

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON versus WATFORD.

Played at Luton on Christmas Day. Result:—

LUTON 2 GOALS.

WATFORD 0 GOALS.

Teams:—

LUTON.—Platt, Hogg, McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, R. Hawkes, Warner, McDonald, Murphy, Pickering and Barnes.

WATFORD.—Biggar, Aston, Richardson, Badger, Hitch, Fyfe, Soar, Turner, Niblo, Grimes and Law.

Referee, Mr. C. C. Fallowfield (London).

The day was frosty, but clear, and the ground hard. There was an attendance of 8,000 spectators, about 1,500 of whom had made the tiring journey from Watford. The train arrived late and the match was delayed nearly 20 minutes. On the Luton side, Sandy Brown was indisposed and Murphy appeared in the centre. Bob Hawkes made his first home appearance in the first team's ranks since his notable display in the Amateur International at Dublin, and received a very hearty greeting as he led his men on to the field. Watford suffered several re-arrangements of their team, owing to illness.

To say that the home spectators were agreeably surprised at the success and superiority of the home team is but to mildly express their feelings. The Town started their attack as soon as the game started and continued through almost the whole of the match. In the first half they should have scored at least three goals, but several of the easiest openings went astray. Pickering was the weakest man in front of goal, but he by no means stood alone in this respect.

It was, however, Biggar who saved Watford from a very sound thrashing. He gave as clever an exhibition of goalkeeping as has ever been seen on the ground and many of his saves were so marvellous that they bordered upon the uncanny. He was repeatedly applauded and received something of an ovation when the teams crossed over.

During the whole of the first half Luton held the whip hand and pressed the Watford defence to its utmost. Time after time they worried the backs for several minutes at a stretch, but luck assisted the visitors to a large extent and the home forwards, despite their evident anxiety to score, could not beat the Watford custodian.

Luton's hopes drooped when the interval was nearing on seeing Turner land the ball in the net, and the visiting players warmly shook the successful one by the hand. Their enthusiasm received a terrible shock when Mr. Fallowfield, after consulting with the linesman, gave the point offside. Both the Watford team and its supporters were perhaps naturally disgusted with this, but the referee was perfectly correct, as Turner was yards offside when he received from Niblo.

At the interval the score sheet was clean, but Luton were not to be denied and continued to harass the visitors until midway through the second half, when their persistence was rewarded. Warner put in a well-placed flag-kick which no one was able to convert, but the ball travelled out again to Warner, who was in a difficult position, but scored with a magnificent shot.

Their patience rewarded, Luton attacked with greater vigour than before and would not be denied. The second success came a few minutes later as the result of a nicely-judged pass by Bob Hawkes to Warner. The latter immediately transferred into the goalmouth, where Pickering headed in, amidst a scene of great excitement. A fast and exciting game thus ended in a win for Luton by 2—0.

The chief praise for this capital victory is due to the halves, but particularly the two Hawkes, who were in brilliant form. Some of White's passes were wretched, but, although not so brilliant as his two comrades, he did some useful work. The defence was sound and the forward line smart. Murphy was very successful as the pivot and the outside men were quick and tricky. The inside men were the weakest, McDonald's passing showed up badly in front of goal, but displayed an excellent understanding with Barnes in midfield play.