

Football.

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. MILLWALL ATHLETIC.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town	2 goals.
Millwall Athletic	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Ord; Street and Lindsay; F. Hawkes, White, and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Barker, Tierney, and Brown.

Millwall: Griffiths; Shutt and Davidson; Caie, Millar, and Henderson; Dryburgh, Bevan, J. H. Gettins, Banks, and Carnelly.

Referee, Mr. A. R. Partridge.

When I said last week that I hoped we should have something like the old crowd and something like the old excitement for the Millwall match, I did not think that my wishes would so nearly be fulfilled as they actually were, and still less did I think there was any possibility of it on Saturday morning, when the rain descended in torrents, the wind blew a hurricane, and the whole aspect of affairs was enough to damp the ardour of even the most enthusiastic footballer.

Happily, however, the weather mended as the day wore on, and though the prospects in the morning and the downpour about half-an-hour before the kick-off doubtless kept a good many away, there was nevertheless a very respectable attendance, and the game was followed with as keen an interest as any played on the Town ground this season, for it was a ding-dong one from start to finish. The middle of the field was in a very sloppy state, but both sides seemed to revel in the mud, and bespattered themselves and each other with the greatest good will.

The omens were not auspicious from the Luton point of view. In the first place it was a battle of the Blues, and as the Dark Blues had been victorious in the boat-race in the morning, the superstitious might have expected the Dark Blues (Millwall) to triumph over the Light Blues (Luton) in the afternoon. A much more practical kind of omen, however, was the winning of the toss by the Dockers, for there was a strong wind blowing, but luckily the advantage from this did not prove to be so great as was anticipated.

The enthusiasm of the spectators was aroused at the very outset, for Luton were as near as possible scoring within the first two minutes. Pretty play by Blessington initiated the attack, and Durrant receiving, sent in a lightning shot, which Griffiths stopped just against the post. The other forwards being up, it looked any odds on the ball being scrimmaged through, but the custodian managed to get it behind, and from the corner Durrant placed behind. The Dockers retaliated, and from Carnelly's centre, Dryburgh shot wide.

Tierney next worked his way through and passed out to Durrant, who crashed the ball into the net—the wrong side. Blessington, Barker, and Tierney followed on with a good combined attempt, but at the critical moment Davidson rushed across and cleared. Griffiths afterwards negotiated a capital shot by Brown, and Millwall then transferred the play, and Ord had to handle for the first time from a shot by Henderson, whilst a moment later Millar skimmed the cross-bar.

Following on a shot by Brown, Millwall again broke away, and from a middle right along the front of goal by Carnelly, Gettins had a fine opening, but sent very wide. There was no question, however, which was the better side. Millwall's attacks were spasmodic, whereas Luton were pressing most persistently. Brown, after beating Davidson, sent in a beauty, and from Griffiths' attempt to clear, the ball rebounded behind off Barker. A foul by Lindsay gave Millwall their best chance, and Ord made two very fine saves—once while on the ground and then punting out a high shot.

A couple of corners for Luton next occupied attention, and then Lindsay elicited a rousing cheer by working his way three parts up the field and passing to Barker, who put in a grand shot, which Griffiths just saved. Millwall responded, and Banks outwitting Street, gave Carnelly a clear chance, but Hawkes came to the rescue and kicked behind. The visitors were again dangerous from a throw-in, and then Luton taking up the running in real good style, Durrant put in a spanking shot, and another one hit the post. Tierney then rushed up and had got the ball on to the very goal-line, when he was not only tripped, but his foot was held while he was on the ground. Luton naturally made a confident appeal for a penalty, but it was not given.

This was very hard lines on the homesters, who at the interval had to be content to cross over with honours easy—a not at all satisfactory index to the play. When the game was resumed, it appeared that the Dockers had thoroughly made up their minds to win, for they went at it in most determined fashion, and a lovely shot from Banks went just wide of the mark. The visitors were then beaten back, and Tierney made a big run, finishing up with a shot which was only a trifle out. A clipping centre by Durrant gave Barker a splendid opportunity, but he clean missed the ball.

