

LUTON LEADS THE WAY

THE ONLY UNBEATEN TEAM.

READING VANQUISHED.

There was a record crowd on the Dunstable-road enclosure on Saturday, when Reading met Luton to decide which should take Southern League points. There must have been between 5,000 and 6,000 spectators for the gate produced a total of £131. There was great regret expressed when McEwen was not seen with the other men. Thompson led the men on the field. They had been preceded by Reading, and both sides received rousing cheers as they paraded before the spectators.

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The following is the way the teams lined out:—

LUTON.

Thompson			
Bennett		Williams	
F. Hawkes	White	R. Hawkes	
Durrant	Eaton	McKee	Storey
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Flynn	Heywood	Bevan	Poppitt	Simpson
Willis		Good	Henderson	
Clinch		H. Smith		

Naisby

READING

Referee: Mr. A. Millward (Leyton); linesmen Messrs. Blythe and Pierce.

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Thompson won the toss for Luton and decided that he would occupy the Bury farm end of the field, and set the Luton players to attack the Great Northern railway end. The visitors therefore set the ball in motion and at once made tracks for the Luton goal, but after Williams had missed the ball, off-side nullified the attempt. The ball was smartly returned down the field, but Allsopp charged Henderson unfairly and a foul was given. This afforded no relief to the visitors for Storey secured the sphere and ran down the wing, but again the attack was pulled up.

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The visitors' right then made an incursion, Poppitt and Simpson passing well. The former was particularly noticeable for some fine play and was speedily voted "a good man." Storey beat Clinch, but the latter recovered himself and managed to kick out. From the throw-in the ball went behind and a goal kick resulted. Then Luton made a grand assault on the Reading goal, but the ball was again placed behind. Bob Hawkes was prominent in robbing the right wing, and passing to White, the centre-half handed to the forwards, and McKee scored the first goal of the match. The ball, however, was not got into the net without a fine attempt by Naisby to clear.

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The cheers which went up over this splendid success were heard all over the town. This only stimulated Luton to further efforts. The forwards went down again in very determined fashion, but in the excitement of the moment White fouled an opponent, which relieved the pressure. Only for a minute, however, for Durrant securing the ball close to the half-way line made a dash for the corner and when well there let drive with a forceful effort and Naisby fisted the ball which fell on Eaton's knees and he promptly netted again. The noise which ensued beggared description, and I will leave it. Two goals in about five minutes was good work, especially against a team like Reading.

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But play slackened after this a bit. Luton were soon on the aggressive again and a corner followed. This was placed well in the field by Allsopp giving Bennett a shot at goal from a long range, but he placed just by the post. From the goalkick the Reading right went away and Williams had all he could do to clear. Then Simpson placed over the bar. Reading still maintained the pressure and allowed the Luton defence an opportunity of displaying itself. Bennett was very prominent with some clean kicking but the half-backs returned in each case. Eventually the siege was raised by Durrant breaking away on the outside right and centring. H. Smith went to clear and the ball caught McKee in the stomach. Storey at once put the centre through a little elementary exercise with the arms and McKee was soon after the ball as keenly as ever. Then Durrant got offside.

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transfer the ball to the other

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A long kick served to transfer the ball to the other end, and Williams made a bad mis-kick, completely missing the ball. Thompson stepped out and cleared, or the consequences might have been serious. McKee charged Smith in a contrary way to law, and from the kick Reading pressed, but the ball was guarded over the line by Williams. "Bob" Hawkes caused the spectators to smile by the way he brought down one of the visiting forwards, and a free-kick was given. Simpson secured and let the ball go with a tremendous amount of powder behind it, but Thompson cleared finely. The visitors still kept up the pressure, and the ball this time was sent behind. Willis fouled Durrant. Reading again attacked on the left. F. Hawkes came across and rendered very useful service to Williams, who was playing a poor game.

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Durrant got away once more on the right, but the three inside forwards were all off-side, and when they attempted to interfere the referee whistled. A foul on Eaton gave the latter an opportunity of taking his revenge, but when in a good position he placed over the bar. Twice Reading had to be thankful for the safety of their goal, for with a little luck Luton would have scored a third. At the other end Reading made a fine attack, and Thompson had twice to use his hands to clear. Allsopp at the other end tested Naisby with a shot which he nearly muffed.

