

LUTON V MILLWALL

BATTLE ROYAL WITH THE BLUES.

SPECIAL REPORT BY "SPECTATOR."

On Saturday afternoon the Luton team was on show at Millwall. The Blues and Luton have fought many times-honoured contests, and last year I well remember that Luton brought off the unexpected by beating the Dockers by three goals to two. It was a magnificent game, contested with rare spirit, and although the Millwall spectators were disappointed they had to confess that the better team had won.

Ben Hulse and some of the other men have disappeared from the ranks of the East Enders, but others have been engaged and they gave a good account of themselves. Stanley Spencer in the centre-forward position made his debut for Luton. He is an amateur, and his business has brought him to Luton.

Strangely enough, J. H. Gettins, the old centre-forward, was expected to reappear for Millwall once more. Some years ago, when the East-end club were at the zenith of their fame, Gettins was a regular player, and Calvey, another old forward who has returned to the fold, will, of course, renew a very old acquaintance. This forward used to play inside-left to Gettins at a period when "Jasper" Geddes and Micky Whelan were the livery of the East-end club.

The following were the teams on Saturday :—

MILLWALL.

Joyce

McLaren

Stevenson

Proudfoot

J. M'Lean

Blythe

Bradbury Calvey J. H. Gettins Hunter Watkins

O

Barnes Ross S. Spencer Eaton Lamberton

R. Hawkes

White

F. Hawkes

McEwen

Turner

Lindsay

LUTON.

Referee, Mr. F. Kirkham.

The weather was rather cloudy at the start, and there was not a very large attendance.

Millwall first appeared, immediately followed by Luton, both teams being applauded.

McEwen won the toss for Luton, who kicked with the advantage of the wind, which blew from the railway end.

Luton got down by means of a fine piece of play by Ross, and the ball was transferred to the right wing, and Spencer gave the goalkeeper a shot, which he fisted over the bar.

The corner was resultless, but Eaton came again, and placed just wide. Spencer was fouled close up, but Turner placed wide of the goal.

Fred Hawkes gave Gettins the ball, and he transferred to Calvey, who easily beat Lindsay, after about five minutes' play.

Barnes had a fine chance, the goalkeeper having left his charge, but he placed wide. Spencer was then given outside.

Gettins was penalised for pushing White, and from this Luton pressed. Millwall turned the tables; Hunter shot, and Lindsay saved, but the ball eventually went behind.

Gettins shot, and Lindsay saved well. Bob Hawkes relieved the pressure, and soon afterwards the spectators cheered him for his play. Gettins had a chance, but he placed behind.

The referee was decidedly unfair to Luton in the matter of offside play, and twice the visitors were pulled up unwarrantedly. Barnes should have shot, but passed the ball instead, and Joyce cleared. Lindsay twice more was called upon, and he cleared well.

The ball eventually went behind, and play became centred in the middle of the field.

Eaton placed in the net, but offside nullified this effort also.

Mac was forced to give a corner, which was badly placed by Millwall. Another corner for Millwall followed, but in the subsequent play the ball was placed wide.

Turner gave away another corner, but this was miserably placed.

Gettins was ruled offside, and this relieved the pressure on the Luton goal.

Offside once more stopped Luton. Eaton had hard luck a minute later, placing just by the corner of the post.

Lamberton endeavoured to improve the prospects for Luton, but he raced behind with the ball. Ross placed wide a moment later.

Millwall forced the game to the other end. Lamberton made an attempt on the right, but this effort was fruitless, and now Luton had to bemoan an offside decision, which was due to the play of the Millwall backs. Luton then pressed, and Bob got in a patent, which went just over the goal.

White put in a good shot from long range, but Joyce saved well.

Millwall were pulled up for offside. Eaton had only the goalkeeper to beat, but Joyce got at the shot, and saved splendidly. Half-time:—

MILLWALL	...	...	...	...	...	1
LUTON	...	...	...	...	...	0

Spencer got away on the start, but he was hampered by one of the backs, and the ball went wide. Millwall forced the play into Luton's territory. Calvey had a grand chance of adding to the Millwall total, but he placed high over the bar.

