

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

WATFORD v. LUTON.

A LUCKY DRAW.

Played at Watford on Good Friday. Result: Luton, 1 goal; Watford, 1 goal. Teams:—

WATFORD: Biggar; Aston and Brooks; Fyfe, McCartney and Richardson; Badenoch, Goodall, Eames, Turner and Spikesley.

LUTON: Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; Gallacher, White and R. Hawkes; Warner, McDonald, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

Referee: Mr. J. Mason.

Owing to an arrangement between the directors of the two elevens it was agreed that the two Southern League matches should take place at holiday times, the gates to be pooled. Consequently Watford visited Bedfordshire at Christmastide and were defeated by 2-0. On this occasion the hard state of the West Herts. ground and the comparative form of the two elevens foretold a probable repetition of Luton's performance. The excursions from the surrounding districts were very largely patronised and the number of cyclists riding to Watford was unusually high. The weather was far too hot for serious football between any but severely trained teams and the attendance was particularly big. Light blue favours were everywhere in evidence the Luton supporters turning up in great force.

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There were about 7,000 people present when the Luton team turned out first to the accompaniment of cheers, shortly afterwards by Watford who received an even heartier reception. Both clubs were not quite at full strength. Fyfe deputising for Main in the Watford ranks, and Gallacher appearing in place of Fred Hawkes in the visiting half-back line, who went lame in the previous match. One of the linesmen was recognised by some of the spectators as the one who was responsible for the giving of the penalty kick that won Luton their game on the Saturday before, against Norwich City and he was greeted with an enthusiastic cheer.

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The start was delayed until the appearance of Gallacher who caused some little fun by turning out in odd boots. "Bob" Hawkes won the toss and made himself prominent in the first few minutes by breaking up two attacks by the Watford right wing, in which the veteran Captain Goodall is such a noticeable figure. Luton got going in decidedly attractive style and a shout of "goal" went up as Warner missed the post by an inch with a clinking shot.

The ball was very lively and play as dashing as the excited crowd could wish. At the Luton end a long range effort by Eames went over the bar. Following closely upon a corner which Blackett gave away Goodall received when placed almost beneath the bar but shot skywards. Watford got into easy distance by means of good passing but McCurdy saved in the nick of time from Eames, who missed an open goal a minute later. A magnificent centre by Spikesley was missed by McCurdy and passed on to Badenoch who put in a fine effort which Platt cleverly saved.

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Play was transferred to the other end where "Bob" Hawkes sent a yard or two on the wrong side of the post with one of his famous drives. Brooks miskicked a centre from Warner and gave Brown the chance of a lifetime but he sent heavenwards. Gallacher having left to effect a change in his odd footgear, McDonald had to perform the work of two and the Watford left wing found themselves with a fair amount of liberty in consequence. Blackett well placed a long clearance from which Pickering should have scored, but, failing to turn his opportunity to good use, he gave up possession to Barnes who only forced a corner off the goalie. Richardson committed a dirty foul upon McDonald and was promptly penalised. Blackett placed the free-kick only a yard or so past the post. "Sandy" Brown, who appeared to be in better condition than usual, was playing a fine game.

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Platt saved a good shot from Turner and Luton attacked again, Fyfe handling within the penalty area without being detected by the referee. Brown ended a spell of pressure by sending high over. McDonald slipped and missed one of the best chances of the game. McCurdy had to give up a corner which Platt punched out; McCartney returned, shaving the post with a curling shot. A free-kick for a foul in the Luton half of the field was so excellently placed by Aston that Platt only just saved by touching the ball over the bar. At the interval there was no score.

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In the first period play had been fast and there was little difference between the teams, Luton having been very slightly the better on the general play. The halves had great difficulty in holding the Watford forwards and Blackett and McCurdy were often extended. The home halves appeared to be a very useful trio and broke up the Luton attack with coolness and completeness, but the Watford forwards were a very useful five whose passing required a good deal of watching by the opposing defence.

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Luton opened the second half with a fruitless dash down the wing by Barnes. At the other end Spikesley got in a long but weak shot which Platt easily saved. From a corner against Watford the home team burst away and gave much difficulty until Blackett retrieved a former mistake by putting into touch. Another corner in the visitors' favour had to be punched away by Biggar and "Bob" Hawkes in his return struck the corner of the goal. Luton assumed the aggressive again and Brown headed a beautiful goal amid a scene of great excitement. Watford equalised less than a minute later, Turner and Platt rushing for the ball which the goalie missed and the forward touched into goal. There was some doubt as to whether there was an infringement of the off-side laws.

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This quick reply smartened up the play and the Watford forward style became very brisk. In a dangerous movement the ball passed dangerously back and forth in front of the Luton goal several times until it was put wide. The visitors' display sadly fell off and they were lucky to escape defeat when Spikesley and Turner both bungled open chances. A splendid centre by Badenoch was headed into Platt's hands by Eames and a fine, accurate passing movement by the Watford forwards took them up close to the Luton goal until Blackett saved by kicking out. They returned, and Platt made a capital save of a fast header by Eames.

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Luton weakened still more until Biggar had hardly anything to do and it was certainly Watford's game if they could have shot well. McDonald seemed to have forgotten Warner's very existence. A good opening to Luton should have resulted from a successful attack upon Aston by Barnes if the other forwards had followed up. Brown was given off-side in his own half. Badenoch went up at express speed, White fouling him, bringing him to a standstill. From the free-kick, Platt made an excellent save. Warner had been given so few chances this half that he was merely spectator and the crowd ironically advised him to get dressed in order to catch an early train.

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Gallacher handled just outside the penalty area, but after the referee had treated the crowd to a

little amusing calculation in order to show the proper distance they should stand from the ball and a couple of unofficial free-kicks, Blackett cleared. Platt brought off two beautiful saves and Spikesley missed with a long shot. Play was tame towards the close but Watford were always the most dangerous team and it was a relief to the Luton supporters when the final whistle sounded to find that their favourites had escaped with a draw.

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Watford should have won by 3-1, had their marksmanship been better or Platt's ability less. In the first half there was a very slight balance in favour of Luton but in the second a rot set in and they were nowhere. The Watford game in the closing stages was a very good one and the visitors must be considered lucky to draw. Of the Luton players, Platt, Blackett, McCurdy, "Bob" Hawkes, Brown and Barnes were the pick.