

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

[BY "SPECTATOR".]

FOOTBALL.

TOP OF THE LEAGUE.

LUTON'S SPLENDID POSITION.

THE Q.P.R. DEFEATED.

There was a crowd of magnificent proportions at the Dunstable-road enclosure on Saturday to watch the narrow win, as it proved, of Luton over the Queen's Park Rangers. So well have Luton been playing this year that this success placed them at the head of the Southern League table. Last year Luton beat the Rangers at home by four goals to one, and though they were expected again to get the better of the Rangers, nobody expected so large a margin.

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The teams who did duty on Saturday were:—

LUTON.

	Bennett	Thompson	McEwen	
	F. Hawkes	White	Williams	
Durrant	Eaton	McKee	Storey	Allsopp
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Murphey	McGowan	Brown	Abbott	Hamilton
	Bull	Hitch	Bowman	
	Newlands	Archer		
	Collins			

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

Referee, Mr. H. Ward, Nottingham; linesmen, Messrs. Tappin (West Ham) and Lynch (Waltham-stow).

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McEwen was received with a huge shout when he turned out, as fears were entertained that he would be an absentee. On the other hand, regret was expressed at the absence of Bob Hawkes, through the injury received to his shoulder in the West Ham game. Williams took Hawkes's place at left-half. "Mac" tossed up and the Rangers' captain guessed the wrong side of the coin. Luton kicked towards the Bury farm end. There was but little wind, though the sun shone very fiercely. The Luton men played with the sun slightly in their eyes. There was some questioning whether the home captain had done the right thing, but I think "Mac" is, after all, the best judge.

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The Rangers were the first to press, and Brown placed a long shot ahead for Hamilton to catch, but "Mac" considerably watched the ball over the line. Eaton was penalised for jumping, and from this free-kick the Rangers got down and Albott had a try at the Luton goal, but Thompson was on the alert and saved finely. A foul for Luton 30 yards from the Rangers' goal gave the home side a chance, and "Mac" tried to put the ball in the net but sent outside. Williams was rolling on the ground, and, swinging his leg behind him, brought down a Ranger, and a foul was accordingly given. There was nothing tangible resulting from this free-kick, but Luton forced the play and during an attack on the Rangers' goal McKee sent the ball in the net, but the whistle was blown and a free-kick for off-side awarded.

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The Luton men were determined to give Collins no rest and Durrant sailed away on the right and put across a lovely centre, but Collins got to the ball and sent it away towards the Luton citadel. Archer fouled Storey close in, and things appeared a bit promising for Luton, but a foul by Williams relieved the attack. Poor old Harry could not get on. He next tried his hand at throwing in, but failed to satisfy the referee because he threw in sideways, and not over his head. Brown, in his anxiety to make acquaintance with Luton's new goalkeeper, got off-side. From this kick Storey secured and put in a long shot, but there was an absence of powder behind it, and Collins cleared. Still the Luton men kept up the pressure, but the ball went by.

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The Rangers...

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The Rangers' forwards evidently considered that they were not doing their best and they went in for a bout of passing which somewhat surprised Luton. Newlands struck the ball with his hands and a capital chance was afforded Luton of getting ahead. Williams had to throw in a minute afterwards, and he did it incorrectly and the referee kindly showed him how to do it. Durrant had just about got the pace of Bull and in a sprint left him behind, so that Jack had a chance of centring. Storey endeavoured to accept the ball, but when close in tried to break the goal net with the result that he missed it altogether, the ball going yards over. This was a very disappointing ending to a promising attack.

After this escape the Rangers forwards were glad to get away to the opposite end, but Hamilton sent behind. The ball was kept round the Luton goal and Thompson was unlawfully charged. Brown had hard luck in missing the goal from a capital centre by Hamilton, though had it been straight it is probable that Thompson would have saved. Then Luton suddenly broke away and transferred operations to the other end, and Storey headed in during the attack, but the ball went over the bar. Allsopp had a fine tussle with Bowman, but eventually beat his man but placed behind. There was no score up to half-time, when the sheet was blank:

LUTON, 0 ; RANGERS, 0.

The Volunteer band then discoursed music for the five minutes' interval. Eaton and Bull had a struggle the former to get to the ball and the latter to keep him off, and in the end the referee awarded a foul against Eaton for holding. Collins saved during a subsequent attack, but only just in time as Storey was smartly on his track. The Rangers' right wing ran away and Hamilton got in a great shot, but Thompson stopped the ball and though hampered by two men, cleared his lines. Williams miskicked and sent the ball behind and thus gave a corner, which though well placed, proved unproductive of result.

Luton about this time had the better of the game and Eaton headed in, but was given offside. No less than three players were injured simultaneously, but the most serious appeared to be Abbott. He was taken to the touch-line and the trainer did his best to bring him round, and he succeeded.

Play had been going on with a good deal of vigour, and neither side could make an impression. Time was drawing on, and the crowd was evidently getting apprehensive of a draw. But they were greatly surprised. Durrant, I think it was, put in a shot at Collins, who caught the ball. Before he could clear, however, McKee, with that fascination for the goalkeeper which never deserts him, charged Collins backwards, and it seemed that he took the ball well over the line. The referee was uncertain, and consulted both linesman, but they evidently could not give it as their opinion that the goalkeeper had been knocked through, and as the doubt must always be on the side appealed against, the Rangers had the benefit of it, and Luton was deprived of the score. There was great disappointment at this.

Luton had got the ball into the net three times up to this point, and not one counted. Durrant received a long pass, and racing by Bull and Newlands, and tricking several other players, got in his centre, and Storey meeting the ball placed it by Collins, who had no chance to save. The hand-shaking between the players was hearty, and the applause amongst the spectators tremendous at this success. Storey afterwards played at centre, and McKee went inside left, and there was some spirited play on the part of the locals. They could not improve their position, and the game ended:

LUTON, 1 ; RANGERS, 0.

The better side won. The first half was fairly even, but the second was in favour of Luton. Still the Rangers are a capable lot. The defence has been strengthened by the inclusion of Archer (late of New Brompton), whilst Bull, though not so speedy as could be desired, played a good game. The champion defenders, however, was Hitch. Time after time he pulled up the attack. Hamilton was the best of the forwards. Mumphey has the reputation of being a sprinter, but either the ability or the opportunity was lacking on Saturday, for he was very mediocre. The side altogether is better than last year's.

We have again to be thankful to Thompson for his brilliant display in goal. Bennett is showing greatly improved form, and he pleases local supporters more each time that he appears. McEwen is evidently cautious—and wisely so—at present, but he did all that was required of him. Williams was the poorest of the half-backs, but there is plenty of excuse for him. There was one great failing—he allowed the right wing too much rope. Durrant was the champion forward, though McKee was in grand form. There were some very uncomplimentary things said about Storey and his

"slowness." But things are not always what they seem. Storey has his own particular style, but the point of it is that he gets there. He entices the defence to come out and rob him, which often means an opening for his own side. He certainly threw away one opportunity of scoring, but still I, for one, cannot join in the condemnation which, with very little thought, was meted out to him from certain occupants of the grand-stand on Saturday.