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Immediately after a corner was forced by Reading: and this was placed by Flynn, but the Luton halves managed to get the ball away, but Reading came back again, and this time Simpson got off-side. Poppitt was presented with a chance of shooting, but placed wide. Luton worked their way to the other end, and McKee, who had followed the ball to the wing, put in a good centre, but Naisby interposed his hand and cleared. There was no further incident of note up to half time, when the score stood:

LUTON, 2; READING, 0.

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The Red Cross band played a couple of selections in admirable fashion. Luton, on restarting the ball, went away at once, and McKee passed to Allsopp, who sent wide. Bennett took the kick for a foul on Eaton, and placed to Durrant, but he was adjudged off-side. From another free-kick Allsopp headed just over the bar. Still another foul was given against Reading. Bennett again put in a shot which Naisby repulsed, and the ball was eventually brought into Luton's territory. Allsopp shot hard and straight, but a defender got in the way and the ball rebounded.

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Williams, who had been rather disappointing in the first half, "bucked up" and took quite a new lease of life. He dashed in and cleared when Reading attacked, and there were not wanting cries of encouragement at Harry's success. The Reading men again attacked strongly, and F. Hawkes put in a fine piece of play, but eventually shot over the bar. The kick-off afforded Reading but little relief, for Allsopp, getting down on the left, let drive, but Naisby got the ball away, though a bit luckily.

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Durrant placed in a long shot which went wide. Reading then introduced a little more spirit into their play, and made a very determined rush, but Poppitt went too far ahead and was ruled off-side. After McKee had been ruled off-side a corner followed a fine piece of play by Durrant. This proved abortive, as White headed wide. Again the ball was placed by the goal by R. Hawkes. Durrant put in a very fine shot, but Naisby happened to stand directly in the way and cleared well. The Luton right-wing got mixed and H. Smith cleared easily.

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Williams opportunely came to the assistance of the Luton defence. The game after this became dull, both sides slackening. For the first time in a Luton game, as far as I remember, Bennett missed the ball, giving the spectators a good deal of anxiety. Thomp-

son came to his rescue as he had done for Williams, and being harrassed by the Reading forwards the referee awarded a foul. Williams, in trying to charge one of the Reading men, hurt himself.

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An amusing scene was witnessed at this point. The referee gave a free-kick some 20 yards off the goal, and on this being taken four of the Luton men stood in a line six yards off the ball, completely hiding the goal. Clinch was at a loss to know what to do, but eventually kicked wide of the goal. Time dragged on without either side claiming an advantage, and it appeared that the spectators had seen all the scoring for the afternoon. In the last five minutes Reading opened up with a fresh outburst, which fairly surprised the Luton men. A hard shot was placed in at goal, and Thompson cleared. The ball was speedily returned by Good and found its way through a crowd of players into the net. The result was therefore :

LUTON, 2 ; READING, 1.

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There was no doubt the better side won. It was, perhaps, a fortunate thing that the Luton men made those two determined onslaughts at the beginning, for it took the wind out of the sails of the Reading team in a truly surprising manner. The Luton team played well individually and collectively, and though Williams was the weak spot in the first half, he improved greatly in the second. Naisby played a good game for Reading, and the backs and half-backs did well. The forwards were rather disappointing, with perhaps, Simpson and Poppitt the better wing.]

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This victory placed Luton again at the head of the Southern League. They have been the first club to get double figures in points this season. Millwall went down before Southampton and fall to third place, their victors dropping in to the second position.

The League table now stands :—



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Gall, the old Luton player, was one of the eleven representing the Irish League against the English League on Saturday, and he did well. Davidson, the old Luton player, who was handed his papers by the club he first appeared for this season has been signed on by New Brompton. I regret to hear that Mayes, the Amateur, was turned off the field at Chesham, but from a printed report which has reached me I gather that expulsion was well deserved. R. Hawkes was selected to play for Hertfordshire against Middlesex in the South Eastern Counties Championship on Wednesday at Ealing.

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B.—A player once off-side cannot put himself on-side. This can only be done for him in three ways:—(1) If an opponent next plays the ball; (2) If he is behind the ball when it is next played by one of his own side; (3) If he has three opponents, etc. You will own that the case in question is met by the second way. On Monday a forward was off-side, and another of the same side ran the ball up nearer their opponents' goal-line, and then passed to the first player. The latter was behind the ball when last played, and although there were not three opponents between him and the goal he was not off-side. It has much to do with where a player is when the ball was last played.
