

The Southern League.

LUTON v. QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

Played at Park Royal on Saturday. Result:

Luton	2 goals.
Queen's Park Rangers	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

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

Queen's Park Rangers—Collins; Lyon and Newlands; Bowman, Hitch, and White; Murphy, Ronaldson, Bevan, Downing, and Singleton.

Referee, Mr. H. Ward (Nottingham).

During the week the local officials were rather anxious as to the side they would be able to send to Park Royal, for more than one member of the regular eleven was far from well, while R. Hawkes, who was injured in the cup-tie v. Clarence, was not sure of being able to turn out; indeed, if Pritchard had been fit he would not have made the journey. Eventually, however, what must now be regarded as full strength took the field.

Queen's Park Rangers also had rather a task to know what to do regarding their team, but for rather different reasons. It appears certain of their players had been suspended, and this meant a re-shuffling of the side. It will be noticed Downing, who usually plays at half-back, was placed inside-left, while White, a full back, was given the left-half position.

Park Royal may be an ideal spot under certain conditions, but on Saturday it was a desolate wilderness. A perfect gale swept across the ground, and it was evident whoever won the toss would possess an enormous advantage. The spectators are a long distance from the actual playing pitch, and with only some three thousand all told present, there were many gaps round the ring, which tended to make matters somewhat cheerless.

Collins had the good fortune to win the toss, and Luton kicked off against both wind and sun, for by now the rain had ceased and the sun was pretty full in the eyes of the Lutonians. Naturally, the game settled down well in the Luton quarters, and for some minutes it was a series of wild shots from the home attack which were unusually wide of the goal and did not cause anxiety. Relief came when Ross was fouled close to the half-way line, but Turner, who took the kick, was unable to get the ball up the field on account of the gale and it passed out over the touch-line, behind the spot where he took the kick.

It would be wearisome to catalogue the times Bevan and Jo. let drive at Lindsay, but the wind, which enabled them to keep the ball at that end of the ground, also prevented them making accurate attempts at the goal, and thus the Luton custodian was by no means so busy as the amount of pressure would indicate.

Barnes made a diversion with a brilliant individual run down the wing, but the ball went out at the expense of a goal kick, which, of course, transferred the play once more well in the vicinity of Lindsay. The fact that Lamberton was given offside at least twenty yards inside his own half shows how this pressure was maintained. Downing had a fine chance to open the scoring, but F. Hawkes robbed cleverly, and ultimately a corner resulted. The ball was placed on the usual spot, but it would not stay there, and the linesman was compelled to hold it in position while the Rangers' forward took the usual run before kicking, much to the amusement of the spectators.

Once more Barnes transferred operations, this time contriving nicely from the corner, thereby enabling Bob Hawkes to have a shot at goal. Collins, however, had little difficulty in getting the ball away, not being hampered in any way. This was Luton's first real attempt, and the game had been in progress over twenty minutes. Five minutes later Hitch and Fred White were observed taking part in a tussle in midfield the ball being blocked between them, but Hitch had the good fortune to secure it, and he pushed it nicely forward towards Bevan, who at once made tracks for the goal. He literally ploughed his way through the Luton defence and eventually arrived in front of Lindsay with only that worthy to beat, and, making no mistake, opened the scoring for the Rangers.

Up to this point Luton's hopes were centred on a clean sheet at the interval, and so well did the halves and backs stick to their opponents that it appeared rather probable. Being a goal behind, however, did not unnerve them, as such an event under these circumstances might have done; indeed, the Luton attack appeared to take a fresh start and were dangerous on their own once or twice. Lamberton was brought down in a very vicious manner by White when almost through, but nothing came of the place kick. A moment or so later Luton's White had a shot at Collins, but the latter easily kicked away. Still, this pressure proved Luton were by no means cowed by the goal against them.

At the opposite end a swift grounder from Hitch almost entered the Luton goal, but Lindsay just managed to turn it out at the expense of a corner, while two minutes later he earned the thanks of his comrades by tipping over a very likely-looking attempt from Downing. It was a brilliant save, and the crowd cheered heartily. This was about the last time Lindsay was seriously troubled before the interval, but seven minutes prior to the players retiring an incident happened which had a most important bearing on the result.

Lamberton put the ball across to Eaton, who was unmarked near the line, and the latter got away down the field, taking the ball almost on the goal-line before putting across a fine centre, which caused Collins to leave his goal. The custodian just failed to reach the ball as it came across to where Moody and Bowman were standing almost touching each other. It appeared anybody's ball, but in some way it was noticed to be travelling slowly over the goal-line, and the spectators naturally thought Moody had equalised. It was discovered afterwards that what happened was Moody and Bowman both tried to get at the ball, but Moody charged his opponent, who at the same time touched the leather, and it just went over the line. If Collins had remained in goal he could almost have blown it away, but fortunately for Luton he had not time to get back, and a big step towards winning the match had been taken by Luton.

