

The Southern League.

LUTON v. QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Queen's Park Rangers.....	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Lindsay; Turner and McEwen; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Lamberton, Hunt, Ross, and Barnes.

Rangers—Howes; Archer and Newlands; Powman, Hitch, and J. Cross, W. Cross, Ronaldson, Bevan, Murphy, and Stewart.

Referee, Mr. A. J. Barker (Hanley).

The Luton directors could congratulate themselves upon the splendid weather which favoured the match on Saturday, for it was so exceedingly pleasant that people with any love for the game at all could hardly fail to turn out. Disappointment was generally felt, however, that Hunt was again being played at centre, and after his exhibitions of the two previous weeks, the policy of giving him another trial was severely criticised. It is urged in his favour, however, that he has not fully recovered from the injury sustained in his first match.

There were between four and five thousand spectators when the Rangers set the ball rolling towards the Bury Farm goal, and the weight of the visitors as against that of the Luton team furnished the subject for interesting contrasts. The Rangers are one of the heaviest teams in the League, and Luton being one of the lightest, it was a case of extremes meeting.

But so far as the football was concerned, the game was not one of the best. Luton seldom got well together, the forwards never giving one the impression of being animated by a thorough understanding, and the defence also was occasionally somewhat shaky.

Luton came very near scoring in the first minute or two. Lamberton following a dropping shot put in from a free kick and pretty well succeeding in rushing the ball through. As it was, however Howes just managed to tip the ball over the bar, and the corner was not turned to account. The Rangers, retaliating, were soon at the other end, and after Lindsay had saved from Murphy, there was a momentary hesitation on the part of the Luton defence, and Ronaldson taking advantage, sent in a shot which found its way between a number of legs and finally into the net. Lindsay could not get a sight of the ball until it was too late, or he could easily have saved.

Luton, stung by this early reverse, applied some pressure, but Howes soon gave a taste of his quality, and cleared splendidly from good efforts by Lamberton and Barnes. The play then went from end to end, the visitors having quite as much of the game as the homesters and appearing to be rather more dangerous in attack. In trying to repulse one of their assaults, Turner came as near as a touch to heading through his own goal, but the ball hit the bar and went over.

A fine run by Lamberton took the ball to the vicinity of the Rangers' goal, but he got no support from the other forwards, and his centre went begging. A little later Turner came into collision with Stewart and had to retire to have his face bandaged, Dr. Rose who happened to be on the ground kindly going to his assistance. During Turner's absence, Luton played the one-back game, and the Rangers, with less excuse, resorted to the same dodge.

The play for some time after this was not very interesting, until a determined effort by Lamberton resulted in his being fouled within the penalty area. Bob Hawkes was entrusted with the kick, and the spectators regarded the equalising goal as a certainty, Bob never having failed in this department. The operations were watched with breathless interest, and great was the disappointment when it was found that the shot had not met with the usual success. The kick was not a clean one, and Howes pouncing on the ball, soon had it out of danger.

Luton continued to have rather the better of the play, helped by several free kicks, and from one of these, placed by McEwen, there appeared every prospect of a goal, but Hunt eventually shot wide. Several further attempts were made by the Lutonians, who now had their full complement, Turner having taken his place again with his head bandaged. Barnes scored an offside goal from a centre by Lamberton, and Ross shortly afterwards headed just over the bar, but when the interval arrived the Rangers were still leading by a goal to nil.

So far the Rangers' defence had been too powerful for the somewhat disjointed attack of the homesters, but after crossing over, Luton went at their work with a will, and it was not long before Ross had scored the equalising goal with a lovely shot, the ball hitting the bar and glancing off into the net. The spectators cheered delightedly, for too many of them had been painfully contemplating a win by the visitors.

This proved to be the last goal of the match, and it may at once be said that Luton very seldom looked like adding to their score. Archer played a grand game for the Rangers and Howes was not often called upon. The visitors, on the contrary, were dangerous on more than one occasion, and but for some splendid work in goal by Lindsay, they might after all have snatched a victory.

The draw fairly represented the run of the play. If anything, the Rangers were a bit the better team, but they were not always too nice in their methods, and Archer was guilty of a very heavy charge on Barnes. The forwards were not particularly tricky, but they made many good combined movements, and often seemed inclined to bear down opposition by sheer weight. Hitch and his partners also played a very good game at half-back. On the whole, I should say the Rangers were full value for point they got.

The Luton play was rather disappointing, for the midfield work was not up to the usual standard and the shooting was a long, long way behind that which beat Portsmouth. As already stated, it was a great mistake to play Hunt again, and if Bob Hawkes did not want to play forward, the directors would have done far better to have put Lamberton centre and Euton inside-right.

Ross and Barnes played a capital game, but the right wing was not up to the mark, neither Lamberton nor Brown being as effective as usual. The half-backs, also, were far from brilliant, White especially being a lot below par. At back, Turner played very well, and after his injury showed wonderful pluck in heading the ball. McEwen seemed to be a little bit over-anxious, and his work suffered accordingly. Of course, he rendered good service, but then we always look for brilliance from the worthy skipper. Lindsay, although not severely worked, had some difficult situations to deal with, and he came out of the ordeal with great credit.