton, one is driven to the conclusion that the Civilians turn out at "full strength" for their friendlies and play their weaklings in the Cup-ties.

Cee Springs v. Stantonbury United.—The Cee Springs were without a League match on Saturday, so a match was arranged with Stantonbury. The game was played at Leighton, and resulted in a draw of 2 goals all.

The draw for the supplemental round in the English Cup Competition took place on Monday, and for the third time in succession Luton had the good fortune to be drawn at home. Our visitors on January 5th will be Bristol Rovers, and as Luton have an old score to wipe off, we may look out for a great game.

The teetotallers of Canning Town were lucky enough to be given the responsible duty of entertaining Liverpool, but the Arsenal have no reason to rejoice at being called upon to visit Darwen, where the gates are not sufficiently large to atone for a long and wearying journey.

On Saturday next, Luton will be at home to Chatham, who, it will be remembered, beat the Strawplaiters early in the season by 2 goals to nil. If the Luton men don't "get their own back" in right good style on this occasion I shall be greatly disappointed. A full report of the match will appear in our next issue, which, owing to the Christmas holidays, will be published on Monday instead of Thursday.