

The Southern League.

LUTON v. FULHAM.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	6 goals
Fulham	nil

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Lindsay; Turner and McIlwain; F. Hawkes, White, and B. Hawkes; Eaton, Ross, Lamberton, Moody, and Barnes.

Fulham—Fryer; Ross and Thorpe; Haworth Gray, and Goldie; Sear, Graham, Fraser, Ward copps, and Bell.

Referee, Mr. J. W. Bailey (Leicester).

It is not often I hazard a prediction, but last week I ventured to say that if Luton played as good a game against Fulham as they did against Southampton, Luton would win. This flight into the realms of prophecy was a rather bold one, because on the one hand Luton lost rather badly against Southampton, and on the other Fulham had always proved a sad stumbling block to the Bedfordshire team. Last season they beat us easily, when we ought to have romped round them, and then, think of the Cup tie this season.

But on Saturday Luton avenged all past defeats in one grand triumph, a triumph which, despite my confidence in the forward line as at present constituted, altogether exceeded any expectations I had formed. The reason for the decisive character of the defeat, however, was not far to seek. Luton played a fine game, and Fulham, when they found themselves two or three goals in arrears, became so hopelessly demoralised that the home-stayers were able to fairly smother them.

The weather was delightful, the going was tolerable, and there was nothing except mishaps to a couple of members of the home team to interfere with the enjoyment of the four thousand spectators. Luton won the toss, but there was not a great deal in that, the wind giving very little advantage either way. Luton, however, kicked towards the railway, which, somehow or other, always seems to be their favourite end for scoring.

Fulham were the first to attack, and Graham put nicely across the mouth of goal, but Luton cleared, and Barnes took the ball up the field in capital style, finishing with a centre from which Lamberton and Ross made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to get through. Then Fred Hawkes, who evidently meant business, returned the ball well to the front, and Ross sent just over the bar. Fryer next saved from Lamberton, and after that came some wonderfully exciting play.

Luton set up a tremendous attack on the Fulham citadel, but for a time Fryer was equal to all demands. Eventually, however, he was taken completely by surprise. The ball came from Ross to Lamberton, and the latter, without a moment's hesitation and from a very difficult position, sent in a shot which the burly custodian just reached but could not turn aside, and the ball found a resting-place in the net.

The spectators cheered heartily at this early success, because it has always been recognised that a goal against Fryer wants a deal of getting. Much encouraged, Luton renewed the attack with great spirit, and Fulham were rather lucky to escape having a penalty given against them for a foul on Lamberton. After a brilliant run and a very likely-looking effort by Bob Hawkes to go through on his own, Fulham got away from a free kick, but again Barnes carried the ball up the field. Moody was going to chime in, but, warned by the shouts of the spectators that he was offside, he left it to Barnes, who centred at just the right moment, and Eaton, rushing in, scored a beautiful goal.

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The visitors protested on the ground of off-side, but the referee declined to listen to them, and I think he was right. Hardly had operations been resumed, when Luton were up again, and from a middle by Eaton, Ross put in a fine shot, which brought Fryer to his knees, and though he got the ball away, it was not far enough, and Lamberton being on the spot, had it through in the twinkling of an eye. The cheering and excitement which followed these repeated successes was something to be remembered, and Fulham were now absolutely out-played.

Luton were soon swarming to the attack, and from a free kick by McEwen, Lamberton received and hit the post with a very smart shot. A corner followed, but it was not turned to account, despite a great effort by Bob Hawkes and the visitors also cleared from another good run by Barnes. In a further assault, Ross was fouled by Thorpe close in, and a penalty being given Bob Hawkes took the kick, but in his endeavour to avoid Fryer, who fills up a good deal more space than most custodians, he shot just the wrong side of the upright.

Luton did not allow this failure to damp their ardour, and even when Moody was hurt and had to retire, they still kept up the pressure. Fryer was soon called upon to save from Lamberton, and then the centre-forward made another run, but being fouled, Ross took possession of the ball and scored splendidly. Four goals in the first half was a new experience for both the Luton spectators and players, and there was consequently much jubilation.

