

Southern League.

SOUTHAMPTON v. LUTON.

Played at Southampton on Saturday.

Result:—

Southampton	1 goal.
Luton	nil.

The players were as under:—

Luton—Platt; Hogg and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and Jones; Latheron, Fitzpatrick, Brown, Gittins, and Barnes.

Southampton — Clawley; Eastham and Glover; Hogg, Robertson, and Gray; Jefferies, Hoskins, Harrison, Glen, and Mouncher.

Referee, Mr. T. Armit (Leek).

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After the Cup-tie excitement of the previous Wednesday, the engagement at Southampton did not arouse the usual interest. Warner was unable to turn out on account of an injury sustained in the first instance at Gainsborough and aggravated in the replay. It is not expected to keep him out of the team for any length of time, but it was thought advisable to rest him for this match. As R. Hawkes was unable to leave business, Jones was given the vacant place at left-half.

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Southampton have had so far only a moderate season, and just now football is rather at a low ebb in their district. Although Watford were beaten on the previous Saturday in the Cup, the performance was not looked upon locally as a great one; indeed, it has been suggested that our nearest neighbours were the smarter side. Consequently there were hopes of Luton earning their first win at the southern port since their return to the Southern League.

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In the early stages, however, the Saints were easily the more active in attack, and but for a steadiness among the Luton backs and goal-keeper would have taken a substantial lead. Right away from the kick-off Harrison obtained the ball in midfield, and passing it out to Jefferies, the Saints' winger put across a dangerous centre which McCurdy fortunately kicked into touch.

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The pressure at this stage was so great that both the home backs advanced to the attack and gave Platt shots to deal with. The ball was put into the mouth of the Luton goal from all directions, and several shots had plenty of sting about them, but fortunately for Luton's goal record the majority of these were just off the target. As an evidence of the amount of pressure put upon Luton's defence, it may be recorded that on each of the two occasions during the opening ten minutes that Luton did get the ball away from their half of the field an offside decision pulled them up, the Saints' backs being so far up.

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Brown got in the first real shot attempted by Luton, and then it was from long range. Nevertheless this rather speculative attempt almost did the trick, for Clawley allowed the ball to roll through his legs, and only saved it at a second attempt. Apparently he did not expect a shot at the moment, and if a Lutonian had happened to be up it would probably have meant a goal in their favour.

A most promising movement on the part of Luton's left wing terminated in Gittins finding himself clean through a yard or so wide of the goal, and it looked any odds on the opening point, but Robertson rushing back to the rescue, had not the slightest hesitation in tripping him up. The referee promptly pointed to the penalty spot, and the crowd awaited in silence the expected goal.

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As McCurdy could not call upon Bob to take it, Sandy was entrusted with this important task, for a goal at this stage would have had a great bearing on the result. Brown took a flying kick which looked a certain goal, but Clawley shot out his arm and the ball struck it and rebounded on to the crossbar and then back into play and was eventually cleared. It is only fair to say Brown's attempt fully deserved to score, and it was really more through bad luck than bad judgment that it did not. Even after Clawley had stopped the drive, the ball appeared to be going through, and it was sheer luck that it cannoned off the bar into play instead of the net.

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After this let-off for Southampton, play became much more even, and several promising raids were made by the Luton forwards, chiefly coming from Barnes and Gittins, by the way. Still one run down by Latheron almost brought about a goal, for Bobby finished up with a well-judged centre, which Brown pounced upon and put in a good attempt, Clawley only saving with considerable difficulty.

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Just on half-time, however, a corner was conceded to the Saints during a spell of pressure and from this the match was won. The ball really never left the vicinity of Platt's goal, although several players had a try to get a decent kick at it. Eventually it came back to Glen, who stood about fifteen yards out, and he put in a cross shot right over the heads of a crowd of players in the goal-mouth. At first it appeared the ball was going out wide of the extreme post. McCurdy, who was immediately in front of the upright, jumped up to head the ball away but did not reach it, and having missed, evidently thought it had gone out of play, but the ball just struck the upright at the corner and rebounded into play. McCurdy at the moment was walking down the field, and the ball hitting him on the back of the head bounced back and through the goal. It was a distinctly lucky point, but counted nevertheless.

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On the re-start Harrison was about to play a centre from his right wing when he was tackled by White and McCurdy, and between them they prevented the home centre-forward getting in his shot. Loud appeals were made

for a penalty, but the referee was "not having any," and was quite right, for the charge was perfectly fair. Barnes was being fed to some purpose hereabouts, his sprinting and centring being a feature of the play. Once he got the ball across in a marvellous manner, although he was falling as it came to him, but Eastham just managed to clear. Eastham a few minutes later attempted to bore his way through; indeed, he did get into shooting range, but his shot was placed wide.

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Latheron had an opening through a miskick, but dallied too long in getting away and the opportunity was lost. Fitzpatrick's weight helped him to force his way through soon afterwards, and he gave Brown a chance to equalise, but Glover just managed to get in the way and the ball went for a corner, which was placed behind.

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Brown was again making his way through in promising style when he was badly fouled, and the place kick was put well forward. Barnes raced through the opposition, only to be given offside—a very doubtful decision indeed, and distinctly hard lines on Luton. The game had proved a gruelling one, and towards time slowed down considerably. Although on the whole Luton held their own in midfield, they could not force an equalising goal, and the Saints ran out winners by the narrowest margin possible.

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It is even now no disgrace to lose at Southampton by a single goal, and the Luton defenders have nothing to blame themselves for in keeping the score down to that point. Hogg for the greater part of the time had Mouncher well in hand, and the spectators did not appreciate the way their crack winger was held up. Just at first the Luton half-backs were in each other's way, but as the game progressed Jones dropped into his new position and was a stumbling block to the opposing forwards. So far as brilliancy went, undoubtedly Barnes and Gittins furnished the better wing, but Brown evidently badly wanted to beat his brother-in-law and tried several times without the slightest luck. As already mentioned, his attempt at the penalty kick was really a good one, and Sandy was the most disappointed player on the side after the match at his failure to drive it home.

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Since they visited Luton quite early in the season the Saints are certainly a greatly improved side. Still they are far removed from the Saints of old, and rely upon vigour and dash instead of the more orthodox methods associated with their name in past seasons. Glen, the ex-Spur, was undoubtedly the cleverest player in their ranks, but he fell off badly after the interval. Harrison played the centre-forward game in dashing style, and given comrades up to his former standard, would prove himself not far removed from the most effective professional centre in the South. In defence, the Saints were good up to the point of stopping their man, but lacked all the fine points in placing the ball to advantage.