

Southern League.

LUTON v. NORWICH CITY.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Norwich City.....	3 goals.
Luton	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Platt; Jackson and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Warner, Schofield, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

Norwich — Thompson; Livingstone and McKewen; Liddell, Bushell, and Beaumont; Lambertson, Wood, Ronaldson, Ross, and Chalmers.

Referee, Mr. D. Hammond (Manchester).

When Norwich City visited Luton last season they had some reason to complain of their luck in having a point snatched from them in the last two or three minutes of the game by a penalty kick against which they protested most vehemently. On Saturday, they had their reward, for the luck was all the other way, and they were credited with a victory which they did not deserve, except that their forwards were always ready to take a chance when it offered.

Playing against the wind, Luton had a full share of the game in the first half, and it was certainly a point in their favour that they were able to cross over with a blank score-sheet; in the second half they panned their adversaries in for three-fourths of the time, and yet the Canaries put on three goals against Luton's one. It was a bitter disappointment for the home team and their supporters.

The weather, though a little threatening at the outset, was on the whole beautifully fine, but a strong wind, blowing from one end of the ground to the other, gave the visitors, who won the toss, a decided advantage to start with. The attendance, consequent upon Luton's recent unsatisfactory form, fell a good deal below the usual, the spectators numbering only about five thousand, as compared with eight thousand at the Tottenham match, and the gate receipts being £120 as against £205.

When the game began, the home team went away nicely, and Thompson was called upon to clear in the first minute. The Canaries, however, soon showed themselves in an aggressive mood, and after hands had relieved from one attack they came again, and Ross shot just by the post. Luton made a brief response, and then Norwich renewing their overtures, Ross received from a throw-in and found himself right in front of goal, with only Platt to beat. Luckily, Peter got in the way of the ball, and the spectators breathed again.

At the other end, Bob Hawkes looked dangerous in getting to a centre from Warner, but unfortunately he trod on the ball and could not recover himself before an opponent stepped in and cleared. Warner next had a fine opening, but lost it in fussing for something better, and a little later a grand centre by Barnes went begging through no one being up.

The Canaries now made the running again and Chalmers put in a splendid cross shot which Platt could only get rid of at the expense of a corner. This was well placed by the outside-left, and Ross tried hard to convert it, but without avail, and Luton then took the ball to the vicinity of the Norwich goal, where Brown shot wide from a centre by Bob Hawkes. The homesters got nearer the mark from a free kick, Barnes ultimately sending behind.

The ball was never long at one end, and the City were soon buzzing about round Platt, Ross and Ronaldson being prominent, and the latter eventually landed the ball in the net, but was offside. A splendid run by Barnes was the next feature, and Pickering, with an excellent opening, missed the mark by inches. In another assault, Pickering was grazed and made strong appeals for a penalty, which, however, was not forthcoming. A somewhat prolonged attack followed, shots being rained in at the City goal, and once, with Thompson away from his charge, the ball was seen going through when suddenly Bushell appeared under the bar and kicked out. Luton urged that the ball had passed over the line, but without effect, and at last the besieged became the besiegers, Chalmers being responsible for a beautiful shot, to which Platt had to give

Nothing came of the kick, and the teams crossed over with a blank score-sheet. This augured well for Luton's chances, for having done so well against the wind, it was hoped and expected that they would not experience a great deal of difficulty in securing the victory. And they began as though they meant it. Probably they did mean it, but good resolutions sometimes fail of fruition, and it was so in this case.

The Luton left-wingers were soon on the war-path, and Barnes put in a good centre, which Livingstone headed away. Offside against Brown spoiled another attempt, and then Barnes taking a nice pass from Sandy, put the ball across the mouth of goal, but Thompson just managed to avert the danger. Barnes next forced a corner, and this was followed by another, neither of which was turned to account.

After Thompson had negotiated a fine shot by Brown, Bob Hawkes gave Pickering a rare opening, but the inside-left betrayed his old weakness of dallying with the ball, and nothing came of the effort. Soon afterwards, however, Luton were given a free kick just outside the penalty line, and Brown lifting the ball over the heads of the opposing force, Schofield dashed through and scored.

