

FOOTBALL,

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. MILLWALL.

DOUGHTY DOCKERS DEFEATED.

BAD LUCK FORSAKES LUTON.

Saturday's struggle in the Southern League on the Bury Park ground was reminiscent of many game fights waged before professional football reached its present prominence as a sport. It would be idle to dwell upon the long-standing rivalry between Millwall and Luton whose experiences in the League have provided interesting articles for newspaper readers in the past. Never have the teams played poorly against each other and seldom have the matches been drawing-room exhibitions. Hard knocks have been given and received without undue animosity.

On the occasion under notice Luton won by 3-1 but—and I confess with reluctance—they did not deserve their victory. If the Dockers had been possessed of as much luck as bustle and grit, the result would have read very differently. As it was the Town's share of good fortune was unfairly large and the most prejudiced partisan will be forced to admit that Millwall showed in the second half a superiority that cannot be denied. The first period ruled rather in favour of the home side, but after the interval the East Enders improved so much that they bagged honours in everything but the art of shooting.

Platt did well, except for a bad mistake that gave the losers their only goal. Hogg was not at his best but Dimmock made up for his deficiencies. The halves worked hard all the way through, White being especially noticeable. In the forward line Fred Hawkes deserves much praise for following up the ball so closely. The rest were moderately successful. Pearson's leg appeared to be sound enough, but he never played all cut, and his display gives no chance of either praising or criticising. Of the visitor's, Frost was the star, doing the work of two men, while the rest played with that spirit of determination which has always been associated with Millwall.

The teams were:—

LUTON

Platt

Hogg

Dimmock

Jones

White

R. Hawkes

Rigate

F. Hawkes

Pearson

Moody

Walders

O

Johnson

Jones

Twigg

Milsom

Hunter

Blythe

Comrie

Frost

Sutherland

Shreeve

Joyce

MILLWALL

Referee—Mr. G. H. Muir, (Southampton).

To the delight of the 5,000 crowd play opened sensationally, Luton drawing blood within the first minute. Before the Dockers had settled down, Moody headed in and found "Tiny" Joyce napping. He muffed the ball and Fred Hawkes at once scrambled it through. Millwall immediately responded and Twigg tested Platt. Play was not allowed to remain in one part of the field long and Fred Hawkes extended Joyce, who was rather lucky in coming out of the ordeal unscathed. Playing a bright, and dashing game, Luton forced a corner which was resultless. At the other end Platt was called upon by Milsom and the visitor's right wing was disappointed of a good opening through the bustling tactics of the defence.

The second goal fell to Luton ten minutes from the kick-off, when a long shot from White struck the bar and bounced back to Fred Hawkes, who promptly kicked into the net. Such a reverse would be enough to take the steam out of most teams but it only increased Millwall's activity and an effort by Hunter looked like a certain score until the ball travelled by the opposite post. A very dangerous centre by Johnson having been headed out by Dimmock, Luton made their way to the other end, where a lightning shot by Walders was negotiated by Joyce by luck not by judgement.

A slip by Platt presented the visitors with their only point 25 minutes from the start. Twigg was the scorer, but the custodian appeared to have got the measure of his shot when it passed through his hands into the net, to the great surprise of everyone. Joyce tipped over the bar a hot attempt from Walders and brought off a marvellous save from Fred Hawkes. Hunter got through the defence well and a goal looked a certainty but Platt saved wonderfully and the interval arrived with Luton leading by 2-1.

The home side showed themselves at their best just after the resumption and Blythe got in the way of a terrific drive from Rigate. Hogg seemed to have some difficulty with Johnson, who was too fast for him and his centres were always a danger. Hunter forced a corner that Platt was called on to punch out and just afterwards Joyce's hands came into play from Rigate. In return Millwall attacked vigorously and were only stopped by off-side.

Pearson gave Rigate as fine an opening as he could wish but he was slow in taking advantage of it and his shot was intercepted. After this period there was no doubt that Millwall were the better team and time after time the Luton goal looked like going down. Platt saved a few shots in very fine style but the visiting forwards lacked surety of aim. Towards the close the light became very bad so that it was impossible to follow play carefully, but just on time Moody rushed the ball into the net and the result was a victory for Luton by 3-1.

This was in the last minute of the game—a very curious fact seeing that Luton had scored in the first minute. The game was a terribly hard one from beginning to end, and there were very few dull moments. How the players kept up the pace on the heavy ground is a mystery, and special credit is due to the visitors, who were certainly the better team in the second half, though the only goal scored during that period went to Luton.

So long as they kept the ball going from wing to wing and played the open game, Luton held their own, but when they gave this up for short passing, Millwall were able to get the pull. By hugging the ball so closely, the Luton forwards delivered themselves into the hands of the Millwall halves, who played with any amount of dash, and were able to rush in and intercept the passes of the home forwards.

Pearson did not get much luck, but he worked well and gave a very good account of himself. Fred Hawkes, too, was in fine form, and the crowd would have been only too delighted had he succeeded in performing the hat trick. He came very near it, a shot of his only just failing soon after he had scored his second goal. Rigate is improving wonderfully at outside-right, and not much fault can be found with the left wing. Moody was in excellent form, and though fortune does not smile on Walders, that player put in some very useful work.

The halves, as usual, served their side well. The captain sometimes electrified the spectators with his brilliant touches. White was a worrier all the way, and Jones was as indefatigable as ever. The backs were not quite up to concert pitch, Dimmock being a little erratic at first, and Hogg having a spell of unsteadiness in the second half. Platt was no doubt at fault with Millwall's goal, but after that he gave a magnificent exhibition.

By the way, what sort of sportsman, nay, what sort of partisan, is that man who, when the goalkeeper in his own team has the misfortune to make a mistake, afterwards shouts ironically each time the ball comes his way, "Let it go." There were several of such "sportsmen" on Saturday, and their ill-natured gibes might have been the means of Luton losing the game. Fortunately, they had not the effect calculated. On the contrary, Platt, as I have said, subsequently gave a marvellous exhibition, and proved to be one of the chief factors in the home team's success.

The Millwall forwards were in great form, Hunter and Twigg being the shining lights in a very bright attack. The halves and backs also played extremely well, and the team certainly did not deserve to lose by a margin of two goals.