

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

DRAW WITH QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

On Saturday the Luton team played their return Southern League game with the Queen's Park Rangers, when the outcome was a draw. The sides had met twice previously this season; on the first occasion the fixture was a Southern League game on the Rangers' ground on October 6, when the Beds. players occasioned considerable surprise by pulling off a victory of three goals to one; the second meeting took place two months later at Luton, the match this time being an English Cup Tie, when the Lutonians went one better and defeated the visitors by three goals to none. The injuries to players which have recently been crowding upon the Lutonians had made necessary some further sorting-up of the team. This accounts for the presence at right-back of White, who thoroughly justified his inclusion by playing a very good game. Some interest was added to the encounter by the appearance at centre-forward of Gray—late of Grimsby—who brought with him a very fine reputation as a skilful forward. The weather was atrocious, a bitterly cold wind sweeping over the ground and rain falling heavily at the outset. The start was made several minutes late, the teams turning out in the following order:—

Luton: Ord; White and McCurdy; Clifford, Holdstock and Williams; Brown, Blessington, Gray, Tierney and Durrant.

Queen's Park Rangers:—Clutterbuck; Newlands and McConnell; Lennox, Hitch and Skinner; Gray, Christie, Ronaldson, Humphrey and Foxall.

Referee, Mr. H. S. Walford (Ponder's End); linesmen, Mr. H. J. Clarke (Waltham Cross) and Mr. A. J. Kips (Maida Vale).

There was naturally some disappointment expressed when it was seen that Luton had lost the toss, this success of the Rangers being by no means unimportant, for the wind was so strong as to be capable of considerably assisting the side fortunate enough to secure it. The "blues" commenced operations against the wind and the rain and it soon became perceptible how great the advantage of the visitors was, for the Rangers were soon enabled to attack. One of the earliest points in the game was a foul against Luton, following which Ord effected a brilliant save. More fouling was seen from both sides, Gray—the newcomer to Luton—on one occasion being the victim. Foxall, who was giving the home defence considerable trouble, was smartly pulled up for being off-side, the latter decision being entered against Luton a minute afterwards. Ord was responsible for a couple of extremely smart saves just now, one leading to a really marvellous clearance. The Rangers forced a corner later on, following which Gray scored the initial point for the wearers of the green and white. Just afterwards Clifford sent in a tremendous shot, from which the ball travelled a little bit wide. Brown followed this up by shooting across the goal and it was unfortunate that none of his companions in the forward rank were not up. As the interval approached the homesters had a good deal the best of the game, and they attacked strongly. On one occasion Clutterbuck was brought down in goal with the ball in his possession, and how he managed to clear was somewhat of a mystery. McCurdy had hard luck in failing to score just before the interval. At half-time the positions were:—

RANGERS, 2; LUTON, 0.

As so often happens when a team has been facing a strong wind, the Luton men, in the second half, showed perceptible signs of the difficult task they had been called upon to perform. At the commencement of the second portion the game was evenly contested, but later on the locals manifested some superiority and afforded the visiting defenders a good deal of anxiety. McConnell and Newlands, however, were in very good form and, for a time, managed to avert the downfall of Clutterbuck's charge. At length, however, Durrant managed to get clear and he reduced the lead which had been established by the visitors with a first-rate shot. Subsequently the game was stubbornly fought, and when Holdstock was seen to be injured sufficiently to warrant his being carried off, it was thought that the chances were all in favour of the Londoners. The truth of the old saying that "There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip" was once more illustrated, for when the Rangers were beginning to congratulate themselves on having scored the full quota of points for once in a way, their citadel was captured once more. Williams was the executant, his effort being made from a long range. It was a grand shot and fully deserved to score. This second success put the spectators on good terms with themselves, though it was felt that the final successful effort had been somewhat unduly delayed. However, the game ended appropriately enough in a draw, the final totals being:—

LUTON, 2; RANGERS, 2.

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