

The Southern League.

LUTON v. MILLWALL.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	6 goals.
Millwall	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

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

Millwall—Dwelley; Comrie and Stephenson; Marshall, McLean, and Blyth; Bradbury, Milsom, Heaton, Twigg, and Hunter.

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

The prospects for the "grate fite" between Luton and Millwall did not look particularly bright on Saturday morning, for the town was enveloped in a thick fog, and bearing in mind that we were in November, there was only too much reason to fear that the game and the game would both be spoiled. Happily, fears were not realised; the fog cleared off before the morning was far advanced, and the afternoon was pretty well all that could be desired.

Under foot, of course, there was room for improvement. The heavy rains had had their effect upon the ground, and the players found the work quite as hard as they cared for. Still, the directors were fortunate to get so nice an afternoon in the midst of the rainy season, and there was little or nothing to interfere with the attendance. Possibly some of the cyclists had none too comfortable a time, but they turned up all the same.

The kick-off was fixed for 3.15, which was fully a quarter of an hour too late, and it was a good thing the referee got the teams to line up ten minutes before time, or it is questionable whether the match could have been brought to a conclusion. As it was, the concluding stages were fought out in the gloom, and spectators had to be well on the alert to follow the course of the ball.

There were quite seven thousand people present when Millwall kicked off, Bob Hawkes having won the toss. The Dockers, by the way, were unfortunate in having to take the field without several of their regular players, Joyce giving place to Dwelley, a Poplar man, in goal, Comrie going from right-half to right back in place of Campbell, and Jones and Watkins being absent from the front string. It was, however, in the defence that the alterations were most keenly felt.

The play was of a very sensational order to begin with, Luton being quickly in evidence in the vicinity of the Millwall goal. Barnes first of all tested the custodian with a fine shot, and then Luton put on the pressure until off-side relieved. The free kick availed little, for the homesters pounced on the ball and forced a corner. Following this, there was a curious mix-up in the mouth of the Millwall goal, and Comrie failing to clear, Brown easily drew first blood.

The cheering which greeted this performance had hardly died away when Luton were again acting on the aggressive, and after a long shot by McCurdy had just missed the upright, the forwards carried the battle to the gates, and Brown giving Warner a beautiful pass, the outside-right scored with a magnificent shot taken at an exceedingly difficult angle. Poor Dwelley tried hard to save it, and I don't think it was his fault that he was not successful.

Two goals within two or three minutes was distinctly good business, and visions of another record began to be conjured up by the on-lookers. Millwall, however, now got a look-in, and Marshall sent over the bar from long range. Then Barnes got away again, through the kindly help of Bob Hawkes and Pickering, and Brown made a good attempt to convert the centre, but could not keep the ball low enough. A splendid effort by Bradbury on the Millwall right was generously applauded by the spectators, and a miss by White afforded Milson a good opening, but he sent wide.

Warner and Barnes replied with corners for Luton, and from that placed by the outside-left, Macdonald hit the bar. The ball rebounded, and a scrimmage ensued, during which the ball seemed to go well over the line, but in response to appeals, the referee, who was watching very closely, emphatically shook his head. A free kick by Blackett was a regular hot 'un, and then Stephenson, in attempting to clear from a centre by Pickering, had the misfortune to put through his own goal.

This was the extent of the scoring in the first half, though the Millwall goal afterwards had several narrow escapes, and the custodian was none too happy in his attempts to clear. Once he punted up in the air from a grand shot by White, and Brown came within an ace of putting on the finishing touch, but Stephenson just managed to get the ball away. Sandy had another good opening from a shot by Pickering, similarly dealt with by Dwelley, but he delayed his kick and the ball rebounded off a back.

The visitors occasionally got away, and during one of these incursions a couple of the inside forwards came down on Bob Hawkes, hurting his back and rendering him of little further use until after the interval. During this period, Bradbury was the only man to cause Platt any trouble, and one of his shots was a beauty, but later on, when he had a clear field, he dallied with the ball and lost the opportunity. Just before the interval Brown, taking a centre from Warner, hit the inside of the bar and a goal seemed certain, but somehow or other the ball came out.

Play in the second half had been in progress some time before there was any alteration in the score, though Luton two or three times had extremely hard luck. Once a tremendous drive by Bob Hawkes was going straight for the net, but it cannoned off Stephenson without the latter knowing anything about it, so far as seeing the ball was concerned, and later on Dwelley appeared to carry the ball right under the bar from a grandly-placed corner by Warner.

The fourth goal came at length, however. Pickering might possibly have got it, but he was fouled just outside the penalty line. Bob Hawkes took the kick—one of his patents—and Warner was the man to score. The fifth goal was not long in following, though before it came, Millwall were several times causing trouble to the Luton defence. Then the home forwards went away, and Barnes put through with a brilliant shot.

Personally, I should have been inclined to say that the left-winger was offside when he got the ball, but the referee appeared to have no doubt on the point, and if there was any suspicion about it, perhaps it may be placed as a set-off against those other occasions when the suspicion was the other way. Millwall still struggled hard against their much superior opponents, and Bradbury got in another fine shot which passed just over the bar. Platt did not appear to touch it, but a corner was given. Nothing came of this, and Luton transferred the play to the other end, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes meeting the running, and Pickering had the satisfaction of scoring his second Southern League goal.

He was instantly the recipient of enthusiastic congratulations from his comrades, for every-

body recognises that if the old Bury man has not placed points to his credit, it has been more his misfortune than his fault. The spectators, who had been letting themselves "go" for some time, now clamoured for something to beat the Bristol Rovers' record, but their part was easier than that of the players. The heavy ground had been telling its tale, and the Luton men were beginning to lose a little of their keenness.

