

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. NORWICH CITY.

McEWEN'S MEN DEFEATED A SECOND TIME.

Played on the Luton Town ground on Saturday.
Result:—

LUTON 2 goals.

NORWICH 1 goal.

Teams:—

LUTON.				
Platt				
Blackett				
F. Hawkes	White	McCurdy	R. Hawkes	
Warner	McDonald	Dobson	Pickering	Barnes
O				
Brindley	Ross	Ronaldson	Wood	Muir
Bemment		Bushell	Livingstone	
	McEwen		Archer	
Williams				
NORWICH.				

Referee: Mr. T. P. Campbell (of Blackburn).

Until this winter the Canaries were an amateur organisation and this is the first season they have ever appeared in first-class football. But, despite this fact, they have made very good headway. The team includes two of last year's men, "Punch" McEwen, always a favourite, and "Davy" Ross, another popular ex-Lutonian. When, early in the period set aside for football, Luton made their way to Norwich they were successful in effecting a draw, which was by no means a poor performance considering the form of the City at that time. On that occasion the game drew a record crowd and it was only fitting that on the return the Luton crowd should turn up, as they did, in full force.

The weather was, in the opinion of the spectators, delightful, but in the view of the players it was more suited to tennis than to football. The ground was in that hard condition which best suits the home eleven, and the crowd of 7,000 people were looking forward to a hard game in spite of the heat of the sun. In this they were not disappointed. There were some doubts openly expressed as to the wisdom of displacing the experienced "Sandy" Brown in the centre-forward position in favour of the clever, but inexperienced youth, Dobson, and the play proved these pessimists to be somewhat justified. Otherwise the Luton team was at full strength. Norwich also turned out an excellent team from which much was expected.

As McEwen led his men on the field he was greeted with a rousing ovation which proved the depth of his old popularity. The advent of "Bob" Hawkes at the head of his eleven was also greeted by a roar of approval. There was no wind but the sun was strong and McEwen, on finding he had won the spin of the coin, very wisely elected to play with it at his back. The first dash came from the home forwards but "Punch" accounted for it. The tedium of a short spell of midfield play was relieved by Luton breaking away again. Dobson eluded McEwen and put in the first shot of the match which missed the corner of the post and cross-bar by a few inches.

Without any hesitation the home forwards returned to the charge, Dobson keeping his men on the qui vive by some rapid passing. Pickering received, tricked Archer almost as quickly as the back realised his intentions and let drive at the goal but it flew just a little too high. At last the Canaries discovered their feet and rushed away into the other half of the field where McCurdy mis-kicked and let through Muir. Blackett dashed across at express speed, caught the winger napping and at once put paid to his account. The Norwich men returned and Muir this time managed to get in a centre which alternated between one forward and another in a tantalising way until Ronaldson put an end to it with a weak shot into Platt's hands.

Luton settled down, displaying a combination which baffled their opponents' halves everywhere. McEwen and Bement headed corners in their attempts to clear from long kicks and both went very near to bringing about Williams's defeat, Dobson heading the first over the bar, a fault from which the front string generally suffered. "Bob" Hawkes was too unselfish, a good fault in a footballer, when he banged the ball out to Warner, who missed, rather than let drive at the further corner where he would most probably have scored. A foul by McEwen just outside the fatal area caused some momentary anxiety, Blackett landing the free-kick only a shade on the wrong side of the post.

Luton held their own without difficulty, the visiting forwards being continually deceived by their passing and tricky movements. The methods of the Canaries, who are by no means a bad team, were made to look mediocre, the Luton halves breaking up their few breakaways with ease. "Bob" Hawkes was here, there and everywhere, but always in the right spot. Some of his manoeuvres with the sphere so astonished his opponents that to them they bordered upon the marvellous. Blackett, with his clean kick, they appeared to stand almost in awe of. Certainly the right back was at his best and his volleying was particularly clean and sure. Numbers of times he placed the ball just where it was most dangerous to Williams, but McEwen was the chief factor in the prevention of these clearances being turned to good account.

Too much long kicking was the great fault throughout the game. Either side suffered equally from it, the home forwards having to make more openings for themselves than were absolutely necessary. On the play, however, Luton should have scored three or four goals in the first half. It says much for the erratic shooting that Williams had much less to do than would be judged simply from the plain statement that Luton were the only team in it in the opening period. "Bob" Hawkes tried some of his tremendous drives but all were slightly wide. Some of the methods of the visiting defence were none too clean and referee should have given a penalty for a piece of work fairly early in this half. He did not see it, however, but there were some appeals from the crowd to Captain McEwen to "play the game," but not because the little man himself was guilty of any very great offences against the laws of the Association.

