

The Southern League.

LUTON v. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 2 goals.

Tottenham nil,

* * *

Teams:—Luton: Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, Gallacher, and R. M. Hawkes; Warner, Macdonald, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

Tottenham: Eggett; Watson and Tait; Morris, Bull, and Hughes; Berry, Chapman, Glen, Brearley, and Whyman.

Referee, Mr. F. Kirkham.

* * *

Had the weather been fine on Saturday, there would undoubtedly have been almost a record crowd, for Tottenham are one of the best "drawing" clubs in the South, and the matches between Luton and the Spurs are more than ordinarily interesting. The rain and snow which fell during the morning, however, had the effect of keeping away a large number of people who would have come from a distance.

* * *

Fortunately, the weather cleared up somewhat, and there was a crowd of something like five or six thousand persons when Bob Hawkes won the toss and chose to kick towards the town end, Luton thus having the wind in their favour in the first half. As was only to be expected, the pitch was not in an ideal condition; in fact, at the Town end there was something like a pool within the penalty area.

* * *

From the names of the players given above, it will have been noticed that the Tottenham front rank consisted of men who do not usually play in the first team; indeed, Glen was the only one who played in the match at Tottenham in November, when Luton were defeated by a goal to nil. Two of the Tottenham forwards had been suspended on Friday evening for misconduct, another was under suspension by the F.A., and last, but not least, Woodward was suffering from an injury.

* * *

On the other hand, Luton were represented by what was practically their full team, White being the only regular player absent. In passing, it is worthy of note that four of the Luton players were opposing the Club for which they had formerly played. A strong reason why it was hoped that Luton would win was that the two clubs were fighting for the third place on the table, and a victory for Luton would place them on an equality, so far as points were concerned, with the Hotspur.

* * *

As things turned out, Luton did win, and they thoroughly deserved the two points, but they were not obtained without a great deal of exertion. For the first half-hour, Luton had three-parts of the game, and they played surprisingly well, considering the conditions. Tottenham improved towards the interval, and once or twice came very near to scoring. Luton had, however, established a lead before the interval. But more of that anon.

* * *

Right from the kick-off, Luton became dangerous, and it seemed as though they ought to have been credited with a corner, but one was not given. In an attack by Tottenham, a free-kick was given for hands by Blackett, and the visitors tried to improve the occasion, but Berry was ruled offside. The scene of operations was transferred to the other end by Barnes, whose centre went across to Warner. The latter sent in a swift low shot, which seemed a likely scorer, but Eggett got down to it and cleared.

* * *

Following a corner for Luton, Gallacher made an attempt to score, but Tait headed over the goal, and the consequent flag-kick was not improved upon. In a subsequent attack, Macdonald shot from some distance out, and Eggett coolly went on his knees to save. A header by Pickering looked dangerous, but Eggett got at it, and the assault ended with a drive by Bob Hawkes, the ball just going wide.

* * *

At the other end, Platt got in the way of a centre by Berry, and at this early stage it was seen that Tottenham relied on their right wing rather than the left, when there was a chance of getting through. After Bull had sent wide, two or three of the Luton players took the ball to the other end by means of good passing, and the finishing effort was made by Warner. Eggett was equal to the occasion, and still the longed-for goal did not come.

* * *

But it came soon afterwards. After Tottenham had made a brief incursion, the Luton left wing got going, and Pickering was fouled within the penalty area. There were two Tottenham players close to him when the offence was committed, but it was Morris who was the culprit, he deliberately holding Pickering and preventing him taking advantage of a very good opening. The penalty kick, given without hesitation, was taken by Bob Hawkes, who scored with a clinking shot, and thus had the satisfaction of giving Luton the lead after fifteen minutes' play.

From the re-start, Tottenham had a turn at attack, and McCurdy cleared. The visitors came again, however, and Platt saved from Berry. Luton then took up the running, and when Tottenham tried to get away, Glen was given offside not far from the centre of the field. A foul by Bob Hawkes, however—a very unusual event — gave them a chance. Once more the ball went out to Berry, who again tested Platt without success.