This success was received with great jubilation, for it was now felt to be only a question how many Luton would win by. But in the very next minute Luton came as near as possible to losing their lead, as the result of a determined attempt by Ross. Platt, leaving his goal to clear, was brought to the ground with two or three others on top of him, and all the while the City forwards were persisting in a bombardment. Still, they could do nothing better than obtain a corner, and this was not improved upon.

Luton were not long in re-asserting themselves, Warner and Schofield leading the way, and the latter would almost certainly have scored but for the fact that he was deliberately pushed in the back. The offence was undoubtedly one calling for a penalty, but apparently it escaped the official eye, for no notice was taken. Luton keeping up the pressure, Thompson had all his work cut out to prevent the further downfall of his charge, and once only just turned the ball round the post, while from the corner which followed, the ball was headed on to the net.

For the most part, Norwich were absolutely penned in, but at length they succeeded in getting on to Luton territory, and as luck would have it, the ball from a wild kick glanced off Bob Hawkes and went careering down the field and over the goal-line. It was the first chance the Canaries had had for a long time, and the corner was one of the flukiest imaginable. But worse was to follow, for Lamberton having placed, the ball was lifted over the heads of the players towards goal. Platt ran out to clear, but made a bad mess of it, and Ross had nothing to do but touch the ball into the empty goal.

This must have been terribly disheartening to the Luton players, who however, at once set to work to regain the lead, and the Canaries were pretty well overwhelmed. Try as they would, however, the home-sters could not score, though a very hot shot from Schofield struck the inside of the bar and rebounded to the feet of Warner, who shot high over. About this time Pickering had the misfortune to get hurt, causing his retirement, and leaving Luton for the rest of the game with only four forwards. Still, they continued to have all the best of the play, until at length Chalmers got loose, and making a dashing run, transferred the ball to Ross, who ran through and scored with a good shot, the ball passing between Platt's legs.

This was bad enough, but a little while afterwards, following another spell of pressing by Luton, Ronaldson got the ball from a rebound near the half-way line, and completely beating the Luton backs for pace, scored the third and last goal. It was a brilliant burst by the Norwich centre-forward, but one would

scarcely have given him credit for being so much faster than the Luton men. This goal, of course, settled the issue, and Norwich left the field the winners of one of the luckiest victories they have ever had or are likely to have.

As already stated, against the wind Luton held their own well, though the City forwards were always the more dangerous when they saw an opportunity of piercing the defence, but in the second half Luton were all over their opponents until they got near goal, and then they failed of success either through weak shooting or hard luck. They had more than a fair share of the latter, whereas each of the Canaries' goals was scored at practically the first time of asking.

Still, there are some serious defects in the Luton attack, and however much one would, one cannot shut one's eyes to the fact that Brown now lacks the speed and energy to make an ideal centre-forward. Too often he endeavours to atone for it by lying offside, and many promising efforts are brought to a premature conclusion on that account. Pickering, on the other hand, does as much as anyone to take the ball up to goal, but when he gets within shooting range, his efforts are painfully weak.

Last year, the ex-Bury man gave every indication of making a very fine player, his abilities being all right, and only a little more strength and staying power being needed, but this season he seems to have fallen off in just the respects where improvement was required; hence his disappointing performances.

Barnes did all that a man could do in the outside position, and some of his runs and centres were exceedingly smart, whilst the right wing also played a pretty good game. There can be no doubt that Warner and Schofield are the two best men for their positions, and the one hope of success is to persevere with them.

The halves and backs all rendered a good account of themselves, except that the backs were found wanting when Ronaldson scored his goal, but Platt was not nearly so reliable as usual. He seems inclined to take too many risks in dashing out of goal. It is all right if he gets on the ball, but failure means almost certain disaster.

Of the visitors, Ross took the eye most, and it is a great pity that he was ever allowed to leave Luton. Chalmers showed that he still has plenty of good football left in him, and Ronaldson was smart at centre, but Lamberton did not show to any particular advantage at outside-right. McEwen at back is still full of life and go, and though the veteran of the team, I am told that he is quite the youngest in spirit. Livingstone got badly knocked out in the first half, when making a dash at Brown, and it took him some time to recover, but on the whole he played a very good game. Thompson also showed that he still knows how to keep goal.