

Football.

The Southern League.

LUTON v. SOUTHAMPTON.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Southampton ————— 2 goals.

Luton ————— nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; Hawkes, White, and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, Tierney, and Colvin.

Southampton—Robinson; C. B. Fry and Molyneux; Meston, Bowman, and Lee; A. Turner, Wood, Brown, Chadwick, and J. Turner.

Referee, Mr. H. D. Casey (Tottenham).

Spectators at football matches are all very well in their way, and are very desirable indeed from a financial point of view, but when they take such a part in the proceedings as many of them did on the Dunstable-road ground on Saturday, they go a long way towards making themselves an unmitigated nuisance.

The Southampton match had been looked forward to for some time as one of the tit-bits of the season, the spectators went down presumably to see a good exhibition of football, and for a time they got their desire in this respect, the play in the first half-hour being as brilliant as one would be likely to witness on any enclosure in the country.

Then Luton lost a goal. Fry, the man whom most people wanted to see, had been for some time losing his head, and the spectators soon lost their tempers. And when people lose their tempers they say silly things; the crowd were constantly saying silly things, or rather shouting them at the top of their voices, and all the satisfaction they got out of it was to completely spoil what might otherwise have been a very fine game.

The Luton crowd, let me say, is getting a bad name, and moreover is assisting to get the team a bad reputation. Players are but human, and if the spectators do their best to make them think they are being badly treated, either by referee or by anybody else, it is only natural that they should let their feelings get the better of their judgment, and then it is good-bye to all hope of decent football.

Of course, I know that the primary cause of all the unpleasantness on Saturday was Fry. This distinguished amateur, who has a reputation second to no man's, displayed anything but a sportsmanlike spirit, his feelings apparently first being ruffled by Colvin's hampering movements. Colvin is a little man, and he quite upset the dignity of the big one. Still, whatever may have been Fry's faults, they were no justification for the noisy and senseless demonstrations of the crowd.

Without going into this matter any further, I will proceed to the game itself. Luton won the toss, which gave very little advantage, and Brown—the Southampton Brown—kicked off before about four thousand spectators. The game at once became fast and exciting, both sides evidently being right up to concert pitch, and both striving their very utmost to gain the upper hand.

Ord was the first custodian to be called upon, but it was a very simple sort of thing, and then Luton went to the other end, where Hawkes shot over the bar. Directly afterwards, Robinson cleared from a good centre by Durrant, and Luton continued to go very strongly, but without any practical result. The Saints made a brief response, then Luton got away through Tierney, who passed to Brown, and Molyneux in trying to clear, kicked towards his own goal, giving Colvin a fine opening.

The Luton left-winger sent in a shot which Robinson scarcely succeeded in clearing, but Blessington, in his rush, unfortunately missed the ball. Then Tierney got through again, and Colvin shot wide. One more opportunity Luton had, and then it looked any odds on Southampton scoring, for the centre-forward got by Lindsay and found himself absolutely clear. He was not quite smart enough, however, and some of the Luton men getting back, the Saint shot rather nervously, and Ord easily saved and cleared.

Sharp was next conspicuous for some good play in depriving the Southampton left wing, and from a throw-in, Durrant showed up with a beautiful centre, from which Colvin forced a corner. This was splendidly placed by the left-winger, and another corner resulted. Colvin again undertook the kick, and placed right under the bar, but Robinson fisted out.

Durrant next made a splendid run, receiving from a capital pass by Brown, and centred across the goal, but as luck would have it, the ball went just a little too far to be of use. Brown followed with a shot from long range, and a moment later, Tierney, profiting by a bit of bungling on the part of Molyneux, sent in an oblique shot which passed just wide of the mark.

Another incident was when Durrant sped along after a pass back by Molyneux, and came up with the custodian just as the latter picked up the ball. Durrant tried all he knew but Robinson refused to be shifted, and effected a good clearance. But it was only for a moment, for Colvin got away from a beautiful pass by Brown and centred across the goal, but the right wing were not up and the chance was lost.

Southampton now made an assault, and Ord had to clear at close quarters. A foul against Lee enabled Lindsay to get in a good kick, and when the ball was returned White shot over. A tame shot by Brown was followed by a foul against Bowman, and from this Brown got in another shot, but again Robinson was well able to keep his charge intact.

