

LUTON v. WELLINGBOROUGH.

Played at Wellingborough on Monday.
Result:—

Wellingborough	2 goals.
Luton	nil.

Wellingborough—Ord; Lamberton and Rodway; Beaver, Bushell, and Martin; Bradshaw, Cookson, Murray, McDonald, and Dartnell.

Referee, Mr. J. Tillotson (Birmingham).

Luton had the same team as against Portsmouth, except that Madden came in at inside-right, Eaton taking Durrant's usual position on account of the latter suffering from a severe cold. Not more than 1,000 spectators were present, but this was considered satisfactory for a mid-week match. McEwen again lost the toss. It did not mean so much, however, as at Portsmouth, as the wind was not so strongly in evidence.

Right from the commencement the Wellingborough players put by far the greater energy into their play, and Thompson was kept on the alert. Luton could not force the play over the half-way line for the first quarter of an hour. Thompson for a time was equal to all shots that came to hand, but after some twelve minutes he rather muddled a shot from McDonald which struck the inside of the upright. Before anyone could get up, he picked up the ball and threw it away, but the referee, who was scarcely in a good position to judge, pointed to the centre, and a goal it was.

Thompson did not appreciate this decision, and ran to Mr. Tillotson, strongly protesting the ball had never been over the line, but the referee paid no heed to the Luton goalie's protest, not even to the extent of consulting his linesmen. I thought possibly this goal would liven up the Luton players, but apparently it had little effect, and Wellingborough were soon again in the vicinity of Thompson's charge, Murray almost notching a second from a long pass from Bradshaw. F. Hawkes, in clearing, gave the locals a corner, which, however, came to nothing.

It was twenty-five minutes from the start before Ord touched the ball, and then he had ample time to pick up and punt down the field. About the most dangerous attempt in the first half came from Williams, who tried a long shot, but offside against Eaton eventually relieved the situation. For a few minutes it looked as though Luton would put up a bit of a struggle, but the effort was not sustained, and after a spell of midfield play Cookson was responsible for a fine drive, which Thompson got down to but could not get away, and Dartnell rushing up put through, making the score two goals in favour of the home side.

This incident happened some five minutes before the interval. Crossing over the game was more even, but this was not so much because of the improved play of Luton as the falling away of Wellingborough, who slowed down considerably. As a rule, it was the Luton left wing which threatened danger, and Turner certainly put in one or two decent shots, but Ord was seldom seriously troubled. Certainly on one occasion it appeared as if a goal would result, for Turner got right through with a pass from Madden, but he was at a difficult angle for netting when he let drive, and the ball went the wrong side.

This was really the nearest Luton came to scoring; indeed, some of the crowd thought it was really in the net until they found Ord taking a goal kick. On only one other occasion can I remember a time when the Wellingborough goal was really in danger. This time it was a rush through by Allsopp, but he was badly fouled just as he was getting clear away. Strong appeals were made for a penalty, but the referee placed the ball just outside the fatal area, and the resulting free kick came to nothing.

From now to the final whistle the players simply wasted time. Wellingborough kicking out at every opportunity, while Luton seemed quite content with the position of affairs and made little attempt to pull the game out of the fire. It was by far the worst exhibition Luton have given this season, not more than two or three players showing anything like their normal form.

McEwen played a good game, or I tremble to think what might have been the result. He was always in the thick of it, once almost taking the ball through on his own. Williams also put some heart into his play, and tried his hardest right up to the finish. So far as forward work was concerned, there was scarcely the slightest attempt at combination until the second half, and then it was practically confined to the left wing. There is little doubt several of the players are rather down, and it is fortunate for the credit of the Club they have no other Southern League engagements this week.

On their display in the first half it is evident Wellingborough have got together a very decent side, Rodway being far above the average back and kicking with splendid judgment. While it could not be said their half-back line were brilliant, they strike one as a trio of workers. Cookson and Murray were the more prominent in attack, the former nipping in and letting drive at any and every possible occasion. But the match scarcely calls for detailed criticism. It was certainly an off-day from a Luton standpoint.