Towards the interval the wind had been dropping considerably, and when the players once more turned out there was little in it, although of course Luton had what advantage there was in this respect. As a spectacle the game improved with the alteration in weather conditions, and the exchanges were naturally more even. Early in this half Singleton had a fine chance, but he finished very tamely, Turner kicking into touch near the corner. A run through down the centre of the field by Lamberton looked dangerous, but Collins saved the shot.

At this stage Luton were having a greater share of the game, but as a rule they tried Collins with long shots which he had no difficulty in getting away. One or two corners were forced, but nothing tangible resulted until seventeen minutes after the re-start, when the ball was put over the line following one of these corners, and Newlands took the usual goal-kick. Apparently he slipped in taking this, for he only half kicked the ball and it dropped at Moody's toes. Moody, without the slightest hesitation, let drive, and before Collins could realise the state of affairs, Luton had netted what proved the winning goal.

It was a brilliant shot, and quite deserved all the thanks the supporters of Luton will bestow upon Moody. For some minutes after this the Rangers were a beaten side, and it appeared possible other goals would come, but they eventually pulled themselves together again and put up a stubborn fight for the points. Twenty minutes from the close Lamberton's knee gave way, and this caused him to retire over the touch-line, but after a little attention from Lawson, he returned to the fray, not being off more than three minutes. It seems the old injury once more caused this retirement, but when the Luton trainer replaced the joint, little damage was caused.

A quarter of an hour before the finish a change was made in the Rangers' attack. Murphy, who had been practically starved on

the wing, was brought inside-left, Downing exchanging positions. This put more life into the line and almost justified the move, for, with only five minutes to go, Murphy got right through within six yards of Lindsay and put in a terrific drive, which the Luton goalie pounced upon right on the line, thus bringing off a sensational save at the expense of a corner. Even play up to the sound of the whistle was the feature of the final period, and the Lutonians were quickly in the dressing-room shaking hands with one another.

The sanctum was, a few minutes later, invaded by two members of the Salvation Army with Self-Denial boxes, and I rather think they would be surprised at their reception, for they carried away a much heavier load than I suspect they would have done under usual conditions. Luton's most welcome win gives the Club a good lift, and with ordinary luck the "bottom two" should not be troubling Luton again. Lindsay had comparatively little to do, considering the pressure in the first half, but he kept out at least three goal-deserving shots in brilliant style. At no period of the game did the defence of Turner and McEwen break down, both these players giving a fine display.

The half-back trio also played a rare worrying game, although Bob Hawkes was greatly handicapped in not being able to kick with his left foot. White had a big handful in Bevan, who depends on individual rushes, and, being strong with it, causes any centre-half many anxious moments, but White stuck to him splendidly.

Among the forwards, Barnes was probably the most in evidence, and he made many fine runs without any luck at the finish. Lamber-ton used his speed to good advantage, and was always well up among the Rangers' defence. As a combination, they were much in front of the Rangers, who seemed to absolutely depend upon Bevan to get up the field. Even in the first half, although the Lutonians were not able to force the game inside the penalty area more than half-a-dozen times, they appeared more dangerous than the Rangers' quintette. It was no use to lift the ball in the air, and the Luton forwards invariably passed the ball along the "carpet," thus being able to make headway time after time.

The weak line of the Rangers was undoubtedly at half-back, and it is a considerable time since I saw a more ineffective trio. Bowman, apparently, had not recovered from his trip to Paris during the week, while White is a better back than half. Hitch worked hard, as usual, but even he has often played a better game against Luton. Lyon was the best man in the Rangers' defence, and only his speed and judgment prevented a score when Barnes got in one of his characteristic runs. It was a bitter blow to the Rangers' officials, who were very "down" at the recent non-success of the team. What it means to them the fact that the gates have fallen from 14,000 to a paltry 3,000 sufficiently testifies.

While the Rangers were yielding up League points to Luton, Tottenham Hotspur were obligingly taking them out of Millwall, and at Brentford they were being divided by Swindon and the Middlesex team. The result was that Luton went up four steps on the League ladder, but Millwall jumped above them again on Monday by beating Northampton.

The following is the League table up to date:

Goals.

	Plyd.	Wn.	Da.	Lt.	For.	Agst.	P.
Bristol Rovers	25	16	5	4	58	26	37
Reading	24	15	4	5	46	26	34
Southampton	24	14	5	5	42	28	33
Tottenham Hotspur.....	25	11	7	7	42	24	29
New Brompton.....	27	9	10	8	36	30	28
Brighton and Hove.....	26	11	5	10	35	28	27
Portsmouth	23	12	2	9	45	39	26
Northampton.....	23	11	3	9	36	35	25
Plymouth Arville.....	24	10	4	10	38	33	24
West Ham United	24	9	6	11	33	31	24
Fulham	23	8	7	8	31	27	23
Queen's Park Rangers...	25	8	6	11	35	41	22
Millwall	27	8	6	13	25	39	21
Luton	26	9	3	14	34	44	21
Swindon	27	9	3	15	34	52	21
Brentford	25	6	8	11	23	30	20
Watford	22	8	3	11	21	25	19
Wellington	24	5	1	18	22	76	11