A hot time in front of the City goal ended rather luckily for the defenders, seeing that McDonald had the misfortune to strike McEwen's foot with a fast shot. Pickering was given one of the finest chances of the match but "skied" it over the bar, and "Bob" Hawkes followed suit with one from long distance. Barnes put in a centre which Williams punched out. Pickering put the ball several inches on the wrong side of the bar again and a minute later attempted to dribble the ball up to easy distance. Archer charged him off the ball as he was in the act of aiming for the corner, spoiling

the force of the kick so that Williams had no trouble in saving.

"Bob" Hawkes was the cause of the scoring of the first goal. Having trapped the ball he coolly and cleverly threaded his way through the ranks of his opponents, and passed back to Dobson who placed out of the goal-keeper's reach with a hard shot. There were not wanting a few who doubted the justice of the referee's decision in awarding the point, but they were in the wrong owing to the fact that the actual scorer of the goal was behind the ball when it was last played. Instead of rousing the Canaries, this only enthused Luton still more and the one-sided state of the play continued.

The breakaways of the Norwich men became fewer and farther between until their display was as weak as could be wished by the most enthusiastic home partizan. On the rare occasions when they got near goal by managing to elude the nippy Luton halves, Blackett and McCurdy were too much for them, so that Platt had a long rest between the posts "Bob" Hawkes receiving from a free-kick from McCurdy tested Williams with a fine shot which he was very clever to save. Another from the Luton captain gave the keeper a great deal of trouble but he saved it against the post. A daisy-cutter by White was similarly treated. Muir tried Platt twice but neither of his attempts were of the good quality necessary to beat him. At the interval the score was still 1-0 in Luton's favour.

The second half opened uninterestingly, and, taken altogether, this half did not provide such attractive play as that in the first. Brindley relieved the monotony with a rush up the field and a centre which Wood banged a few inches past the post. For some minutes Luton did not wake up to a sense of their responsibilities and the Canaries were seen at their best. However much their passing may have lacked finish they went forward in a style which meant ill for the opponents. Some of the centres were very good and Ronaldson, when in front of goal, stuck to the ball with admirable persistence and manœuvred until he was in a good position to shoot.

Blackett and McCurdy are not easy to beat at the best of times, but on this occasion they were in their finest form and gave the City front string as little rope as possible. Before, long, however, play was transferred to the other end, McEwen spoiling two very promising rushes. The amount of kicking from back to back increased and in inverse ratio the game as a spectacle deteriorated. Luton relaxed their efforts considerably, but were able to hold the whip hand without difficulty. Dobson's display, which had been passable generally and on occasions good in the first half, now deteriorated so that he was weak and threw away opportunities which Brown would have seized and was unable to keep his wings together so well as the professional usually does.

Numerous chances which it seemed impossible to miss went a-begging, but interest began gradually to revive and a spell of good play by the homesters with a hard shot by "Bob" Hawkes which was only intercepted by one of his own men showed that the Lutonians were improving. Williams saved smartly two difficult shots and at the other end Platt accounted for one from Ronaldson. The City custodian had to break up an exciting scrimmage in goal on his own initiative. "Bob" Hawkes was as usual excellent in all departments and did much to give more zest to the game, but in spite of all his efforts the heat began to tell its tale towards the close.

Play became tame again and the shooting on both sides was poor. Norwich were overjoyed near the end by an unexpected piece of luck. Chiefly as the result of tricky play by Ronaldson, Ross, was given a chance and scored. With only 5 or 10 minutes to go a draw was looked upon as certain, but in the last two minutes the unexpected happened.

Archer pushed Barnes over the line in the penalty area. The linesman noticed this and waved his flag. The referee observed neither the offence nor his colleague's endeavour to catch his eye. One of the players called his attention and after a consultation he awarded a penalty-kick. "Bob" Hawkes was deputed to take it and landed in the net, amid a scene of much excitement. The whistle blew immediately afterwards and the linesman who had been responsible for the giving of the penalty was cheered by a section of the crowd as he left the field.

Norwich have no reason to grumble against fate, for on the play a score of 4-1 would not have been out of place. Perhaps it was hard to have a point snatched from them in the last minute, but to the most fair of the Luton spectators this seemed to be an unsatisfactory finish. No one expected that if Barnes had got in his centre before Archer assisted his progress so forcibly, anyone would have turned it to account. Still, the indisputable fact remains that Luton were the better team and deserved to win.

Of the Luton players, it may be said that all played well. The only regret was that Brown was absent. Had he been the pivot the goal average would have been improved. Dobson was good at times and has the makings of a very fine player, but he is not nearly so useful in an emergency as "Sandy" is. The Norwich players all did fairly well. McEwen was pretty safe, but Ross did not have much chance to shine; White attended to that.