

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

One does not want to be continually on the grumble, but really after last week's performance what is one to say about the Luton team? They have played but few worse games on the Bury Park; that, I think, puts the whole thing in a nut shell. Throughout three-quarters of Saturday's match our men were completely at sea; no other explanation can be offered for the result, a draw. There were several weak spots, but I fancy the centre was the weakest of them all. As a centre forward, Hunt has not proved a success; indeed, it is fair to say that he has not even done so well as Penman in that position. Few of us expected that he would. Good, cheap centres are not picked up every day.

In spite of our recent reverses, there was a good muster on Saturday, but it should be borne in mind that if last week's is the kind of display we are to have in the future, the Directors must not count upon such good gates.

The teams turned out as follows:—Luton: Lindsay; Turner and McEwen; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Lamberton, Hunt, Ross and Barnes. Queen's Park: Howes; Archer and Newlands; Bowman, Hitch, and J. Cross; W. Cross, Ronaldson, Bevan, Murphy and Stewart.

So disappointing was the game, that I do not propose going into many details. McEwen won the toss, and the Rangers kicked towards the Farm goal. Luton were early on the aggressive, but the forwards showed an unusual amount of weakness, and nothing resulted. At the other end, a shot from Murphy brought Lindsay to his knees. Shortly afterwards, Ronaldson scored for the Rangers.

After this, they made a desperate attack on the Luton goal, but the home defence managed to stave off further disaster. It was during this attack that Turner got his head cut so badly that he had to retire for about a quarter of an hour.

During his absence, Luton had, of course, to play the one back game, to which the visitors replied by doing exactly the same. Naturally, there was no interest in the game until Turner returned. The referee gave Luton a penalty, but Bob Hawkes failed to score. At half-time, the Rangers were leading by one goal to nil.

Upon resuming, for a time it seemed as if Luton meant business. During the early stages, Ross shot wide, and Barnes put behind. Brown got away, but was easily stopped by Archer, and a shot from White later on went very wide. Of the Luton forwards, Ross and Barnes were doing all the work, but their shooting was weak. Brown centred, and Ross equalised, amidst great cheering, with a shot which went in off the bar.

Lindsay made a splendid save from a corner kick. Murphy missed a fine opening. He and Bevan had an almost open goal, and everyone expected to see the leather roll into the net. Murphy, however, stumbled, and that dangerous moment was passed. It was, however, a splendid piece of luck for Luton. Stewart came within an ace of beating Lindsay; but Luton commenced to attack with vigour, and in the bad light no one would have been surprised to see them obtain the lead. Nothing further being scored, the game ended in a draw of one goal each.

I am afraid the majority of the spectators blamed Lindsay for letting the Rangers have the first goal. It was a soft affair, and seeing what he does sometimes, the Luton custodian might have saved the shot. Howes, who played for the first time on Saturday for the Rangers, is a smart goal keeper, and was constantly on the alert, though the excellent defence of the backs relieved him considerably.

Ronaldson was by far the best forward on the field. He and W. Cross made a formidable wing, and even "Mac" was frequently beaten. Queen's Park are a heavy lot, and after the equalising shot their weight told against Luton.

Archer is a powerful back, and on Saturday played a magnificent game. There was a great contrast between his play and that of our own captain, but McEwen was not at all in fighting form. Archer completely paralysed the Luton left wing. At centre, Bevan played a decent game.

Coming to the Luton team, I noticed that Turner nearly headed through his own goal. Some consideration, however, must be given for the injury he sustained. It is not, however, our backs that are so much at fault as the halves. Freddy Hawkes did but poorly on Saturday, and White did not come up to expectation.

"Bob" was also a bit tame, especially after he had missed the penalty. In the first place, I don't think we were entitled to the penalty. J. Cross fouled Lamberton nearly a dozen yards outside the line, but the Luton inside right fell down within the penalty line. However, having obtained the advantage, it was a wretched shot.

As to the halves, I wonder why they leave the best half out? Competent observers assert that Pritchard is our best man, and when he has been tried he has always played as good a game as any of the others. Our right wing put in some hard work, but as I said before, Ross and Barnes had something to beat. Hunt had numerous openings, but practically missed them all. Two or three times he had a splendid chance at heading, but our centre was much too slow.

Brown is a "trier," but triers do not always come off. In one respect, he is an improvement on Eaton—that is, in his weight—but he is not so tricky as Sammy, and Brown's performance on Saturday did not improve the team. I will say one thing for Brown; he is not a selfish player, and he puts across some splendid centres.

Our encounters last season with the Rangers were very near things. When they visited Luton, we defeated the Rangers by one goal to love; and at Kensal Rise we managed to beat them by two goals to one.

Next month we enter the English Cup competition. Shall we have again to face Hitchin, who nearly defeated us last year? On Saturday the Herts team beat Lowestoft by two goals to love.

We are still next to the bottom on the League table, but the result of Saturday's match with Millwall ought to make a difference. The Dockers must have played a fine game to only lose to the Spurs on Saturday by one goal to nil. Let us hope that, at any rate, Luton will bring a point home with them.