

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. WATFORD.

A NARROW VICTORY.

For the 4th time this season, these old rivals met at Luton on Saturday for their first Southern League match. Since Luton defeated them a month ago in the English Cup, the Watford eleven have been showing very indifferent form, and the committee made some drastic changes in the team for this match. Waller, their goal-keeper, has practically given up the game, and his place was taken by Nidd, their left back. Brown, who has been dropped for two weeks, was brought in at outside left, while Munn and Greenslade appeared in the half-back line, Wragg partnering Cother at back.

The weather was very dull and threatening and a strong westerly breeze blew across the ground. A good number of the visitors' supporters accompanied the team, but the crowd never numbered more than 2,000. In the Luton team, Harry Williams was again absent, R. Hawkes substituting him at left half. The referee was Mr. Nat Whittaker, of London, and he had the following 22 under his command:—

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; F. Hawkes, White and R. Hawkes; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, Tierney and Colvin.

Watford: Nidd; Cother and Wragg; Munn, Hamilton and Greenslade; Cottrell, Lyon, Harvey, Chalmers and Brown.

Watford won the toss and Luton kicked off. The home side pressed at once but offside against Brown stopped their progress, and Munn gave a fruitless corner. Luton came again and Colvin made a good effort, but offside again intervened. Watford got away, and Harvey shot just by the post with a fine drive, and Ord had to give a corner to a grand shot from Munn, but Tierney cleared.

Nidd saved smartly from Brown and Wragg cleared well from Tierney, and the first foul of the match was given against Greenslade, but it was no award to Luton. Cother headed out a fine centre from Brown, and directly after the latter netted, but offside nullified. Sharpe got hurt in clearing from Lyon, but he was able to resume, while at the other end Munn gave a corner to a grand shot from Blessington, and Hawkes shot over after Nidd had saved from Colvin. Greenslade tripped Durrant badly when he was getting away, but the referee failed to penalise. After sending in a fine centre, Colvin missed badly with their goal at his mercy.

The interval was fast approaching and the spectators were anxious for goals, but the defence of each side was very sound, although Watford were very lucky in clearing some of the Luton forwards' shots. Brown skimmed the bar with a grand shot, and Durrant also tried well. A foul on Nidd nullified a fine goal obtained by Lindsay with a beautiful dropping shot from a well placed corner by Colvin. At the interval there was

No score.

On resuming, Watford got away and Brown caused Ord to clear, but Luton were soon attacking, and from good play by R. Hawkes, Colvin forced Cother to give a corner, and the Watford goal had some narrow escapes. R. Hawkes struck the bar with a grand shot. However, after 6 minutes' play, Luton made a determined onslaught on the visitors' charge, and Blessington beat Nidd with a fine shot after the latter had just cleared a centre from Durrant.

Watford now pressed, and Ord had to save from Harvey, but Luton soon transferred operations, and Cother and Wragg both cleared efforts from Colvin. After Nidd had cleared from Brown, Watford got away and Chalmers shot right across the goal-mouth, but the ball was missed. Sharp had to leave the field as a result of his injury, leaving Luton with ten men. In consequence, Luton resorted to the one back game, and to the great surprise of everyone the visitors adopted the same tactics, Cother coming up into the front. Thus Watford played six forwards. From now to the finish the game was a complete farce, and needs no description. Watford gained an offside point, but no more legitimate scoring took place and a poor game ended.

Luton 1 goal

Watford 0 ,,

NOTES.

The match was not of a very scientific character, and the defence of either side was generally too strong for the attack, although on the day's play, Luton fully deserved to win by at least three goals. The unsportsmanlike tactics adopted by the Watford eleven after Sharp had retired completely spoilt the game, and also led to one or two unpleasant incidents, when the referee had to caution several players.

The Watford eleven showed great improvement on their display when Luton met them in the Cup, and nearly scored on two or three occasions, but the Luton defence prevailed. In his new position Nidd played a splendid game, and could not possibly have saved the shot that beat him. He was ably assisted by Cother and Wragg at back ; both kicked very strongly and never gave the Luton forwards much latitude

The middle trio also played well, and Hamilton, the old Leicester man, was always in the thick of the fray. Munn, their latest capture from Manchester City, did fairly but was inclined to wander. Greenslade, who hails from Everton, showed up moderately, but found his wing too clever for him at times. The forwards all worked hard, but they sadly lack combination.

Harvey, who also comes from Manchester, played a decent game in the centre, but was poorly supported. Our old friend "Roland" Brown did very well on the wing, but he has not lost his old tendency to run back with the ball instead of going forward, and lost one or two openings on this account. His partner, Chalmers, was not so effective as in the Cup tie. Against a less reliable defence, however, the Watford forwards would make themselves felt.

With regard to the winners, Ord again kept a clean sheet, although he did not have a great deal to do. Lindsay played a strong resourceful game at back, and time after time cleared his lines in fine style. Sharp did his best until his injury, and although he continued for some time he eventually had to retire after the interval.

For the second week, the Luton middle line was composed entirely of locals and all three of them performed their duties splendidly. Rob Hawkes was perhaps most prominent and all through he gave a very clever exhibition, and fully deserved the cheers bestowed upon him by the spectators. White was untiring throughout, and the other Hawkes repeatedly got the better of his opponent. On present form the Luton half-backs would take a deal of beating, both in defence and attack.

The forwards were again in capital trim, and although they had only gained one point, the Watford goal had some narrow escapes. Brown was irresistible in the centre. Some of his efforts deserved better success than they

attained, and only the hardest of luck prevented him from getting two more points. Tierney and Colvin also were effective, and caused great amusement among the crowd by the way they often got the better of the burly Cother. Blessington and Durrant got through a vast amount of effective work.

The referee was very fair, but was again very strict on the off-side rule, and no less than 19 free-kicks were awarded Watford for the infringement of this rule by Luton, while the visitors were penalised 9 times for the same offence. The players were mostly pulled up for offside in the latter portion of the game when Sharp had retired. The number of fouls awarded during the match were 4 against the visitors, while Luton were penalised 5 times. The behaviour of the crowd was all that could be desired.

To-morrow (Saturday) the great English cup-tie is to be decided at Plumstead, where Luton are journeying to meet the Arsenal in the supplementary round. The winners in this tie will qualify for the competition proper. As stated last week, the Luton team are very confident of their ability to win, and should they succeed there will be great rejoicing at Luton. With regard to the relative merits of the teams, Luton are as strong as the Arsenal both in defence and attack, but it is the middle line where the strength of the Plumstead team lies, and in Place, (or Coles) Dick and Anderson, the Arsenal have three most capable defenders. Given fine weather, there is bound to be a huge crowd, and excitement will run very high, as such old rivals meet for the first time in a Cup-tie. The referee will be Sergt. Barrow (London) and the kick-off is at 2.30.