

The Southern League.

LUTON v. NEW BROMPTON.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 2 goals.

New Brompton..... 1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

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

New Brompton—Martin; Walton and Floyd; Bull, Mavin, and Elliott; Barnfather, Travers, Phillips, Beadsworth, and Campbell.

Referee, Mr. C. C. Fallowfield.

Miserable weather prevailed on Saturday, but fortunately the rain held off while the game was in progress. The ground, however, was in a very sodden state, and the three thousand spectators who turned out to witness the match expected there would be plenty of slipping and sliding and not much artistic football.

Anticipations in this respect were not quite realised, for the teams went about their work with a will, and it may as well be stated at the outset that the visitors made a remarkably good fight of it, though their methods in the second half partook more of the vigorous than the scientific order. In fact, quite unnecessary roughness was indulged in, and the wonder was that matters did not take a serious turn.

Seeing that Luton had already beaten the Bromptonians twice this season and drawn with them once, it looked a fairly easy thing for them on Saturday, but it proved anything but that, and the homesters had to congratulate themselves upon gaining a somewhat lucky victory.

The visitors winning the toss, took what little advantage there was to be derived from the wind, and at once gave a taste of their quality by forcing a corner. This was well placed, but Barnes obtaining possession, made a grand run down the field, and finished up with a nice centre, from which a corner resulted. This was not turned to account, but Luton came again, and from a fine centre by Fred Hawkes, Brown headed through.

A goal in the first few minutes looked decidedly promising, but Luton were not destined to hold their lead for long. New Brompton were soon in evidence in the vicinity of the Luton goal, and Barnfather was responsible for a brilliant shot, which was cleverly saved by Platt. Mavin then had a try and sent wide, but the same player had much better luck a minute later, a long shot from him having its course altered by coming into contact with White's foot and finding its way just inside the upright.

Even though Platt's calculations were upset in the way stated, he would have saved only that he slipped in going across the goal, so that the point was an extremely fluky one. After this play became very fast, and Martin and Platt both made fine saves, the one from Barnes and the other from Campbell. Platt then had to deal with two or three smart attempts, following which Warner showed up with a lovely run, and from his centre Brown headed over.

Platt did well to tip over the bar a long, rasping shot from Floyd, and Luton responding, Barnes and Warner put in some good work. A bad decision by the referee checked Luton at a critical moment, Warner being given offside just when working his way in, and then Barnes put in a brilliant piece of play, which did not meet with the success it deserved.

Nearing half-time Fred Hawkes had to retire hurt, someone having stepped on his ankle, and Luton resorted to the one-back game, Blackett going amongst the halves. Both teams struggled gamely to get the lead, but when the interval arrived the score still stood at one goal each.

Hawkes turned out again afterwards, but limped somewhat painfully. For a time, the play was carried from end to end without either side gaining any particular advantage, and when Luton began to press, Floyd quite lost his head. He went for Warner very badly, but was the victim of his own violence, and the game had to be stopped until he recovered. After that, his behaviour provoked a good deal of hooting from the crowd, for he raged about like a bull in a china-shop.

Martin saved a beautiful shot from Barnes, and then the outside-left put in a centre, which Brown handed on to Macdonald, but that player shot over. From a corner given by Watlton, Barnes placed beautifully, the ball falling right in the mouth of goal, but Macdonald failed to get on it, or he could easily have touched through. Fred Hawkes had a good chance and shot wide.

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A splendid shot by Pickering missed by inches and then the inside-left had a fine opportunity from a centre by Warner, but headed over. Pickering soon afterwards sent in a magnificent shot, but Martin brought off a splendid save at the expense of a corner, and this was not improved upon. Luton at this time were certainly having the best of matters, and eventually Pickering was brought down within the penalty area, and the referee pointed to the fatal spot. Sandy Brown took the kick and scored with a shot which went in just under the bar.

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Subsequently Pickering had hard luck with another brilliant shot, the custodian effecting a save which bordered on the miraculous, but towards the finish the visitors pressed very severely, and nothing but first-rate custodianship on the part of Platt enabled Luton to keep the lead. Again and again New Brompton looked like equalising, but fortunately Platt was in his best form and successfully dealt with all the shots put in. Just on time a corner was given, but before it could be taken the whistle sounded, leaving Luton in possession of a rather lucky victory.

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As already indicated, New Brompton marred their work by rough tactics, but apart from that they played an exceptionally smart game, and one could not help feeling surprised at their lowly position in the League. On the run of Saturday's game they certainly deserved to share the points, for they were wonderfully quick on the ball, and forwards and halves combined well, Mavin especially lending plenty of support to the attack.

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As to Luton, Platt gave a smart exhibition between the sticks, as also did Martin for New Brompton. Blackett and McCurdy were in good form, and White and Hawkes rendered excellent service at half-back, but Gallacher was not quite equal to holding Barnfather. Forward, Barnes and Pickering again showed up well, and it was gratifying to see Warner once more doing first-rate work on the right wing. Macdonald was not in the best of form, and Brown was still a little slow, though he kept going well, and had the satisfaction of scoring both goals.

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The refereeing was not quite up to the mark, and Mr. Fallowfield made more than one mistake in his offside decisions.

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