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As almost invariably happens, the other side were the first to notice the difference, and they strained every nerve to get on better terms. For some time their efforts were unattended with success, and they were lucky in not losing another goal in the meantime as a result of Warner's persistent attempts, but eventually Hunter beat Platt with a lovely shot which gave the Luton custodian little or no chance.

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The play following this was fairly even, but practically speaking, Hunter was the only man to give Platt any serious work, whereas at the other end there were two or three openings from which goals might have come. Bob Hawkes had good chance but shot over, and towards the finish Brown got clean through, but the men at his heels caused him to shoot too soon, and Dwelley was able to save.

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All things considered, it was a very fine game, and the Luton team are to be congratulated upon another splendid performance. Possibly, they would not have fared so well had Millwall had a full team, for Dwelley, in goal, was not an efficient substitute for Joyce. Curiously enough, however, Luton did not take advantage of his mistakes, and there was little blame attaching to him for any one of the points scored. At times, his attempts to clear were painfully weak, but, as it happened, though the goal was many times threatened on this account, it did not fall, and the shots that scored might have beaten any custodian.

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Comrie took a little time to settle down at back, but otherwise the men gave a very good account of themselves, though the forwards generally petered out near goal. Perhaps this was because of the fine form shown by Blackett and McCurdy and the worrying tactics of White and Fred Hawkes, both of whom did excellent work. The going seemed a little too heavy for Bob Hawkes, who was further handicapped by the injury to his back. Nevertheless it was his play which took the eye of the Millwall officials, and they freely expressed admiration of his command over the ball and his well-timed passes.

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The forwards were in their best vein, and had the travelling been a little easier, they would have done even greater things. Barnes was full of determination right from the very start, and—well, seeing that all rendered such a capital account of themselves, perhaps it is not worth while to single out any one for special mention, though a word must be spared to congratulate Pickering upon breaking his spell of bad luck and to express the hope that his scoring will now be as prolific as that of the others.

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I must not forget Platt. He did not have a great deal to do, but what little came his way was dealt with in a very creditable manner, and once, when he could not get rid of a hot, high shot at the first attempt, he kept his goal intact though a couple of forwards were right on the spot.

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Whilst Luton were rubbing it into Millwall, Fulham were losing to Reading, and consequently Luton now have the privilege of heading the Southern League. This is a great distinction, and one which has been achieved by brilliant play. They are now well ahead of any other team in the number of goals scored. Since the one disaster which led to the re-organisation of the front string, Luton have truly done wonderful things.

In its comments on the match, the "Daily Chronicle" says:—"Milwall took a strange sort of team to Luton, but the nature of Luton's victory is astounding. In ten Southern League matches the Straw-workers have scored 27 goals, at least 10 more than any other club. In addition, eight United League games have brought them in 30 more goals. The success has a significant feature—only twelve players have taken part in the ten Southern League fixtures, which must surely be a record! Every week-end people smile superciliously and say, 'Luton can't keep it up,' but Luton are as 'up' as they can possibly be, though relatively the Spurs and Southampton are a point better."

The greatest surprise in the Southern League matches on Saturday was the extraordinary recovery of Bristol Rovers, who went to Plymouth and beat the Pilgrims by 2 goals to 1. They were the only visiting team to win, but Brighton and Portsmouth drew at Northampton and Brentford respectively, and Swindon put up a good fight at Tottenham, being beaten only by the odd goal in three. Queen's Park Rangers also did well at Southampton, the Saints just gaining the day by 2 goals to 1.

Norwich City continued to show their improved form, scoring four goals against New Brompton's one, and Watford gained a creditably victory over West Ham, whom they beat by three goals to one. The following is the League table up to date:—

	Plyd.	Wn.	Lt.	Dn.	Goals.		Pts
					For.	Agst	
Luton	10	6	1	3	27	11	15
Tottenham	9	6	1	2	16	5	14
Southampton	9	6	1	2	14	7	14
Fulham	10	4	1	5	11	5	13
Plymouth Argyle ...	10	5	3	2	13	8	12
Portsmouth	10	3	2	5	17	10	11
Millwall	10	4	4	2	14	12	11
Bristol Rovers	10	5	4	1	17	15	11
Brentford	10	5	4	1	10	10	11
Norwich City	10	4	4	2	15	12	10
Reading	10	4	5	1	12	13	9
Northampton	10	4	5	1	8	20	9
Watford	9	3	4	2	10	11	8
Queen's Park Rans.	10	3	6	1	14	15	7
West Ham	10	3	7	0	9	14	6
New Brompton	10	2	6	2	6	28	6
Brighton and Hove	9	2	6	1	7	15	5
Swindon	10	1	6	3	7	16	5

It is interesting to compare Luton's position now with that of last year. The first ten matches last season yielded only five points as against 15 this, and whilst 18 goals had been lost as compared with 11 now, only 8 had been scored, a number which looks very paltry indeed when placed against the 27 the present team have secured. The following are the figures in full:—

Last season	10	2	7	1	8	18	5
This season	10	6	1	3	27	11	15

Saturday's gate at Luton realised £159.

The Luton scorers up-to-date (Southern League matches) are as follow:—Brown 7, Warner 7, Barnes 6, Pickering 2, Macdonald, 2, R. Hawkes 2, making a total of 26, the one unaccounted for having been scored by Stephenson (Millwall), who put through his own goal.

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

On Saturday next Luton will be at home to Crystal Palace in a United League match. An idea has got abroad that the Palace will be playing Chelsea on that day in a Cup-tie, but that is a mistake, the Cup-tie being due for the following week. The Glaziers seem to be a very warm lot, and so far have lost only one game in the United League. They have won their last 9 matches straight off the reel, and up to the present have scored 54 goals to 10. The kick-off is fixed for 3 o'clock, and the Luton team will be as usual.