

WEST HAM V. LUTON.

FIRST S.L. WIN FROM HOME.

Played on the Boleyn Castle Ground, Upton Park, London, on Saturday. Result:—

LUTON	...	...	...	2 GOALS.
WEST HAM	...	...	...	1 GOAL.

The following were the teams:—

LUTON.			
	Platt	McCurdy	
Blackett	White	R. Hawkes	
F. Hawkes	Brown	Pickering	Barnes
Gallacher	Warner		
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Blackburn	Wilkinson	Mackie	Winterhalder
	Bridgeman		
Jarvis	Piercy	Bush	
Gardner		Hammond	
	Kitchen		
WEST HAM.			

The fixture attracted a crowd of between 9,000 and 10,000 people. It was confidently anticipated that the match would be a hard and even one. The supporters of both teams seemed fairly sanguine, but the newspaper experts in the game were inclined to the belief that West Ham would win.

But this they were unable to do, and even had a draw resulted they would have been rather fortunate. A margin of a goal very fairly represents Luton's superiority. The splendid defence of the visitors certainly did a lot to prevent the Hammers from bringing off a draw, but the homesters did not take full advantage of their opportunities.

The ground was hard and in good condition. The improvement between the pitch since last season, when no one could have doubted that it was originally a potato patch, was very marked. The weather was gloriously fine, and the heat of the sun would have been trying to the players had they not been in such good training.

Luton were set to kick off, and at once cut out the pace. Warner and Gallacher got to the West Ham end through some well-judged passing, and centred to Brown, who showed that he had not quite settled down to his stride. Some good work by Blackett set Luton pressing again, and this time it was Gallacher who forgot the exact position of the goal.

Three ugly rushes by the West Ham forwards found Blackett as safe and self-reliant as ever. Winterhalder began to display a fine turn of speed and considerable ability to centre, but Freddy Hawkes was too quick for the other West Ham forwards, and set Luton on the run towards the other end again. Here "Sandy" Brown made a shot at goal, but missed by only a few inches.

The resultant goal kick increased the Hammers' activity, and a capital attempt by Mackie on receiving from Winterhalder was cleared in unhesitating fashion by Blackett. At the other end of the field Gallacher sent the ball flying right across the goal mouth. Luton's determined attacks were giving the Hammers a good deal of trouble, and in their anxiety one of the defenders was pulled up for fouling. The free-kick was taken by Blackett, and the ball flew past the post a few inches on the wrong side.

The dashing work of the visiting forwards went near to bringing about the downfall of the West Ham goal several times. A weak shot by Gallacher, however, found that Kitchen had all his wits about him. An attempt by one nippy Blackburn was rendered useless by White, who set the visiting forwards going once again.

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It was, however, a free-kick by McCurdy which led to the effort which placed Luton ahead. After a little delay in front of goal Warner put paid to a centre from Pickering, through a crowd of players, Kitchen having very little chance. Thus Luton opened the scoring only 10 minutes from the start. Dismay reigned in the West Ham ranks, for it was useless to deny that up to the present the visitors had had by far the best of matters and deserved their goal. But, alarmed though the supporters of the home team were, the players themselves were only made the more determined by the reverse, and a hot shot by Blackburn looked dangerous.

Bridgeman had a chance in a thousand through the good work of Piercy, but though energetic the West Hammer was anything but safe in his shooting, and made a mess of his opportunity. A well-timed clearance by Gardner sent the home forwards swarming round their opponents' goal, but Mackie missed the mark. A good attempt by Blackburn put the ball high over the cross-bar. A run by Mackie, and a pass to Winterhalder, came just as Blackett was measuring his length on the ground, but McCurdy saved the situation.

A passing movement set Luton on the aggressive again, but Gardner very cleverly took the ball off Barnes' foot from a corner. The kick was entrusted to Barnes, who placed well, but one of the Hammers was the first to get his head to the ball, and transferred the leather to the other end; but Pickering returned to the attack, and with a good shot missed the post by an inch or two. At the other end Wilkinson received a pass from the right wing, and tried Platt with a shot which was minus any great sting, and was therefore dealt with without much trouble.

An attempted clearance by McCurdy struck Mackie with force, and West Ham attempted to profit by the mishap, but Platt put the stopper on their efforts. At this juncture the Hammers began to find their feet, and their attacks gave the Luton defenders a good deal of trouble, but the work of the visiting backs was too good for them. "Sandy" Brown attempted to turn the tide by a clever individual run, but he spoilt an otherwise good effort by kicking too high. At the interval Luton were still leading by 1-0.

West Ham opened the second (forty-five" promisingly, but Winterhalder forgot the whereabouts of the goal. A couple of minutes later, however, Barnes took the ball up the field and centred, "Sandy" Brown putting on a finishing touch which Kitchen did his best to stop, but failed. A few minutes later Blackburn reduced this lead, on receiving from Bridgeman, with a very well-judged shot.

For the rest of the second half West Ham more than held their own, but their opportunities were few and far between, thanks to the splendid work of the Luton defence. The home forwards strove particularly hard to equalise, but bad shooting and weakness in front of goal were the principal causes of their efforts being unrewarded. At times Luton made their presence felt, but their play lacked the dash which characterised it in the first half, and towards the close of the game they made hardly any headway against the Hammers' defence.

"Sandy" Brown seemed to be particularly anxious for his team to more than hold their own in this half, but he was too well watched to do any very effective work. With the aid of Gallacher, however, he made Kitchen leave his charge in order to clear, and a moment later Pickering shot the ball across the goal mouth. It was in one of his dashes that Brown was badly winded, but he was able to resume after a short rest. Just afterwards Gallacher placed the ball over the top of the goal.

Bridgeman was accountable for an offside goal for West Ham, and a little later Platt had to punch out a dangerous centre from Winterhalder. A minute after Platt had to again use his fists to a clever header from Blackburn. At the other end Kitchen was easily able to deal with a shot by Gallacher, who obtained possession from Brown. The end came with Luton deservedly victorious by 2-1.

In the Luton team the defence was especially prominent, and Blackett was the finest back on the field. Platt saved some stinging shots. The halves tackled in good style, and White seemed to be getting back to his old form again. Of the forwards, the outside forwards suffered by comparison with West Ham. The West Ham side included some capital players. The front rank displayed great skill, with the exception of

Bridgeman, whose play was often wild and his shooting aimless. The halves strove hard to a certain extent, Bush showing up as a very promising young player. The backs were safe, without being brilliant. Gardner took care of "Sandy" Brown, and Hammond is said to be an improvement on McCartney, the Irish International. Kitchen did his work well, and had no chance with the shot which scored.

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The game reminded me somewhat of the old Millwall games, when the visitors to Luton got the lead and the home team could never get the equaliser. West Ham in the second half had the better of the game, whilst Luton were more to the fore in the first.