

The Southern League.

NEW BROMPTON v. LUTON.

Played at New Brompton on Saturday.

Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
New Brompton	1 goal.

The following teams turned out:—

Luton—Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Warner, Macdonald, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

New Brompton—Griffiths; Walton and Floyd; Mavin, Martin, and Elliott; Burns, Sheridan, Snellgrove, Beadsworth, and Marriott.

Referee, Mr. C. C. Fallowfield (Streatham).

On paper, it looked a good thing for Luton on Saturday, but New Brompton have ever proved stubborn opponents on their own ground. Very few victories have been credited to Luton on Kentish soil; indeed, I believe a draw has been the commonest result between Saturday's teams. It will be observed the home side made many alterations. Of these, Beadsworth had only been secured during the week and was making his first appearance for the Club. Sheridan, of whom much had been expected, had not played for a week or two through illness, but I understand he had not made a very favourable impression in his previous games for New Brompton. Our old friend McKee was dropped, and thus the forwards were an entirely new line from last season's five.

Luton gave the side which gained such a glorious victory the previous week a further chance to distinguish themselves, but, as the sequel shows, they failed to live up to this reputation. The train service to New Brompton is not of the best, and the players were on the ground early. An inspection of the turf did not prove very favourable and in comparison with our new pitch it was extremely rough.

Luton won the toss, and, as there was a decided wind, Bob naturally took advantage of its assistance. The game opened in quiet fashion; indeed, after last week's fireworks, the proceedings all through were very tame. An opening rush by New Brompton's right wing was nicely stopped by Bob Hawkes, who passed back to McCurdy, but the ball travelled out, and from the throw-in Beadsworth shot over.

The ball did not remain long at this end of the field, for Barnes kept up his recent form by going through nicely several times without being able to drive home the advantage. His final pass was either too far forward or his inside comrades had failed to keep up and his centres went begging. It was some minutes before Warner touched the ball, and then he was well offside from Pickering's pass. He had a bit better fortune at the next attempt, for he tricked Elliott in fine style, but Floyd just managed to save the situation by kicking into touch.

New Brompton could not keep the Luton attack away from Griffiths' vicinity for any lengthened period, until hands against Pickering inside the penalty area gave relief. Walton almost brought about the downfall of his own goal when he missed badly, but Warner did not get away soon enough and the opportunity passed. At the opposite end Marriott made a diversion in favour of New Brompton, Blackett failing to stop his career, but Snellgrove was not clever enough to take up the advantage gained and Luton's goal was not endangered to the extent it should have been.

Several times offside against Warner pulled up the Luton attack, and I might state here the referee was by no means happy in some of his decisions on this point, making many mistakes. Elliott was penalised for a bad foul near the halfway line, and the resulting free kick was placed well up the field, but the home defence prevailed and danger was averted. Play veered round in favour of New Brompton and Platt was called upon twice in quick succession, Snellgrove being responsible for a good attempt.

This turn of events did not last long, and a high dropping centre from Warner appeared good business for Luton, but the home backs were successful in clearing. Barnes and Pickering now forced the play with a cleverly-executed run, giving Macdonald a chance to have a pop at Griffiths, but his shot was a trifle wide. At the opposite end White gave a corner, but this was easily disposed of and the ball was quickly returned up the field. At this stage Pickering injured his knee in some way, and although he did not come off the field, he was of little use to his side during a spell of pressure, as he was not in his place when the ball came across once or twice. But he soon recovered and took his share in the play to the end of the piece. Hereabouts Beadsworth fouled Blackett and received a warning from the referee, but the place-kick was of little value.

Brown almost netted with a fine drive, but Floyd managed to get in the way of his shot and the ball rebounded far down the field. A minute later Sandy made a surprise pass to Macdonald, who was not prepared for it, and a very good opening consequently went begging. Later on a pass from Brown to Barnes

was vetoed by the referee giving Luton's outside-left offside just as he was prepared to improve the occasion. This was only one of many such rulings and undoubtedly Barnes should have been allowed to go on.

From a hard drive by Macdonald the ball cannoned off Floyd at the expense of a corner, but nothing further came of the incident. White had a comparatively easy task to hold Snellgrove in check, though once he let him through right in front of Platt, but he made a wild attempt and the ball went yards wide.

White almost repeated his success of last season on the same ground by a fine drive from a pass put to him by Brown, but this time Griffiths just managed to clear Freddy's shot, and he did not open his Southern League goal record for the present season. Five minutes before the interval the game was stopped through Martin getting hurt, but he soon recovered. McCurdy did well to rob Snellgrove when almost through, just before crossing over. Although it looked odds on a clean sheet at half-time, Luton made two desperate efforts. Once Brown, with a characteristic dash, went through the Brompton backs, only to be pulled up for offside. This was quite the worst decision of Mr. Fallowfield's, and was admitted by the home officials to have been a wrong one. The other came about through the agency of Barnes, who finished up a brilliant run by passing across the goal-mouth. Floyd managed to turn the ball out to Macdonald, but the latter put up a rather weak attempt, and nothing more than a goal kick for New Brompton came of it.