After this the visitors took another turn, and a foul against White gave them an opening, but it was not turned to account. Luton retaliating, Brown very nearly succeeded in intercepting a back pass to Robinson, and then a foul against Williams was the means of transferring the play. A miss by Lindsay added to the danger, but Ord managed to clear.

The Saints came again, however, and eventually the ball coming across from the left wing, Ord and Sharp got mixed up in an attempt to clear. The clearance, as a consequence, was a very weak one, and Meston scored with a good shot—the first goal in a Southern League match registered against Luton at home this season. It was a thousand pities, for up to this time Luton had had considerably the better of the play, though when Southampton got away they always appeared to be the more dangerous. The goal was scored after thirty-five minutes' play.

Upon the re-start, Colvin at once made the running and hit the net with a good shot, and then from a pass by Tierney, he got clean through again, and his shot struck the upright. He ought to have scored. After a bit, Southampton found themselves in the vicinity of the Luton goal, and A. Turner putting across, Chadwick headed in, but Ord cleared in very smart style.

A nasty charge by Fry, who evidently did not like being tricked by Colvin, escaped the referee's attention, but Lindsay was not so fortunate at the other end, and the Saints had a couple of kicks, the second going through without anyone touching. A mistake by Sharp let the visitors in again, but nothing resulted, and half-time was called with the score standing at one to nil in Southampton's favour.

Early in the second half Brown was fouled by Fry, and in the very exciting play which ensued Tierney had a very good chance of scoring, and a dropping shot from Durrant just missed the upright. Hands against Brown gave Southampton facilities for getting to the other end, and ultimately, from a centre by J. Turner, A. Brown scored a soft goal whilst Lindsay was appealing for offside.

There was no play worth speaking of after this. The spectators shouted, the Luton team went to pieces, more or less, and for a time Southampton pressed vigorously. Then Molyneux got hurt in a collision with Durrant, and the game had to be stopped for a few minutes.

When play was resumed, Luton, after a couple of fouls had been given against them, acted on the aggressive and forced a corner. Durrant placed, and Williams having tried a shot, Colvin followed on and sent just by the upright. Williams, a few minutes afterwards, had a good chance, but shot over. Molyneux was off the field for a time, and then another stoppage occurred by reason of J. Turner being hurt in a heavy charge by White.

When play was resumed, Southampton secured a couple of corners, but the most noteworthy incident of the concluding stage of the play was an offence by Fry, for which a penalty ought to have been awarded. Tierney was tripped in the twelve-yards' line, but though Luton appealed for a penalty, the referee awarded only a free kick, and from this nothing accrued.

Taking the game altogether, it was extremely disappointing, and the reasons for this have been already stated. When Luton were playing the game, they were playing it just a little better than their opponents, and it was only when the spectators began to take such an undesirable part in the proceedings that the homesters really lost ground. Both the Southampton goals were soft ones, and in this respect they were decidedly lucky, though at the same time no impartial person would deny that the honours went to the better team.

Ord made several good saves, but on one

weather of the back was quite up to his proper form. But the weakest man in the team was the centre-half, whose impetuosity causes him to leave his own work in order that he may do other people's. If White would keep his place he would be hard to beat, but the undertaking of a roving commission is only a source of weakness.

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Both Williams and Hawkes rendered a first-rate account of themselves, and in the first half the forwards also played in rare good style, except for their failing to turn their efforts to account at the last moment. Brown was particularly good, some of his passes being very neat, and if he himself could only have got a few forward passes, he might have done some damage.

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With respect to the visitors Robinson was not in any way wanting in goal, but Fry, from whom so much had been expected, was quite a frost. Bowman and Meston played well at half-back, and the forwards were a fine, dashing lot, very fast, and able to make the most of their opportunities. A. Turner was brilliant on the outside-right, and Brown was so good in centre that one can only be surprised he should ever have been left out of the team.

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At the conclusion of the match something in the nature of a hostile demonstration was made against Fry, but it was chiefly by boys. There was some attempt on the part of these juveniles at hustling, and it was only averted by the prompt intervention of directors and police. Had the youngsters succeeded in their idiotic attempts, it would probably have been the death of professional football in Luton. This shows how necessary it is that those who have any respect for the Club should learn to control their feelings.