

Football.

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. READING.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 2 goals.

Reading nil.

The teams were as follow:—

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

Reading: Cotton; Henderson and Clinch; Bull, Holt, and Mainman; Evans, Pangbourne Logan, Sharp, and Spence.

Referee, Mr. J. H. Jamieson (London).

When a comparatively weak team from Luton went to Reading a few weeks ago and snatched a victory by a goal to nil, I thought they had done a very smart thing. So in truth they had, but I must confess that after seeing Reading on Saturday, I can the better understand how it was done. The Biscuiteers, taking them altogether, are a strong, sturdy-looking lot of players, and they are a tolerably expensive combination, but there is no heart in their play, and it is this want of heart that spells disaster.

They made a bit of a show in the first ten minutes on Saturday, but for the most part Luton were all over them, and Ord had only one decent shot to stop throughout the match. Instead of winning by a couple of goals, Luton might have won by half-a-dozen had they really put themselves to it, but in the second half they came down pretty nearly to Reading's level, their play showing a marked falling off from that in the first forty-five.

Unsettled weather again interfered with the game, and there were not more than fifteen hundred people present. It was not long before many of these must have wished they had stopped indoors, for a very heavy storm of rain and hail came on soon after the start and made things very uncomfortable both for players and spectators.

Play was of a pretty even character to start with, but eventually Luton got the upper hand, and Williams put in a beautiful shot which somewhat troubled Cotton. Then Brown made a sprint, and being pressed, back-heeled to Tierney, who sent nicely across the mouth of goal, and Blessington rushed up and scored with a tremendous shot, he himself following at such a pace that it took him some time to pick himself out of the net.

Durrant and Blessington next made a nice run, and the former getting in a lovely centre, Barker shot just the wrong side of the net. Reading replied with a couple of corners, and then the homesters got away again, chiefly through good play by Tierney. Barker and Blessington succeeded in beating the backs, and Barker scored a second goal with a very pretty shot, the ball going in at the opposite side to which the custodian stood.

Luton continued to have much the better of the play, and Tierney was making his way through when he was badly fouled, but he just managed to hand the ball on to Barker, who scored with a grand shot. To the chagrin of the spectators, however, the referee disallowed the goal, and gave a free kick to Luton, who thus had to suffer for the sins of the other side. The free kick was not turned to account, and then Tierney got in another fine shot, which Cotton saved. Directly after, Barker headed into the net from a corner placed by Durrant, but though the ball had dropped well in front of goal, the referee ruled that it had gone behind first.

It will be seen, therefore, that Luton had very hard lines in crossing over with only a couple of goals in hand. In the second half, they again had much the better of the game, but there was no particular determination about their play, and Reading consequently got off with a two goals to nil beating.

Henderson, the captain and right back, was the only man among the losers to attract the eye, and he certainly put in some very cool and clean kicking. Cotton was much too prone to running out of his goal to pass muster as a reliable custodian, but at the same time he had no chance with the shots that scored.

Ord had a very easy berth. Both the backs played very well, Street being the safer of the two, and the halves were in great form. White's dash, Hawkes' coolness, and Williams' dash and cleverness combined, quite took the sting out of the opposing attack. The forwards performed well, Blessington and Tierney being the best of the bunch. Durrant rendered a very good account of himself, and Barker was sometimes very smart and sometimes the reverse, but on the whole his form was pretty good.