

Football.

The Southern League

LUTON v. WATFORD.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Watford	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

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.

Referee, Mr. N. Whittaker.

With Luton in a winning vein, there ought to be no difficulty in securing for Southern League matches at home a gate of £60, which is the sum required in order to pay expenses, but on Saturday, local rivalry notwithstanding, the visit of Watford attracted an attendance of only a couple of thousand or thereabouts.

Possibly, people thought that Watford having dropped some players and re-arranged the team generally, Luton would be able to do pretty much as they liked, and that therefore the game would not be worth seeing. There are some persons so squeamish that they will stay away if they think the home club is going to be beaten, and they will stay away also if they think the result is going to be very much the other way.

But those good folk who thought Watford were going to crumple up and yield themselves willing victims to the team which knocked them out of the Cup Competition were very much mistaken, for the shuffling of the cards had worked wonders for the visitors, and they were seen to better advantage than in any of the previous matches with Luton this season.

The game began soon after half-past two, Watford winning the toss, but gaining very little thereby, as the wind blew across the ground. Luton went away at the start, and from a centre by Durrant, Brown sent in a shot from an off-side position. A corner next fell to the home-sters, and Colvin placing, the Watford goal experienced several narrow escapes. The visitors retaliated, and after one or two attempts, Harvey got in a beauty, the ball just skimming the bar.

Watford coming again, a splendid shot was caught by Ord, who held the ball too long, and was charged behind with it in his hands. Cottrell placed, Tierney cleared, and Brown got through at the other end, but Cother just cleared in the nick of time by kicking out. Luton attacked again, and after a fruitless corner, Roland Brown created a momentary diversion. The ball being returned, Durrant had a lovely chance to centre in the mouth of goal, where Tierney and Brown were waiting to receive it, but he preferred to shoot, and the ball went behind.

Cother in defending from another assault appeared to handle, but the appeal was unheeded, and the next moment Brown sent in a grand shot, which Nidd disposed of as if to the manner born, and his effort was greeted with considerable applause. Brown afterwards scored an off-side goal, and then Watford making for the other end, Chalmers got clear, and taking the ball to within a few yards of goal, seemed certain to score. Sharp, however, rushed across, and just planted his foot down as Chalmers took his kick. The result was that the goal was saved, but Sharp's ankle was hurt, and he had to stand by for a few minutes.

The ball was speedily trundled up the field again, and a corner being conceded to a hot shot by Blessington, Durrant placed, and a beauty by Colvin was well fisted out by Nidd. Then a miss by Wragg gave Tierney a rare opportunity, but instead of dribbling the ball in as he might have done, he sent in a tame shot which Nidd easily disposed of. Colvin next was responsible for a very fine effort, getting by both Munn and Cother, and finishing up with a good centre, which went begging, the other forwards not being up. Colvin repeated the first part of his performance almost immediately, getting quite clear, and then, with an open goal, shot miserably wide.

Durrant next nullified a smart piece of work by shooting behind instead of middling to the inside men and giving them a chance, but a little later Brown obtained a corner. This was splendidly placed by Colvin, and Lindsay meeting a return, netted the ball with a shot which passed just underneath the bar, but the point was disallowed because the goalkeeper had been impeded.

Luton continued to have the better of the play up to the interval, but one or two good openings were practically thrown away, and the teams crossed over with a blank score-sheet. Watford had undoubtedly performed much better than was anticipated, and the play thus far had been of a very interesting character, though scarcely satisfactory in its result from a Luton point of view.

Upon resuming, Luton at once acted on the aggressive, and Brown, who ran between the two backs, was given offside, a decision which was decidedly open to question. Colvin next obtained and placed a corner, and Bob Hawkes put in a good shot, and followed it with another long one which just skimmed the bar. Roland Brown then got by Lindsay at the other end, but muddled his opportunity, and the ball being returned, Durrant went away and centred, Tierney helped the ball on its way, and Blessington scored with a fine shot quite out of Nidd's reach.

This happened six minutes from the re-start, and the spectators of course were all hoping that it was the forerunner of others. In this, however, they were disappointed. Several free kicks took the players off their game a bit, but the Lutonians warning to their work, Tierney sent in a couple of shots which were negotiated by Nidd, and these were followed by attempts by Fred Hawkes and Brown, each missing by the merest shave.

