

Southern League.

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS v. LUTON.

Played at Park Royal on Saturday. Result:

Queen's Park Rangers ...	2 goals.
Luton	nil.

The teams were as under:—

Luton—Platt; Hogg and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Warner, Macdonald, Murphy, Gittins, and Latheron.

Queen's Park Rangers—Howes; White and Lyon; Yenson, McLean, and Downing; O'Donnell, Fletcher, Green, Sugden, and Ryder.

Referee, Mr. J. H. Pearson (Crewe).

There could be no greater contrast than that afforded by the conditions under which the two fixtures with the Rangers have been carried out. It will be remembered they opened the season at Luton under a tropical sun, while on Saturday the surroundings reminded one of a picture of the Arctic regions. As Barnes was on the injured list, it was decided to give the reserve left wing a run together in the Southern League, with Murphy retained in the middle, Brown not having resumed training since his indisposition.

The snow had been cleared the previous day, but this rendered the pitch very dangerous, the frost during the night having literally made the surface a sheet of ice. Fortunately there had been a slight fall of snow during the early morning and this made the ground playable, although in the second half, when the effect of this had largely worn off, the players were compelled to take great care to keep on their feet.

The first movement which caused either goalkeeper any anxiety came from a pretty piece of work on the part of Latheron and Gittins, who brought the ball through in fine style. The latter tipped the ball over to Warner, who, however, had the misfortune to hit the upright with a stinging shot with a first-time effort that fully deserved a goal.

The Rangers had better fortune with their initial attempt at goal scoring, for a long centre from Ryder was sent on to the bar by Platt, and rebounding to the foot of Green, the latter had nothing to do but touch through. It was a surprise kind of goal and largely accidental in character, but still it was sufficient to cause Luton to fight an uphill battle right through the piece. Up to this point Luton had been the attacking party most of the time, indeed, taking the first half as a whole it should, on the run of the play, have been Luton who were leading at the interval.

Latheron and Gittins, the latter especially, proved very troublesome customers, and White (the Rangers' back) scarcely knew what to make of Gittins, who literally walked through with the ball on at least half-a-dozen occasions when the Rangers' full back was preparing to take his kick. On one occasion Gittins, after completely beating White, gave Macdonald a fine pass, and Howes seeing little chance of saving his charge, came right out of goal, but Macdonald's shot went yards over in his attempt to miss Howes. Latheron's centring was very accurate, and Bob Hawkes had hard lines with one drive from Latheron's work near the corner flag, only missing by the merest shave. To show the amount of pressure Luton were putting on the Rangers' defence, I have only to mention that Green was pulled up for offside while at least ten yards inside his own half.

Murphy had been trying his best to break through the whole first through, but could not quite manage to get clear until nearing the interval. Then it appeared he would do the trick, but Lyon just managed to get up before Murphy attempted his shot and seemed to hold his old club-mate for several yards. This naturally upset Murphy's equilibrium, and at last he pushed Lyon away, only to hear the referee blow his whistle. Undoubtedly Lyon was the original offender and a penalty seemed the only award, but greatly to the relief of the crowd, the referee gave a free kick to the Rangers! Murphy protested strongly, but it was no use, and what should have been an equalising goal for Luton turned out to be an advantage to their opponents.

Although a goal behind, it was anybody's game well in the second half, for Luton were ever making tracks towards Howes, but somehow failed at the critical moment. Some excuse must be made for the fact that by this time the covering of snow in the vicinity of the goal area had disappeared and only the bare ice remained, making it extremely difficult for a player to manœuvre for a good position for shooting. On the whole the game was pleasantly contested, but Gittins' work in the first half had directed the attention of the home defence in his direction, and he was brought down very badly once or twice when he attempted to break through. From one of these place kicks McCurdy almost beat Howes with a shot from thirty yards' range, but the Rangers' goalkeeper just managed to hold the ball and get it away before any Lutonian could get up.

Hands against McCurdy about a foot outside the penalty area looked ominous for Luton's chances of equalising, but although rather slim tactics were indulged in in taking this, it all came to nothing. One Ranger advanced with the avowed intention of taking the place kick, but apparently by arrangement he jumped right over the ball and a comrade coming up behind, sent in the shot, which, how-

phency that the engine would prove unequal to the task of getting up the long pull between Leighton and Dunstable was freely made, and sure enough the train came to a standstill before the top of the cutting was reached. A weary delay of nearly half-an-hour occurred. Luton was not reached until just before the time for the kick-off.

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"About £200 was taken at the gate, half of which went to Watford, under the pooling arrangement which exists between the clubs. A good-humoured holiday crowd it was too, out for an afternoon's enjoyment, and prepared to cheer at the least opportunity. The ground was frost-bound, and in an atmosphere seething with excitement a start was made.

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"No goals were scored in the first half, although Turner netted the ball from an offside position. In this instance Niblo sprinted through the middle and surrendered the ball to Peter, who was a yard or two offside. The referee allowed him to go on, and he netted the ball with a really brilliant cross shot. Mr. Fallowfield pointed to the middle, but being mobbed by the home side, consulted a linesman, and then reversed his decision. It was not a good goal, but it was rather an extraordinary thing for it to receive official sanction and then to be negatived on the opinion of one linesman only. Prior to this Biggar had done excellent work, but ought to have been beaten by Pickering, who let slip one of the easiest chances imaginable.

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"Warner, who was in great form throughout, notched the first legitimate point. Two corners had been taken by the Strawplaiters, and from the second the ball came to the outside-right. He was standing at an acute angle, but shooting with great force, found the opposite corner in brilliant style. The second point was also the outcome of a cross by the old 'Spur. Warner turned over a ball which was half a shot and half a centre, and Biggar could not get it away before Pickering, Barnes, and White were on him, the first-named giving the leather the necessary touch. These two goals just about represented Luton's superiority. The home club won because they were served by a forward line with an admirable conception of their duties.

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"The Luton team were naturally anxious to prove that the result at Reading on the previous Saturday was all wrong. As usual, they weighed it up for Watford. Never before this season have they reached such a high standard of excellence. Forward they were positively brilliant. The men did not keep the ball an instant too long. The passes were quick, the five were always in a line, and when a centre came across, Biggar had the three inside men coming for him like greyhounds off the leash. Once when he caught the ball and dodged, two of them went sprawling to the back of the net. That is the game which pays. An inside forward who will not get into goal is not worth his salt."

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