

Southern League

LEYTON v. LUTON.

Played at Leyton on Saturday. Result:—

Leyton	5 goals.
Luton	nil.

The teams were as under:—

Luton—Platt; McCurdy and Dimmock; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Rigate, A. Eling, Brown, Moody, and Walders.

Leyton—Skiller; Meredith and Ramsay; Cresser, Moles, and Clark; Kingaby, Wood, Busby, Silor, and Walker

Referee, Sergt.-Major Rowley (Preston).

The recent non-success of Luton's attack led to changes at Leyton, but the result proved disastrous, and the heaviest Southern League defeat of the season was sustained. Unfortunately, alterations were compulsory in the defence, caused through injuries. Hogg and Jones both being unable to turn out, while as a matter of fact the only member of the defensive brigade who was thoroughly sound was Platt. R. Hawkes and Dimmock had been on the sick list during the past week, while McCurdy, F. Hawkes, and White were all more or less suffering from injuries, but in each case the players were anxious to do their best in the interests of the Club.

Luton lost the toss, and this meant a good deal, for there was a very strong wind blowing. At the start naturally the play was well in the Luton half, but the Leyton forwards were rather wild at this stage of the proceedings, and several openings were missed. From a free kick given for a foul by F. Hawkes some thirty yards out matters assumed an ominous aspect. McCurdy momentarily relieved the situation, but the ball fell at Walker's toe, and he promptly sent it across to Wood, almost underneath the bar, but the ex-Fulham forward headed yards over. A bit later Wood dashed through with the ball, but Platt came out and just succeeded in kicking into touch. This was a very near thing indeed.

It was only occasionally Luton were able to get down the field, but from a throw-in F. Hawkes put in a well-judged shot, which, however, was too high, and sailed harmlessly over the bar. But the play was soon down at Platt's end again, Wood badly failing at an open goal from a centre by Walker. Still it could only be a matter of time before a goal resulted, and when the game was sixteen minutes old the opening goal came along. Dimmock met a punt up the field, and did his best to return the ball, but he got his toe a trifle too far under, and the wind carried the ball back into the goal-mouth. Two or three Leytonians had a try to pierce Platt's charge, and undoubtedly Kingaby handled before letting drive, but the referee failed to see this infringement, and the ball coming back to Wood, the latter scored with a shot which Platt

made no effort to stop. Still Wood was so close up it would have been almost impossible to have got to the ball in any case. Within two minutes Wood increased the lead with a good goal. He received the ball in midfield, and neatly tricked Dimmock before working into the centre of the field, finishing up with a terrific drive which Platt threw himself across the mouth of goal to stop, but it went over his outstretched arm near the further upright.

From this point Luton improved, and up to the interval more than held their own; indeed, they appeared likely to cross over with at least a goal standing to their credit. One of the best efforts of the day was a nice run through and centre by Rigate, with an opponent hampering him all the way, and Brown, who was well up, let drive with a swift shot which Skiller managed to save close to the post. Hereabouts Luton had several corners, but these were none too well placed, partly because of the wind, but Walders failed two or three times to get the ball into the goal-mouth, dropping it several yards short. Eling placed the ball over the bar on two occasions when well situated, but each time the ball came awkwardly. Skiller made a dashing save from Moody by coming out several yards to relieve, but no real impression could be made, and the teams retired at the interval with Leyton still holding their two-goal lead.

Now that Luton had the advantage of the wind, it was expected a desperate fight for honours would result, especially after their manifest recovery before the interval. At first they certainly promised to bring about a change, but quite a surprise was in store, for Busby, taking advantage of a slip by the defence, dashed clean through and scored goal No. 3. This quite upset Luton, and they never afterwards appeared likely to retrieve the situation.

A further disaster was in store, a sudden attack from Leyton's right wing leading up to the fourth goal of the match, but in this case Wood, who thus earned the distinction of performing the hat trick, was yards offside, and the goal should never have been allowed to stand. It was now all over from a result point of view, but Wood beating Dimmock, gave Busby another chance and he promptly banged through a fifth goal, amid delighted cheers from the crowd, who had not seen their pet's earn a couple of Southern League points for three months.

There was still twelve minutes left for play, and Luton had decidedly the better of those closing moments, but without any luck coming their way. Rigate shot in finely, and all but netted, but Skiller proved equal to the emergency and brought off a grand save. Eling met with an injury to his foot, and was carried off by the trainers of both teams, but he returned to the field after a minute or two, and put in one of the best attempts of the day, this leading up to a couple of fruitless corners.

Such a crushing defeat was quite unexpected, and is a bad opening for the holiday programme. But it was a case of one team getting more than a fair share of fortune's favours. At least two goals should not have been allowed, while, as one critic has it, the ball ran very kindly for Leyton. Platt was not to blame for the heavy defeat, for every time the scorer was through on his own. Possibly the backs were partly at fault, Dimmock especially. Wood getting by him much too frequently. The middle division were overworked at the start, and, after facing half a gale up to the interval, were somewhat fagged during the later stages.

There was still the old failing manifest in the front rank, Brown being painfully slow, while Eling, although he tried hard, was handicapped by lack of weight, and did not show up so prominently as in the South-Eastern League matches. Rigate was the most dangerous member of the line. Leyton are certainly not the best team Luton have met, the result notwithstanding, but their forwards were more forceful in their methods, and Busby played a surprising game at centre-forward; still, their star artist on Saturday was Wood, the ex-Bury, Fulham, and Norwich player, and he certainly has never done finer work, for in addition to netting three goals, he was the chief engineer of all the attacking work put in by his side.