From a well-judged centre by Colvin, Tierney put in a sparkling shot which rebounded off the custodian, and then Watford getting possession, Lindsay, in toying about with Roland Brown, let in Chalmers, who came within an ace of scoring, the ball passing just by the opposite post. There was no need whatever to have given the chance; it was only because Lindsay chose not to treat Brown's efforts seriously.

At this juncture, Sharp had to leave the field, and Luton had to play with only one back, a lesson in the art of which they had had on the previous Saturday. But they had not been playing it long before Watford, with less excuse, resorted to the same expedient, Cother going up among the forwards. The consequence was that, with the exception of Lindsay and Wragg, the men were all of a heap in the middle of the field, and, generally speaking, directly one attempted to break away, he was given offside.

Now and then, a forward did manage to emerge with the ball at his feet, and without having infringed the rule, and on one of these occasions Brown must have scored had not Blessington chimed in and taken the ball from his toe. But altogether the proceedings during the last twenty minutes were a complete farce, and it was quite a relief when the call of time was given, especially as the heavy clouds hanging over the ground made it difficult to see what was going on.

As already stated, Watford gave a very good show. Nidd particularly distinguishing himself in goal by the smart and business-like way in which he saved and cleared. The backs were very good, and the forwards were wonderfully well together. Chalmers and Harvey perhaps being the pick of the bunch.

The Luton forwards, on the other hand, were certainly not at their best, and they will have to put a lot more heart and a lot more head into their work next Saturday if they expect to beat the Arsenal. Neither of the outside men was up to the mark, and Durrant was most exasperating in his constant efforts to shoot instead of giving the chance to the inside men. Brown and Tierney worked hard and well, though the latter

ought to have done better with his opportunities, but Blëssington was below his proper form.

Young Fred Hawkes, too, failed to come up to his usual standard, and Bob Hawkes was certainly not the least effective of the trio. He played very smartly, tackling well and placing the ball with great judgment. The backs, so long as there were two of them, were both very good, and Ord was quite equal to the calls made upon him.

A Woolwich correspondent, writing on the subject of next Saturday's Cup-tie, remarks with pleasure upon the fact that the draw has decreed that the Arsenal shall have the privilege of entertaining "such old favourites as Luton," and adds: "It is some time now since we have met Luton in a serious encounter, but I can recall vividly the old days of the United League when Luton were only second to Millwall as a popular draw at Plumstead. The Lutonians are stronger this season than for some time past, and will make the Reds go all the way if they are to secure the verdict, but win or lose I can assure my Luton friends of a hearty reception when they step on the Manor Field next Saturday."

I need hardly remind the Luton men that on Saturday next they have a great opportunity of making themselves famous. A victory over the Arsenal in a Cup-tie at Plumstead would bring them into such prominence as they have not enjoyed for many a long day, because the Arsenal just now are at the top of their form. They have not lost a match since Oct. 19th, at home or away, and during that time they have not had a goal scored against them in the League Competition.

Still, I cannot help thinking that the Arsenal have had more than their fair share of luck, and if Luton play up to their best form on Saturday, I think they have a very reasonable chance of achieving the desired distinction. Let us hope they will rise to the occasion.

The following is the League table up to date:

	Goals.						
	Pld.	Won.	Lst.	Drn.	For.	Agst.	Pts.
Southampton.....	12	9	1	2	32	9	20
Portsmouth	12	9	1	2	24	10	20
Tottenham Hotspur	11	9	1	1	26	8	19
Reading	12	9	2	1	24	8	19
West Ham United	13	6	5	2	18	18	14
Luton ...	9	6	3	0	11	8	12
Millwall	12	5	6	1	18	18	11
Kettering	10	4	4	2	11	10	10
Queen's Park Rangers...	10	3	5	2	10	10	8
Northampton.....	11	4	7	0	17	20	8
Wellingborough	10	4	6	0	11	19	8
New Brompton.....	10	2	5	3	13	18	7
Watford	12	3	8	1	11	27	7
Brentford ..	11	2	7	2	10	19	6
Bristol Rovers	10	1	7	2	6	18	4
Swindon	11	1	9	1	7	23	3