

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. NEW BROMPTON.

Played on Luton Town ground on Saturday afternoon. Result:

LUTON 2 GOALS
NEW BROMPTON 1 GOAL

Teams:—

LUTON

Platt

Blackett

McCurdy

F. Hawkes

White

Gallacher

Warner McDonald Brown Pickering Barnes

O

Campbell Barnfather

Beadsworth Phillips Travers

Elliott

Mavin

Bull

Floyd

Walton

Martin

NEW BROMPTON.

Referee, Mr. C. C. Fallowfield.

There was an attendance of only about 3,000—one of the poorest gates of the season for a Southern League match—but this was due principally to the rainy state of the weather. The ground appeared to be in good condition, having received some careful attention, but the game had not been in progress long before the mud was so churned up that it resembled a quagmire. A light wind, which blew diagonally across the pitch, was just strong enough to influence play. McCurdy tossed with Mavin for choice of position, but the Luton vice-captain lost the toss and Brown had to start the ball rolling against the wind.

Keeping up the aggression New Brompton secured a corner, but once more Barnes got away and went down the wing in fine style. Walton closely followed in pursuit, so Barnes' only course was to pass the ball forward for Pickering who was just behind, but Walton nipped in and kicked away. The visitors turned the tables on the home side and Platt had to save. Then Warner at the other end received a long pass from Brown and put in a very dangerous shot which went over the bar. The Luton outside right forced a corner, which he placed well, and Martin had to fist out. Blackett tried from long range, but just as the goalie was making for the ball at one end of the goal it struck one of the backs and nearly went in at the other, Martin only just clearing.

Still putting on the screw, and assisted by a foul, Fred Hawkes essayed an attempt but Bull kicked away. Hawkes returned to Brown who was well up and headed through, thus giving Luton the lead. Barnfather, who, though a little chap, was ever on the alert, next transferred play to the opposite half of the field, and sent in a tremendous shot which Platt was rather lucky to save just against the post. From the kick-out Mavin met the ball and tried a right-foot drive, with the result that the ball went into the corner of the goal off White, Platt slipping down in endeavouring to reach the ball. This was certainly a very lucky equaliser for New Brompton but only served to spur Luton on to renewed efforts, and Martin had one shot in particular to clear which gave him a good deal of trouble, though after this the visiting eleven went away in great style.

Brown was heavily charged over in the penalty area, and an appeal was immediately made for the converted award, but the referee declined to accede to the emphatic shouted requests of the crowd, so nothing but a fruitless corner-kick followed. Warner missed the goal by inches, and in the next minute was incorrectly given offside when in a fine position of making ground. Luton hesitated considerably in playing so that Martin was rarely troubled at this period, but Floyd was not over-particular in his methods and brought Warner down rather badly. Fred Hawkes, in stopping one of his opponents, fell with his foot under him, and play had to be stopped while he was assisted to the side of the field. After examination he had to leave the pitch altogether, and remained off until after half-time. Of course, New Brompton endeavoured to press home their advantage in numbers, and one shot struck the cross bar with a thud.

Barnfather caused the hearts of the spectators to jump into their mouths when he received a long pass and dashed by McCurdy. But the referee thought he was offside and gave a decision accordingly. This was particularly lucky for Luton, seeing that the victim of the incorrect ruling had not infringed in the slightest degree, and appeared to have a clear run right into goal. Mr. Fallowfield made several mistakes of a similar nature, but Luton have little to grumble about in this respect, for generally they were favourable to the home side. Owing to the absence of Hawkes the "blues" played the one-back style, and this seemed to greatly nonplus the responsible official. Half-time found the scores equal—1—1.

Fred Hawkes returned after the interval. New Brompton were early to the fore with a well-intentioned effort which was calculated to cause Platt trouble, but Blackett prevented this though at the expense of a corner. Campbell placed well, but Bull headed over the bar. Pickering then tried a shot at goal, and Martin just turned the ball round the post by almost a superhuman effort, falling in a heap in doing so. It looked as if the goalkeeper were hurt, but happily this proved not to be the case, as the next minute he was in the thick of a tumble. Luton appeared to have the better of the ensuing play.

A very dirty incident occurred just at this point. Warner was getting off with the ball, and had nearly reached the goal-line when Floyd rushed at him in a particularly brutal way. The two men fell together, and it was feared that Warner, much the lighter man, was hurt. The crowd was positively relieved to see Warner get up and walk away, but Floyd continued to lay on the ground, and began to roll about, evidently in pain. The spectators thought that he had got what was intended for Warner, and roundly hooted him. The referee spoke to the spectators near, probably about the hooting, but Mr. Fallowfield could certainly not encourage such conduct on the field as Floyd's. The latter evidently meant to damage the outside right, and when the latter had the ball again Floyd went for him in an aggressive manner, but "Alf" parted with the ball too quickly to allow Floyd to touch him. Fred Hawkes had a chance of scoring, but shot weakly by the post. Pickering looked all the world a scorer from a centre by Warner, but headed over the bar. Pickering sent in a well-judged shot which caused Martin a lot of trouble, but once again the goal was saved at the expense of a fruitless corner.

Walton brought one of the inside men down inside the penalty area, and the referee gave a penalty kick. Brown rushed out from a crowd of players and scored with a shot just under the bar. Blackett fouled an opponent just outside the area, but a wall of human flesh repulsed the ball. With that hard luck which seems always to be Pickering's the inside left once more had a wall-timed shot well saved by Martin.

One of those incidents which delight the crowd occurred soon afterwards. Floyd played a remarkably dirty game—in fact, he never seemed to regain his self-control—and he made a desperate charge at McDonald. Mac went over, and Sandy then went for the defaulting back. Floyd went down like a nine-pin, and Brown over him, the Luton player's very dirty boots being relieved of a good deal of mud in their transit over Floyd's head and face.

Once more it appeared that Nemesis was on the side of the innocent, and the crowd did not fail to remind Floyd that he had merely got what he deserved; in fact the spectators cheered as if a goal had been scored. Right up to the end Floyd deservedly brought on to himself the jeers of the crowd, for just later he deliberately kicked Brown with the referee not three yards off. Strang to say, the official in charge took no notice, but when Barnes and Bull fell out quite mildly he stopped and gave them a caution. As a matter of fact the incident was extremely feeble compared with those which were constantly happening on the other side of the field. There was no further scoring, and Luton won by the odd goal in three.

McCurdy played a grand game for Luton. Blackett very foolishly seems possessed of an inane weakness for becoming a forward very suddenly, and with a less reliable partner than McCurdy might have found the goal in sore straits. The halves were good, and all the forwards, particularly Barnes and Brown, pleased the local patrons immensely by their display. Barnfather and Martin were the best of the visitors and the only ones worth mentioning. On his work Walton did not deserve to be the means of losing his side the game; had Floyd been the transgressor none would have been surprised. After his fall with Warner he ceased entirely to play football. The referee made mistakes, particularly on the offside rule.