Again and again Luton attacked, and at last Durrant netted the ball, but it was after Tierney had been given offside. From a foul against Shutt, Lindsay placed, and Griffiths had to fist out a dropping shot. The Dockers took the ball to the other end, and Gettins passed to Dryburgh, who shot very smartly, but Ord saved and cleared in rare style. Dryburgh had another try and shot over, and then Luton going away, Durrant put in a nicely-judged centre, enabling Brown to rush in and score a fine goal.

The cheering that ensued was certainly very much like old times, but it seemed to have an inspiring effect on the Dockers as well as Luton, for they made a vigorous assault and were repulsed by the redoubtable Roger, who saved grandly from Dryburgh. Luton then got down from a free kick, and Griffiths had to save. Another foul following, Lindsay placed within easy distance of goal, and Barker stopped the ball for Tierney, who took a flying shot, and beat Griffiths all ends up—as brilliant a goal as one could wish to see. This provoked a fresh demonstration from the spectators, but despite the rebuff, the Dockers never slackened their efforts, and both sides went for all they were worth right up to the finish.

There was no further scoring, however, though the game was so full of incident that one could never say what a moment would bring forth. But when the whistle sounded, and Luton were left in possession of as fine a victory as they have ever won, there was more applause, and many were the enthusiasts who rushed towards the dressing rooms to give the Luton players a parting cheer.

It is rather a difficult matter to speak of the men individually, because there was such an all-round excellence. Ord gave a fine exhibition between the sticks, for though, on the whole, he was not overworked, he had some very teasing shots to deal with. Lindsay played a great game at back, but Street was not quite so good as in the Kettering match. The halves were a trio of splendid workers. Williams, no doubt, gave the most finished display, but Hawkes performed remarkably well, and White tackled in grand style, seldom letting Gettins make anything like a show.

Barker was the only weak man in the forward line, and even he did some smart things at times. Tierney played a champion game, for he did not spoil his cleverness and hard work by sticking to the ball. Blessington also rendered excellent service, and Brown and Durrant were both in first-rate fettle, Brown nipping in and out very smartly, and Durrant in the first half being in his very best mood for shooting.

As to the visitors, no fault could be found with Griffiths, who kept goal in admirable style. The backs were fairly good, and Millar played capitally at centre-half. Banks and Gettins would probably have been the leading lights among the forwards if the opposing defence had allowed them a little more latitude, and Dryburgh performed very well at outside-right, but Carnelly was not great on the left wing, and there was nothing particularly sensational about Bevan's display.

In the other Southern League matches, it is interesting to note that not a single home team was defeated. Watford made a draw with Southampton at one goal each, and a similar result was arrived at at West Ham, where Kettering were the visitors. Hotspur beat the Rangers by 4 goals to 1, and Portsmouth beat Reading by 2 to 1. At New Brompton the match with Bristol Rovers was abandoned after ten minutes' play, owing to the fury of the gale. The following is the League table up to date:—

					Goals		
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Southampton	24	17	3	4	58	21	38
Bristol City	24	16	5	3	49	23	35
Portsmouth	24	16	6	2	51	29	34
Millwall	27	16	9	2	52	32	34
Bristol Rovers	25	13	9	3	42	30	29
West Ham	23	12	8	3	35	24	29
Tottenham Hotspur	20	11	6	3	39	22	25
Queen's Park Rangers	26	11	12	3	41	45	25
Luton	22	8	12	2	30	37	18
Kettering	21	6	10	5	26	39	17
New Brompton	24	6	13	5	28	42	17
Gravesend	24	5	13	6	28	75	16
Reading	21	5	11	5	19	22	15
Watford	25	5	17	3	21	49	13
Swindon	26	3	16	7	19	45	13