Half-time was called without any tangible result. Although, of course, Luton had the greater number of chances, they scarcely deserved to have fared better on the play. It was thought with a change of ends Platt would have all his work cut out to keep a clean sheet, and after a short spell of Luton attack, he was kept on the alert in the early stages of the concluding half. It was at this time that Luton's unbeaten away record in the Southern League was most in jeopardy, but only one goal came, this being netted by Marriott with a cross shot high up in the extreme corner of the goal some twelve minutes after the re-start.

Platt made a dash to get to the ball, but was just too late, and for the first time the crowd let themselves go. Doubtless visions of a rather unexpected win arose in their minds, and, if the truth is to be told, I must confess that I rather fancied Luton were in for a beating, inasmuch as the home players were having much the better of the exchanges and also had the material help of the elements. But this goal livened up the Lutonians and they put on an extra spurt or two. Still, a rather ugly opening came about when Platt, in fisting away a shot, got too far under the ball and almost put through his own goal, but only a corner came of it, and this being disposed of, play was transferred. Warner dropped in a good corner kick at the opposite end, and the ball was put over by Barnes.

A better fate was in store, however, from a corner taken by Barnes which Griffiths made a dash at and missed altogether, and Brown equalised the scores ten minutes after Marriott's goal. The crowd by no means relished the award of the corner which led up to this goal, claiming that it ought to have been a goal kick. Personally, I was too far away to say which was the correct decision, but I am assured by the Luton players who were on the spot that Walton was the last player the ball touched before passing over the goal-line. Therefore the goal was a good one.

Of course, it was a bit disappointing to the New Brompton supporters to see points slipping away when they were so badly needed. From this stage to the finish Luton had more of the game, although, helped by the wind, New Brompton got down occasionally. Beadsworth caused Platt to kick away on one occasion when hard pressed, while only the wildness of the attempt prevented the same player bringing off a goal when Blackett let him through.

But as a rule it was Luton who appeared the more likely to get the lead, Barnes usually being the one to bring the ball through. He earned the ironical applause of the home crowd when, after getting right through on his own, he failed to steady himself and his final shot went wide. As this was about four minutes before the close, a goal would probably have settled the result, and consequently there was a certain amount of relief about the cheer. About the last incident was a good save by Griffiths from a centre by Warner, and the players trooped off the field a minute later sharing the points.

The game was far from a good one to watch, pretty forward work being very infrequent. The backs on both sides kicked strongly and were the chief cause in keeping down the score, neither goalkeeper having a deal to do. Undoubtedly the Luton forwards were the cleverer five, but the hard, bumpy turf quite upset their combination, and thus individual work came off best. Barnes kept up his form of recent matches and was Luton's most prominent forward. The worrying tactics of the halfbacks of both teams did not allow the inside men to get going, and it was the outside wingers who usually got through the intermediate division. Burns, who took Barnfather's place, certainly justified a further trial, while Beadsworth promises to make Marriott a good partner. I should think Marriott the best of the New Brompton forwards on Saturday; anyway, his goal was a fine one.

Bristol Rovers met with another defeat on Saturday, Tottenham Hotspur beating them on their own ground by 2 goals to nil. At Park Royal, Brentford beat the Rangers by 2 goals to 1, at Brighton, Southampton were victorious by 3 goals to 1, and at Swindon, Northampton gained a surprising success by 2 goals to 1. The home teams winning were—Fulham 2, Norwich City 1; Watford 1, Reading 0; West Ham 2, Plymouth Argyle 1; Portsmouth 2, Millwall 1.

The following is the League table up to date:—

	Goals.						
	Plyd.	Wn.	Lt.	Dn.	For.	Agst	Pts.
Fulham	7	4	0	3	10	3	11
Plymouth Agyle	7	5	1	1	12	4	11
Luton	7	4	1	2	17	7	10
Tottenham H.	7	4	1	2	8	4	10
Portsmouth	8	3	1	4	14	6	10
Millwall	7	4	2	1	13	5	9
Southampton	6	4	1	1	10	5	9
Bristol Rovers	7	4	2	1	15	12	9
Brentford	7	4	3	0	7	7	8
West Ham	7	3	4	0	6	7	6
Watford	7	2	3	2	6	8	6
Queen's Park Rans.	7	2	4	1	12	8	5
Norwich City	7	1	4	2	6	11	4
Brighton & Hove...	7	2	5	0	6	13	4
New Brompton	7	1	4	2	3	17	4
Northampton	7	2	5	0	5	19	4
Reading	7	1	5	1	6	10	3
Swindon	7	1	5	1	5	13	3

On Saturday next there will be a battle royal at Luton, the visitors being Portsmouth, who are on a par with Luton as to points obtained, but have played one more match. Last week, they had the great joy of lowering the Millwall colours, and as they came out top in a very hard struggle, they will doubtless hope to render a good account of themselves on this occasion. The kick-off is at 3.15, and Luton will rely upon their usual team.

Luton Town v. Portsmouth and Bassett v. the World for supplying a good Overcoat or Mackintosh to watch the match in.—Note address: 28, Wellington-street.—[ADVT.]

Watford dropped Peter Turner in their match against Reading, having discovered that though he plays remarkably well in mid-field, he fails in the shooting department. Eaton, on the other hand, seems to have gained a permanent place in the team.