

The Southern League.

NORWICH CITY v. LUTON.

Played at Norwich on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Norwich City	1 goal.

The teams were as under:—

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

Norwich—Williams; Archer and McEwen; Livingstone, Bushell, and Bemment; Muir, Graham, Ronaldson, Ross, and Brown.

Referee, Mr. J. Plaistow (Grimsby).

There is one thing certain this season, namely, that Luton have played before the biggest gates in their history, both home and away. Although the kick-off at Norwich was timed for 2.15, it was given out that our visit brought them their record crowd, it being estimated that 8,000 spectators were present. It was the match of the season for the Eastern Counties, and had been well boomed throughout the district. Fortunately, each side was at full strength, and but for the foggy outlook everything pointed to a great game.

McEwen won the toss. The phrase wears quite a familiar appearance, but this time, of course, it was Luton's opponents who had choice of ends. Still, little advantage was gained thereby, and for the opening minutes both teams went easy. Warner eventually broke away from the ruck in midfield and gave Williams a shot to save, but this caused the spectators little anxiety, although Barnes returned the ball into the mouth of goal, and White taking a pot shot missed by about a yard with a good attempt.

The ball did not remain at this end long, for Ross worked a splendid opening for Brown by neatly tricking Fred Hawkes and putting the ball well out on the wing. Brown possesses a fine turn of speed, and, amid encouraging shouts from the crowd, he ultimately sent in a shot to Platt, which the Luton goalie did well to punch away. But Muir pounced on the save and banging the ball back into the goal-mouth, it was placed through by Graham, but he was palpably offside, although the spectators were shouting themselves hoarse at what they evidently thought was a goal.

A still more threatening movement came about when Ronaldson was let through by F. Hawkes a minute or so later, and again Brown tested Platt, but the latter was able to save at the expense of a corner. Just here the home forwards were rather busy and gave the Luton halves a worrying time. White fouled Ronaldson just outside the 18-yards' line, but the free kick came to nothing, which was quite as well, for it was rather a mild offence. Ross had a shot on his own which Platt saved, the ball falling to Brown, who, luckily for Luton, ran it out of play. McCurdy, in tackling an aggressive movement, put the ball over his own goal, but the corner was none too well placed, and danger quickly passed away.

This few minutes' pressure naturally pleased the spectators, but they had a shock when Warner finished up a pretty movement by letting drive with a curly one, a la Park Royal, which, however, did not quite accomplish the object, but struck the upright with a bang. Williams was completely beaten, and another couple of inches would have done the trick. As it was Barnes got his toe to the ball before the Norwich custodian had recovered, but McEwen unexpectedly bobbed up from somewhere in his well-known style and Barnes' shot hit him and glanced away from the goal. It was a lucky incident for the Canaries, for a goal appeared "a cert." when Luton's outside-left secured the ball off the goalpost.

Half-an-hour from the start Luton were doing the main part of the attacking work, and but for a mistake by the referee should have been awarded a penalty. Pickering was coming through in fine style, when he was deliberately pulled by a Norwich defender; still, he kept his feet, and although really stumbling at the moment, he let drive at the goal. Williams had come out to intercept the shot and an open goal was presented, but the ball hit the post for the second time during the game without any Lutonian being able to take advantage of the rebound.

The only explanation I could gather as to the reason the referee did not award a penalty was that he saw nothing wrong, his view being obstructed by the players between himself and Pickering. The general opinion round the ropes was that he gave Pickering his chance to get in a shot, seeing he had partially recovered from the foul and was right through. Even this ruling would not have met the case, for Pickering had certainly not recovered his balance when he was forced to take his shot if anything tangible was to result.

Two corners in succession were forced by Luton, but they could not drive them home, and Williams' charge appeared to have a charmed existence until seven minutes before the interval. Brown was taking the ball from a pass inside the penalty area when Archer pushed him right in the back with both hands, and this time the referee saw the incident. Bob Hawkes does not seem inclined to take penalties this season, and Blackett was entrusted with the responsibility of improving the award. He made no mistake with the kick and Luton stood one up.

