

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. MILLWALL.

PILING UP THE GOALS.

Millwall at Luton! What memories of past struggles are there not brought to mind at the very mention of Millwall? Luton and Millwall are indeed two old antagonists in the Southern League, and in the old days there was very keen rivalry between the two teams. So when the Dockers visited us on Saturday they were accorded a hearty reception. It was expected that this match would constitute a record as regards attendance, and it was disappointing to the directors that this was not so. It was stated that the gate receipts were considerably less than in the case of the Fulham match. Still, when compared with last season, the takings this year are most gratifying.

The result was a sensational one, and for the first time for some seasons, Luton gave their opponents a regular beating. To beat Millwall six goals to one was indeed something to be proud of, granted that the latter were not at full strength. The absence of Joyce, their capable custodian was a severe handicap for them; and had they brought with them their strongest team, it is difficult to say what would have been the result; but taking everything into consideration, perhaps Luton would have been victorious, although not by such a large margin, because the presence of Campbell, Jones and Watkins must have made itself felt.

Once more R. Hawkes won the toss, and Millwall were set to face a slight wind; and the fact that Luton scored in the first two minutes through Brown shows with what a rush they went away. Dwelley, the Millwall custodian, it was thought ought to have cleared, though it was evident he was hampered at the time by his own backs.

The visiting halves were playing with commendable energy, but only succeeded for a short time in holding their opponents in check, and before the game was seven minutes old, Warner, from Brown's pass, increased Luton's lead. Dwelley completely misjudged the speed at which the ball was travelling.

Millwall worked with dogged tenacity, and took up the attack, but failed to penetrate the home defence. Their short-passing tactics, too, did them no good, and the forwards failed to do much against the combination of Luton's half-line.

Another ten minutes' play elapsed, and Brown succeeded in putting on another goal for Luton. Such a performance naturally cheered the crowd, who had never anticipated anything like this. Thus the score at half-time was 3-0 in favour of the home side.

In the second moiety Luton multiplied their score, three further goals being put on. A foul was awarded Luton. Bob Hawkes took the shot, and centred across the field, Warner shaking the rigging. Hands again proved the downfall of Millwall. Blackett took the kick, and Barnes safely placed in the net. Luton had thus scored their fifth goal, and the final result was a hundred to one on the homesters. The next point of interest centred in a dash by Pickering. Working his way through, the Luton man scored a very pretty goal, making the sixth for his side.

Millwall some time afterwards obtained a corner from Platt. The flag-kick was not quite cleared, and after the leather had hovered round the home citadel for a moment, Hunter succeeded in banging it into the net, and thus Millwall secured their solitary point of the game.

What a difference to last season's result, when Luton was beaten at home 2-1 and again away 2-0. It must not, however, be inferred from the score of 6-1 that the play was one-sided. The Dockers not only always shone in mid-field, but held their own there; it was in front of goal that they showed a marked weakness, and they were not very strong or accurate in shooting either.

Bradbury was their only really dangerous man, and his centres caused Platt some trouble, but the other men of the front string always held on too long to the ball. Dwelley, too, was not safe by any means. Once he showed exceptional coolness. The ball struck the cross-bar, and thinking the leather had gone over, the custodian did not trouble further, when he was alarmed to see it drop down at his feet. Brown and Pickering rushed up, but Dwelley showed commendable versatility in safely pushing the ball away out of danger. Though he saved some high shots as well as any goal keeper could have done, he did not prove himself very capable of dealing with grounders.

There is one thing that must be said for Millwall. Though the tide all the afternoon went against them, they never for a moment lagged in their efforts, and they were as energetic five minutes before the end as they were at the beginning. They also played a very clean game, and the spectators were chivalrous enough to acknowledge this sportsmanlike spirit. The fact was, all the same, Millwall were this time completely beaten on their merits, so we may expect to catch it hot when we have to play the return in London.

Warner again shone on the wing, and it was delightful to see him pitted against Stevenson, who is generally regarded as the fastest back in the South. Sometimes it was the forward that came off best, and some times the back, but on the whole honours between both men were about equally divided. Early in the game Bob Hawkes got injured, consequently he was not able to play with the dash that has hitherto this season characterised his efforts.

Luton are now at the top of the Southern League, though the London papers as usual will give us but scanty credit for it. Here, for instance, is what the "Daily Telegraph" says:—"By beating Millwall by 6 goals to 1, Luton not only accomplished the most remarkable performance of an eventful afternoon on Saturday, but secured first place in the competition. This disaster, following a reverse at home from Northampton, shows clearly that Millwall have sadly deteriorated since the early weeks of the season; but, allowing that the London team were disappointing, great credit belongs to Luton for the decisive manner in which they forced home superiority. Although heading the table of results, Luton have not such a good record as either Tottenham Hotspur or Southampton, both of whom, on their own grounds, had to work very hard for victory."