Hands against McEwen was nullified, and Ross transferred operations to the other end, but ended with a weak shot.

White placed just wide with a long shot. A free kick for Millwall was followed by a corner for them, but though the pressure was hot, the ball was cleared.

Another corner resulted, and during the scrimmage which ensued, the ball struck Eaton on the shoulder, and the referee awarded Millwall a penalty. This was converted by Watkins.

This appeared the last straw, and the Luton men played as if they knew it. An exciting corner took place in front of the Luton goal, but the ball went behind. Lamberton was cheered for some individual play, and this was followed by an attack by Millwall, and Calvey threw away a good chance.

Twice Luton were given offside, and it always seemed that some ill-luck dogged the steps of the Luton forwards.

Lindsay was called upon several times in the subsequent play, and Millwall obviously were doing all the pressing, and Luton rarely broke away.

Several times the Luton backs had to kick out. Millwall returned to the attack with force, but the ball went behind; and another time the forwards got offside.

The home team attacked with great vigour towards the end, but failed to break through.

RESULT:

MILLWALL

2

LUTON

0

NOTES ON THE GAME.

Another defeat to explain away! Opinions on the match and as to the better team were divided. Of course the fact that the Millwall lads won must stamp them as the more successful side, but I think Luton threw away several splendid chances.

Without particularising the players who had the opportunities I may say that the fault was in the forward line when they got near goal.

None of them seemed able to get in the hard shot which would have beaten Joyce, and it never came. I am inclined to think that the Luton forwards fail to take in as forwards should the points of the opposition.

Thus once on Saturday, Joyce ran across the ground and missed the ball, which remained in the possession of the Luton player. It was almost the same kind of situation which saw Thompson run out of the Portsmouth goal at Luton. But the Luton man on Saturday passed the ball.

Then again very early in the match the referee showed himself particularly keen on the off-side rule. Sometimes, too, he saw the Luton men off-side when three defenders and the goalkeeper were in front of the one, who received the ball! But the reason which led him to give the Luton men off-side was apparent, at least to the spectator.

The man who was given off-side always received a long pass forward from his confrere. The referee amused me, too! He would see one of these passes, say to Barnes, would make up his mind that off-side was the correct decision, and then would start to walk back to the Luton goal. Barnes had barely got to the ball, when that official, who was walking down the field, blew his whistle, and moved his arm forward in the direction in which the free-kick was to be taken.

I suppose all referees have little vagaries of the sort. When a free-kick was given the referee would give two sharp whistles, and the ball, before it would have been placed by some referee, was on the go again. This prevented the usual monotony attaching to free-kicks, and had the side which had erred at all been slow to take in the situation the consequences might have been serious.

Several have asked me what I thought of Stanley Spencer's display. Considering that it was his first attempt with Luton, I thought a good deal of it. He has any amount of dash and pluck, and would be the lad to score goals off the centres of a couple of good outside men. It took him some time to get used to the passing game as played by the left. Once he gave Joyce a stinging shot to save, and the goalkeeper could only put it over the bar.

It was very hard luck which gave Millwall the penalty-kick. The ball struck Eaton on the shoulder. The ball was a good distance from goal, but still was in the penalty area. Getting, I am told, appealed to the referee not to go to the extreme step, but Mr. Kirkham thought it his duty. Lindsay never had a chance.

Perhaps I might explain how Millwall got their first goal. The ball was thrown in from touch, and F. Hawkes, in endeavouring to stop it, gave Getting an unexpected pass. The amateur drew the Luton defence on him, and then passed out to Olvey. The latter took the ball up to within 10 yards of the goal and let drive at an angle quite out of Lindsay's reach.

I rather think Lutonians as keen sportsmen will find pleasure even in this reverse. The Millwall team have been giving very indifferent displays lately and the gates have suffered. There was a very small attendance, and if the victory helps the Dockers to get bigger crowds, then Luton will have done their old opponents a very good turn. "It's an ill wind, etc."