It was a question of marking time from now to the interval, with the exception of one sustained attack at the Luton end which culminated in a corner to Norwich. From this loud appeals were made for a penalty against F. Hawkes for handling, but his jersey bore distinct evidence that the ball struck him on the body; indeed, he was almost winded by the contact. The players were trooping off the field when the referee recalled them, and as the light was fast failing, while the fog was getting thicker, he ordered them to resume without any interval.

As Luton were leading by a goal, it was to their interest to get the game finished if at all possible, and I think the referee was acting in the interests of true sport in doing his utmost to get the match through. Even at this stage it was extremely doubtful if it would be possible to accomplish the feat, for it was difficult to see the spectators on the opposite side of the ground, but right up to the final whistle the players were just visible from the ropes, the pitch itself being fairly free of fog.

Although technical fouls were pretty frequent, the game was by no means a dirty one; far less so than the Brentford match of the previous Saturday. One of the worst was when McEwen fouled Brown some forty yards away from goal. Blackett took the resulting place kick, but his shot was too high, and only a goal-kick for Norwich came of it. Once more Brown almost succeeded in threading his way through, but the ball hit McEwen in its passage and rebounded into touch. For the opening quarter of an hour in the second half Luton were having decidedly the better of the exchanges. Of course, with teams so evenly matched each side secured openings, and from one such the City Brown got well away on the extreme left, and judging the situation finely, he transferred to Ross, who was in a good position, and the ex-Lutonians gave Platt a chance to distinguish himself by bringing off a really fine save.

There was still some twenty minutes to go when it was noted the City attack was forcing the game in the centre, and Ronaldson attracted the Luton defence to the extent that he was literally surrounded by them just inside the penalty area. Anyway, in the gloom he was observed to fall, and naturally a big shout went up for a penalty. Not one in a hundred saw what happened; indeed, it would have been impossible to get a clear view from the ropes as there was a crowd of players within a yard of the spot. Still, the chance was too good to be missed, and greatly to the delight of the spectators the referee was noticed to be pointing to the 12-yards' spot.

Archer took the kick, to atone, I suppose, for the offence which caused the downfall of the City goal. He made a flying kick at the ball and it rose immediately from his foot; so much that I was prepared to see it pass right over Platt's head, but it just managed to enter the net, although it must have been a question of inches. A wild scene of enthusiasm was the consequence, and the spectators, whose this point had been of rather a broke out in snatches of "so much in the ball, City," being For a few minutes after quite likely to even no

before the finish Blackett received a nasty kick on the knee from Brown and was compelled to leave the field, but as there was only a couple of minutes to go it made no difference to the result and a division of points was the final verdict.

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I should say it was the earliest result of the day, for when the whistle went it was barely 3.47, but I question if it would have been possible to go on another five minutes, and the referee doubtless congratulated himself upon his ruling at the interval. A draw probably was the fairest result of an excellent fight, although I think if Luton had enjoyed their just deserts when Pickering was fouled and had been leading by a couple of goals at the interval, the Canaries' home record would have gone by the board.

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The score-sheet shows Platt did his little bit between the sticks, and his comrades immediately in front fully maintained their reputation, and compared by no means unfavourably with the Archer and McEwen combination. As usual on strange grounds, Bob Hawkes made himself a favourite with the crowd with many pretty touches. Still, his clubmates in this line were equally servicable to the side, albeit Fred Hawkes had a hot pair to hold in Davie Ross and Brown. There was a decided improvement manifest among the forwards, although several times they had the ill-luck to see their efforts frustrated by the Lall striking the goal furniture when Williams was all at sea.

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As a pair, the Norwich full backs are earning a great reputation this season, notwithstanding the many years they have each been before the public, and on Saturday they made very few mistakes. Archer's kicking was really fine, while Mac worked as hard as ever. The members of the half-back line are not so well-known to fame, but in Bushell the Canaries possess a centre-half of distinct merit. Forward, the line is a bit uneven, the left wing being decidedly the better of the two pairs, with Muir the pick of the three remaining forwards. Ronaldson had one or two chances to get through, but he failed rather badly, especially when shooting for goal.

