

WESTERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. CROYDON COMMON.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Luton 2 goals.

Croydon Common 1 goal.

The teams were:—

Luton—Platt; Gregory and Dimmock; F. Hawkes, Bradley, and Jones; Brown, Stansfield, Menzies, Moody, and Johnson.

Croydon—Furr; Christie and Meston; Hammond, Wolstenholme, and Hayward; S. Garrett, Lewis, Toal, Macdonald, and Barnfather.

Referee, Mr. L. Bullimer (Northampton).

The six-to-nil beating had a very decided effect on Monday's gate, and despite a beautiful afternoon, the spectators numbered under a thousand. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that those who stayed away missed much, for the game was of the tamest description imaginable. Many practice matches have furnished far better football, and in watching the proceedings one could scarcely believe that League points—even if they were only Western League points—were at stake.

There was scarcely an interesting incident in the first half, and the custodians were certainly not overworked. The Luton forwards at times played fairly pretty football, but there was a great deal of passing and re-passing—not always in the direction of goal—and very little dash.

Near the interval the home team certainly deserved a goal. Following a free kick, given against Hammond for a foul on Johnson, Moody headed in and Furr dropped the ball, but Stansfield then disappointed expectation by shooting over. Later on, Johnson placed a corner nicely, and after Furr had punched the ball away, Fred Hawkes neatly shot into the net, but to the chagrin of the spectators the goal was disallowed for offside against Stansfield, who stood close to the custodian.

It is extremely doubtful if Furr could have got to the ball in any case, and therefore it was rather rough luck to have the effort nullified. The Commoners had not done a great deal in this half, and Macdonald, the old Luton man, was quite the shining light in the attack. He made several good attempts, but taken altogether there was little for either team to boast about.

The second half did, at the beginning, give promise of a little more life, and very early on Platt saved beautifully from Barnfather. Luton replied with a fruitless corner, and subsequently the visitors got away on the left, and Macdonald scored after Platt had made an unsuccessful effort to get the ball away. There is more than a suspicion that the ball was handled before it was got into the net, but the referee allowed the goal.

Croydon did not maintain their lead long. Menzies, who had been limping badly, now left the field altogether, and responding to cries from the spectators, Bradley went forward, Dimmock joined the halves, and Gregory was left to himself. The presence of Bradley certainly imparted more sting to the Luton attack, and the Commoners, on the other hand, could make little headway in consequence of being pulled up for offside.

Stansfield scored the equalising goal from a centre by Johnson and then Luton fell away again, the best shot at the Croydon goal for some time being one by Dimmock. The visitors several times made individual rushes from near the half-way line, always appearing dangerous when one of them did happen to get clear, owing to the fact that Gregory had half the field to himself.

Platt saved a hard drive from Macdonald, and was very smart in dealing with attempts by Garrett and Barnfather, whilst towards the end he brought off a brilliant clearance. Then almost on the stroke of time, Luton got away, and Johnson obtaining possession, took the ball in and scored a very clever goal.

The win, perhaps, was the only satisfactory thing about the game from a Luton point of view, and Luton will have to put much more life into their work if they are to gain many Southern League points. In the first half, the forwards seemed more intent on passing than goal-getting—a very unfortunate habit to cultivate. That is one point in Bradley's favour—the passing is no overdone when he is about.

The Commoners are a very fair team, but the fact that Macdonald was as good as any of the forwards shows that there is nothing absolutely brilliant about them. They would not have gone far in the Southern League, but they ought to lay the foundations for future success.