Tottenham now seemed to have found their feet, and they gave some trouble to the Luton defence. Then, after a well-sustained attack, the ball went out to Warner, who raced away and gave Eggett a handful to deal with. About a minute later Pickering was fouled, this time about two yards outside the penalty line, but the resultant free kick was cleared.

The next incident of note was a little misunderstanding between Blackett and Brearley. Directly afterwards, Chapman got through, but used his hands. Another shot by Berry was disposed of, but Platt made a slip in attempting to kick away a subsequent attempt. The ball rolled on one side, but none of the Tottenham vanguard were near enough to take advantage of it, and at the interval the score was still one goal to nil in favour of Luton.

Upon the resumption Barnes got away on the left, but Brown did not get to his centre. After Tait had headed away another attempt by the outside-left, Pickering and Brown tried to meet a rather unexpected centre by Warner. Eggett rushed out and punched away. In doing so, he accidentally punched Pickering, who sustained an injury to his mouth and had to retire for some time.

This did not seem to be particularly promising for Luton, who had not by any means established a safe lead. It was not long, however, before they added another, and it was a splendid goal. Brown found himself with the ball in front of Eggett, but not being quite clear, he passed back to Macdonald, who let fly. The ball went in at the top corner well out of Eggett's reach, and Luton were two goals to the good five minutes after the interval.

There had been fitful gleams of sunshine during the afternoon, and these were now followed by a storm of hail and snow, which passed over the ground and did not add to the comfort of the players or spectators. The storm naturally had some effect on the play, but now and again there were some interesting incidents.

Both sides attacked in turn, and Whyman seemed to be offside when he received a pass. The referee, however, let him go on, and he shot a few inches wide. Pickering, who had returned just after the goal was scored, gave Eggett a difficult piece of work with a high shot near the post, and a corner resulted. It came to nothing, however. At the other end Berry missed a good chance by dallying, but Platt had to be smart to negotiate a shot by Glen.

Platt brought off several fine saves during the next few minutes, the Spurs taking advantage of the hail, which was driving full in the faces of the Luton defenders, and keeping up a hot attack. Fortunately, the Luton custodian

was in brilliant form and successfully dealt with all the shots that came his way. When the storm ceased, the effort of the Spurs died away, and Luton took the play to the other end, where Macdonald gave Eggett a teaser. Luton afterwards had little trouble in holding their own, and the Tottenham team were well beaten.

* * *

Luton thoroughly deserved to win, for they were undoubtedly the better team. Pickering was always to the fore in attack, and he and Barnes made a fine left wing. Macdonald worked as hard as ever, but was inclined to dally with the ball, and Warner was in capital form. The half-backs were not found wanting. Gallacher put in some excellent work, and Fred Hawkes was as good as usual. Fred is one of the most consistent players who has ever turned out for Luton, and he plays with an end in view, not for effect.

* * *

Bob was also in first-rate fettle, and it is worthy of note in this connection that young Craig, who is following in the steps of his father, was on the ground and sold quite a large number of copies of his rhyme about the popular Luton captain. The Luton defence was safe enough, Platt again giving a splendid display, and the backs did everything that was expected of them, though it is a pity that Blackett should so often mar his splendid work by letting his temper run away with him. Where Tottenham failed was in attack, and they might have done better by playing to the left wing more, for on the few occasions when Whyman got the ball he gave evidence of considerable talent. The Spurs' half-back line did well, Bull especially being in great form, whilst Eggett gave a capital display in goal.

* * *

Watford came a rare cropper at Park Royal on Saturday, the Rangers winning by 6 goals to nil. Norwich City and Southampton were the only visiting teams to win, the former beating Swindon by 3 to 1, and the Saints scoring four against New Brompton, who were unable to reply. Brentford drew at Millwall and Plymouth at Portsmouth at 1 goal all, and the other results were as follow:—West Ham 4, Northampton 1; Fulham 2. Brighton 0; Bristol Rovers 2, Reading 1.

* * *

Saturday's gate at Luton amounted to £134. What would it have been with favourable weather?

* * *