

FOOTBALL.

UNITED LEAGUE.

LEYTON v. LUTON.

Played at Leyton on Saturday afternoon.
Result:—

LEYTON	...	...	...	...	...	3 GOALS
LUTON	...	...	...	...	...	2 GOALS

LUTON.

Platt

Blackett	McCurdy			
F. Hawkes	White	Gallacher		
Latheron	McDonald	Brown	Pickering	Barnes

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Plested	Brand	Newton	Bush	Hesham
McLean		Gray	Evans	
Ramsay		Meredith		

Draper

LEYTON

Luton was represented by almost their full Southern League team, Captain "Bob" Hawkes and Warner being absentees through injuries.

Luton won the toss, and set the homesters to face the sun and wind on a somewhat patchy, heavy ground. The opening exchanges were altogether lifeless and uninteresting. Luton were not disposed to exert themselves, preferring to look upon the fixture as a holiday after the hard games of the Xmas season, while Leyton could not at first settle down to their stride, and manifested in their every movement a lack of confidence in their own methods, and too great a respect for their opponents, whose calmness and coolness seemed to render them nervous.

This species of "stage-fright" wore off a little by the time the ball had made a number of fruitless journeys from one end to the other, though it was apparent in a larger or smaller degree all through the first half. Newton and Brand initiated the first dangerous move, but it was neutralised by Blackett, and the visitors commenced to press. Meredith was somewhat fortunate in intervening just at the right moment as Latheron was about to take a pot-shot at goal from a position which would make Draper's task a difficult one.

Newton placed the leather in the hands of Platt with a shot which lacked the requisite sting. A mistake by the Luton defence let through the nimble-footed Plested, who banged across a centre which White's head turned aside. Gray caught it on the rebound, but sent behind.

Leyton drew first blood by a fluke 10 minutes from the start. Plested dribbled up in good style and centred, but in its course the ball was handled by Brand, and the Luton backs at once appealed to the referee for a free-kick. Taking advantage of the momentary inattention of Platt, Newton, who appeared to be standing offside at the time, had no difficulty in placing the ball in the net. Even while the leather was in the centre of the field the official in charge consulted his linesmen, both of whom were neutral, and as their opinions seemed to coincide with his own, he decided to allow the point.

The visitors' display brightened up so considerably after this that an equaliser was certain to come before the game was much older. A foul by Meredith on "Sandy" Brown looked like being the means of accomplishing this. Blackett sent the ball out to the waiting Latheron, who promptly transferred it to the middle of the field, only to find that Brown was offside. Leaving nothing to chance White tried a long attempt, which Draper dashed at but missed, and the ball struck the inside of the cross-bar and glanced into the net, making the scores level three minutes after the obtaining of Leyton's goal.

Plested, whom Fred Hawkes had some difficulty in keeping in check, headed several attacks upon the Luton goal, but in quite a number of cases Newton lost his opportunity through an unfortunate inclination to take his time. McDonald took the play to the other end and passed forward to "Sandy," who was wrongfully pulled up when in a good position for offside. A centre by Barnes travelled from foot to foot in front of the Leyton goal in tantalising fashion, but no one was able to put on the necessary finishing touch. The crowd began to breathe more freely when the other end was visited and Newton placed in the net, though this time he was given offside.

Another trial by the centre-forward made Platt stretch his length on the sawdust and give away a fruitless corner. Gallacher placed well in the goal-mouth, but McDonald and Latheron were stopped as they dashed to convert through both of them being offside. After a few more minutes of hard pressure in the immediate vicinity of the Leyton goal, Pickering received in the course of a scramble, and had no difficulty in rushing the ball through. Half-time arrived with Luton leading by 2—1.

In the second period the game was faster and more open, and Luton's additional dash was met with extra zest by their opponents. Draper had to concede a corner to "Sandy" Brown, and Latheron so accurately dealt with the flag-kick that the goalie had to punch away. White sent in another hot one which the custodian found rather troublesome, and Leyton then found their feet again. Plested again was in the fore-front of the attack, but to the expressed disgust of the crowd Blackett robbed him and kicked out of play.

McDonald sent over the bar, and a corner by Barnes was somewhat luckily headed out of the goal-mouth by one of the home defence. Newton tried Platt with a shot which the latter found too hot to hold, but he fortunately retrieved his mistake before it was too late. Leyton obtained their equaliser as the result of a free-kick taken by Ramsay. Bush placed it in the middle of the field, and Brand scored amid excitement with a good shot.

Luton woke out of their lethargy again, and so long as they exerted themselves they held the upper hand, but as soon as their efforts relaxed, Leyton took advantage of the opening and Hesham scored an offside goal. McLean attempted a high-dropping shot, such as are sometimes very successful in an emergency, but it affected Platt's equanimity very little. A long grounder by Gallacher was capitally saved by Draper and Leyton attacked again. Brand missed a good opening, and then Bush put his side ahead with a capital shot.

With only ten minutes to play Luton attempted to make amends for this misfortune. But their efforts came too late, for success had given the home defence confidence, and they held the Luton attack in better style than hitherto, while the forwards played with considerably more dash. In the closing few minutes a free-kick was given against Blackett for fouling Plested and placed so well that Newton tried to place it between the posts from only a few yards out. Platt was too quick for him and brought off a clever save. The result was, therefore, a victory for Leyton by 3—2.

In all that goes to make up good football Luton were the superiors, but they lost the game from too great an inclination to take things easy. Leyton were on their mettle, and determined to do their best and deserve their single goal lead because of their efforts. Without being a star team theirs is a very useful side, and judging from the day's play they possess some useful players, Plested being particularly good. On the Luton side no one exerted himself to the full. Gallacher deserves a word of praise for some fine work. If he continues to be as successful in the half-back line as on Saturday he should have no difficulty in retaining his place. Pickering did little, and Latheron did not do justice to himself because of want of opportunity.