There was soon to be a fly in the ointment, however, for Lamberton's knee went out, and for a time Luton played with only nine men. Under these circumstances, Fulham naturally began to show to more advantage, and Lindsay and two or three teasers to deal with. One save of his bordered on the marvellous, but on the whole Luton maintained their position very well and succeeded in keeping a clean sheet.

The spectators watched anxiously as the players came on the field for the second half, and a cordial cheer was given when Moody and Lamberton followed the others. Owing to the injuries, however, the forward string had to be re-arranged, Ross going centre, Eaton inside-right, and Lamberton outside. Ross readily adapted himself to his new position, and Luton were quickly on the aggressive, three or four corners rewarding their efforts. They were well placed, and several good shots were put in, one striking the post after Fryer had been beaten.

A little later Fulham had a lucky let-off, Ross getting away from a rebound, but stumbling at the critical moment and not being able to recover himself before taking his shot, which went wide. The relief was not for long, Ross and Eaton again getting in evidence from a centre from the left. Eaton, being challenged, passed to Ross, who was clear and had little difficulty in registering Luton's fifth goal.

The spectators were more delighted than ever. They had thought if Luton, handicapped as they were by having two crippled forwards, could hold their own in this half, they would do well, and this fifth goal came somewhat in the nature of a pleasant surprise. But it was not the last. Fulham had resorted to very humiliating tactics in order to keep Luton out. They had even played the one-back game when Luton had only nine men, and they tried it again now. But it did not avail them, for Luton were soon in Fryer's neighbourhood, and the custodian falling down to and fumbling a hot shot from Lamberton, a couple of other Luton forwards rushed up, and one of them—Eaton, I think—landed the ball in the net for the sixth time, though the shot had probably taken effect in the first instance.

Luton continued to monopolise the play, until Lamberton's knee went again, and he had to retire. Fulham then had more of the game, but were seldom dangerous, whereas Luton two or three times came near increasing their score. Once Barnes got clean away, and it was only when he was right in front of goal that he was overtaken by Haworth, who deliberately tripped him from behind, but though the offence occurred under the very nose of the referee and there were no other players in the vicinity, that official did not give a penalty. Everybody was astonished, and many were the uncomplimentary remarks that followed.

After this, Barnes hit the crossbar with a good shot, but the concluding part of the game was of rather a scrambling nature, Fulham playing ten men, owing to Ross having hurt his leg, and Luton only nine, Moody having joined Lamberton in his retirement. There was nothing further scored, and so one of the most memorable games ever played on the Dunstable-road ground ended in a well-merited victory for the home team by six goals to nil.

As a forlorn and disconsolate Fulham supporter remarked, no fault could be found with any of the goals, all being good and not a milky one amongst them. Luton performed grandly, and crushed their opponents in all departments. The forward line played beautiful and effective football, the halves were at their very best, and the men behind them were right up to conceer pitch.

McEwen was carried off the field in triumph at the close of the game, and he deserved it for he performed magnificently all the way through. His heading and kicking and tackling were superb. Time after time he simply pulverised the Fulham attack. He was ably seconded, particularly in the second half, by Turner. When Luton were playing with depleted ranks, the old Fulham man came to the rescue in fine style, and try as they would, the visitors were seldom able to scrape a very close acquaintance with Lindsay, who had an easy afternoon. Once towards the finish there was a trying situation, and Lindsay then came out of the ordeal with flying colours.

I should say Fred Hawkes played his best game this season. He started well and he kept it up, having no small share in maintaining the attack at a high level. Bob also showed up prominently, much of his work being that of a master, and White likewise rendered a good account of himself. As to the forwards, the goals scored sufficiently testify to the excellence of their work. Lamberton, I should say, was not really fit at the start, but he has wonderful pluck, and even after his knee had gone, he did some capital work. Undoubtedly he is the best centre we have had for many a long day, and it is a great pity he should have suffered so badly at the feet of some of the opposing 'cans. Ross acquitted himself well, as he always does, and showed also that Lamberton is not the only centre-forward in the team. Barnes and Moody were both in fine form, and Eaton also rendered valuable service.