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Brentford, in receiving a visit from Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday, had to take the field without Shanks, who was indisposed, and to add to their misfortunes, Tomlinson, their excellent left-half, had the bad luck to break his leg a quarter of an hour from the start. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising, perhaps, that the Spurs were victorious by 3 goals to nil. This win gives the Tottenham Club a substantial lead on the League table.

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Fulham were successful at Northampton by 3 goals to 1, and Southampton at home beat Swindon by 2 to nil, whilst the Argyle obtained a similar verdict at Plymouth against Millwall, but Portsmouth managed to draw at Reading, the Biscuiteers being handicapped by the loss of Bannister fifteen minutes from the start, and at Brighton the home club beat Bristol Rovers by 2 goals to 1. West Ham, on their own ground, accounted for Queen's Park Rangers by 2 goals to nil, but at Watford, New Brompton drew at 2 goals all.

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The following is the League table up to date:—

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Goals.		
					F.	A.	Pts.
Tottenham H.	13	9	2	2	23	7	20
Fulham	14	7	1	6	17	7	20
Southampton	13	7	3	3	18	14	17
Plymouth Argyle...	14	7	4	3	20	12	17
Luton	13	6	3	4	28	15	16
Bristol Rovers	14	7	5	2	30	20	16
Portsmouth	14	5	3	6	22	15	16
Brentford	14	6	5	3	14	15	15
Norwich City	13	5	5	3	18	15	13
Millwall	14	5	6	3	17	17	13
Reading	14	5	6	3	17	18	13
Queen's Park Rans.	14	5	7	2	21	20	12
Northampton	13	5	7	1	11	26	11
Watford	13	3	6	4	16	23	10
West Ham United...	14	5	9	0	14	17	10
New Brompton	14	2	7	5	10	35	9
Swindon	13	2	7	4	10	20	8
Brighton and Hove	13	3	8	2	10	20	8

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

Luton's great concern just now is with the Cup-tie, which is to be played on the Crystal Palace ground on Saturday. Let us hope that it is only the preliminary canter—on the part of Luton—for the great match which is to be played on the same pitch towards the end of the season. But, as I said last week, Luton will have all their work cut out to get the better of the Glaziers, for the latter, on their form at Luton three or four weeks ago, are a fine combination.

The Second Division men have done exceedingly well in their other engagements, but then the class they have been playing against has not been great, and consequently that little tussle at Luton forms our most reliable guide to their capabilities. Judging from that, they will take a lot of beating, and the Luton men will be well advised to lay themselves out for a very hard fight.

It is a little unfortunate that Luton should be set such a stiff task to begin with, especially as the pecuniary reward is not likely to be commensurate with the importance of the occasion. To go far in the competition is very desirable from more than one point of view, and it would be little short of a disaster if Luton were knocked out at the first time of asking.

The Great Northern Railway Co. are running a special excursion to King's Cross and the Crystal Palace on Saturday, leaving Dunstable (Church-street) at 11.30 and Luton at 12.15, and arriving at King's Cross at 1.13 and the Palace at 1.55. The return will be made by ordinary trains and a midnight special, and the return fare to King's Cross is 3s. from Dunstable and 2s. 6d. from Luton, with a shilling extra in each case to the Palace (excluding admission). The Midland Company are also running a special excursion to St. Pancras.

Admission to the Palace for the football match is 6d., but tickets must be obtained at the boxes just outside the turnstiles, and admission is obtained through certain turnstiles belonging to the Football Club.

"FOOTBALL ENTHUSIAST" asks the following questions: "Did John Jack play in goal for Luton against the Spurs in a Cup-tie about ten years ago, and how long did he play for Luton?"—Yes, John Jack kept goal for Luton on Oct. 12th, 1895, when Tottenham Hotspur visited Luton to play an English Cup-tie and were victorious by 2 goals to 1. Jack played two seasons for Luton, first as left-wing forward, then in goal, and afterwards as forward in the Reserves.