Not much can be said as to the visitors. They simply underwent a total eclipse, and I am afraid they would go back to their training quarters at Matlock in a very sad frame of mind. It must be a long, long time since the great and only Fryer had six goals scored against him.

There was nothing surprising about the other League games, but Swindon, Brighton, and Wellingborough all suffered defeat, and Luton's victory gives them quite a respectable position on the League table. Millwall accomplished a very good performance by beating Plymouth Argyle by 2 goals to 1.

The following is the League table up to date:

	Goals.						
	Flyd.	Wn.	Da.	Lt.	For.	Agst.	P.
Bristol Rovers	18	12	4	2	37	13	24
Southampton	18	11	5	2	31	17	27
Reading	17	12	2	3	34	15	24
New Brighton	19	7	7	5	29	29	21
Tottenham Hotspur.....	19	7	6	6	29	20	24
Portsmouth	17	9	1	7	28	34	19
Northampton.....	17	9	1	7	25	26	19
Queen's Park Rangers..	17	7	3	7	25	28	17
Plymouth Argyle.....	18	7	3	8	24	26	17
Fulham	17	5	5	7	12	21	15
West Ham United	19	5	5	9	18	21	15
Luton	19	6	3	10	23	30	15
Brighton and Hove.....	16	5	4	7	21	17	14
Brentford	17	6	4	8	17	18	14
Millwall	19	6	4	10	15	28	14
Watford	14	5	3	6	14	14	13
Swindon	16	6	1	11	21	33	13
Wellingborough	17	4	1	12	14	48	9

"Linesman," of the "Daily Chronicle," says: "Luton are a rather light lot, but their football against Fulham was full of fire and dash. It is almost unkind to single out any one of these forwards, but I would like to make special reference to Ross and Barnes. The latter was not always in luck when he partnered Satterthwaite in the West Ham team. Here, with Moody to foot him unselfishly, and the weirdly cool Bob Hawkes to back him up, he dribbled and dodged magnificently, never doing more than was necessary; therein was the beauty of it. The whole line, and for that matter the whole team, worked admirably together, and it is the irony of fate that Luton are one of the clubs threatened with a dangerous position in the table. Turner (a former Fulhamite) played better when victory was assured than in the early stages, but McEwen was unvarying, and was quite as industrious and sincere when the game was won as in the difficult early stages. White was a cool and methodical centre-half, and Bob Hawkes sometimes paralysed his opponents by his easy assurance. I think he would dribble the ball through a furnace.

"Poor Fulham were hopelessly demoralised. Ross was dreadfully unsteady at the start, but I understand he had just received a wire telling him of the loss of his child. There was not a single man who stood out as playing really well, but perhaps Soar was the best, and Bell the weakest of the forwards. Lengie's absence, I believe, was due to the loss of his kit.

"Only a £72 gate witnessed this great triumph. The crowd did not take at all kindly to the referee, and even when they were six goals up they fully believed that Mr. Bailey had an eye and three-quarters for Fulham, and only a quarter for Luton. The severest indictment came from an indignant lady in the stand—'He doesn't see anything for us. I hope they'll give him five shillings short; then see if he can see that!'

Commenting generally upon the League matches, the same journal says:—"The match at Luton was productive of the heaviest score. It must be a very long time since last the straw-workers scored six goals in one League match. It may be a very long time before any other club gets six goals out of the Fulham defence. Lutonians cannot be grudged their satisfaction, but they must not overlook the important point that their chief success was in shooting. In this department the team achieved a brilliant triumph, and it was this power of finishing which enabled Luton to overplay the Londoners."