

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

WEST HAM v. LUTON.

OUR INJURED.

Stansfield Plays Well.

It was a meeting of two teams which so far have not altogether pleased their supporters at the Boleyn Castle ground on Saturday. Much criticism has been made round West Ham district on the team selection for the various matches and some strong comments were made in the London papers on Saturday morning, regarding the numerous changes made in the Hammers' ranks. Possibly, as they won so handsomely the critics will be silenced until the next defeat.

The Luton selectors had practically no choice for with Johnson and Bradley on the injured list and W. Porter declining the invitation to play, they were compelled to press Brown and Menzies into harness in order to make up the front rank.

Of course, it was rather late in the week to ask W. Porter to come to the rescue, and he had already promised his own club and could not desert them in one of their most important league games.

The refusal, therefore, meant that Stansfield would have to take the outside left post, this being the third position he has already occupied and only one month of the season gone.

It will be remembered Stansfield figured in this position many times for Tottenham, and therefore he was able to fall into line with some promise of success.

As a matter of fact he made a very capable substitute for Johnson and certainly played his best game since joining Luton.

Dimmock was retained at right back after his fine show the previous Wednesday, and McCurdy came back to the team in his old position, and although he was a bit doubtful of his knee, he managed to stand the game. Luton were, therefore, at full strength in the defence with an experimental attack.

The teams were constituted as follows:—

West Ham: Kitchen; Taylor and Harwood; Yenson, Piercy and Tirrell; ..on, Shea, Foster, Burton and Blackburn.

Luton: Platt; Dimmock and McCurdy; F Hawkes, Jones and R Hawkes; Brown, Haycock, Menzies, Moody and Stansfield.

Referee: Mr. T. Randall, Coventry.

West Ham won the toss and were soon down at the Luton goal, but just as Foster was about to shoot he was pulled up for getting offside. He has earned his reputation as a goal scorer simply, and he is invariably playing right on the backs and thus is continually risking getting offside, but it sometimes pays for the referee does not always notice the infringement and one of his goals on Saturday should certainly have been knocked off on this account.

Coming through again, Foster got the better of McCurdy and let fly at Platt only to have his shot promptly booted into touch near the corner flag. Luton, however, were not idle and for the opening 10 minutes had quite as much of the play as their opponents.

Moody put in the first real attempt with a long dropping shot which landed on the top of the net, just going over the cross-bar. Luton's left wing again brought the ball down and Taylor was hard pressed, but he just managed to get in a wild kick, which sent the ball flying right out of the pitch almost opposite the corner flag.

At this point Taylor could not hold Stansfield and within the next minute, Luton's outside left was again in evidence with a clever run and he finished up with a brilliant cross attempt which only just missed the target.

It was now the Hammers' turn to take up the running, and they were more fortunate than Luton. Shea came through with the ball and Platt came out to meet him to prevent him settling down before taking aim, but Dimmock also rushed up and kicked the ball away from them, only to land it at the feet of Foster, who promptly banged it through before Platt could recover his position.

It was a hard drive, and deserved to score, but rather luckily got. The game was fifteen minutes old when this goal came and within the next ten minutes the result had been put beyond doubt. Encouraged by drawing first blood, the homesters' forwards literally swooped down on the Luton defenders and it was no surprise that another goal was added to the score, although the point itself was rather in the nature of a chance shot.

Piercey, standing at thirty yards out, met a return and taking aim, sent the ball all along the ground into the corner of the net, Platt throwing himself full length, being just too late to prevent the ball going through.

The third goal was a remarkable "angle" shot from Ashton, following a smart save from Platt. In all probability, the youthful Accrington Stanley recruit intended to centre the ball, but it flew by Platt at a terrific pace. Meanwhile Ashton literally jumped for joy at his success, and it was difficult for his comrades to give him the usual hand shake, so excited was he.

It was not to be expected the home team could continue the pace they set during this period, and gradually the game became more even. Bob Hawkes gave Brown a fine pass, but the latter shot wildly and the ball went for a goal kick. It was a good chance missed for Brown was not hampered in any way.

Again the Luton captain put the ball well up to his forwards after tricking his man, and Moody trapping the ball, put in a much better attempt, but it was a trifle wide and again it was a goal kick.

Shea managed to get the better of a tussle with McCurdy, and sent in a flying shot which Platt did well to save at the expense of a corner. From this the ball was only got away by Platt giving a second flag kick, which was, however badly placed and danger was once more averted.

Just before the interval, Menzies had a decent opening, but was bowled over rather roughly at the moment of shooting without the referee taking any notice of the incident. Possibly the charge was fair but in any case it was pretty vigorous.

The ball came back to Bob Hawkes and he sent it back with great force, but, unfortunately, his aim was not true, for it would have been almost impossible for any goal keeper to have prevented it entering the net unless it had hit him.

This was the final exciting incident up to half time and the teams retired with the score standing:—

West Ham

Three goals

LUTON

Nil

The second half saw Luton able to take an equal share of the play, and the right wing were more in evidence than during the earlier stages. They quickly forced a corner kick and this was splendidly placed. Piercey, however, just succeeded in heading away from Menzies who was close up.

A bit later Kitchen just smothered a drive from Menzies and from his punt up the field the ball was sent into the Luton goal, but Shea had handled some yards out, and the ball was brought back for a free kick. At Kitchen's end Haycock appeared to have a fine chance, when he was badly fouled and the free kick awarded came to nothing.

McCurdy fell heavily in tackling the home right wing and the game was stopped for a time, but Mac recovered and did not leave the field. On the opposite side of the ground Haycock and Tirrell came into collision and the ex-Northampton half back was not able to take any further part in the game, Blackburn falling into his place.

Luton appeared likely to reduce the lead when Brown completely beat Harwood and gave the ball to Moody splendidly situated for a pot at goal, but unfortunately the referee judged Moody to be offside. Although it must have been a near thing, for Brown was well up the field when he centred the ball.

Stansfield brought the ball well into the penalty area but Taylor just managed to block the final shot, but how he did it could not be seen from the stand although it looked suspiciously like hands.

Menzies came down the centre with the ball at his toe and Kitchen coming out blocked it, but could not kick away and Haycock rushing up sent in a second attempt only to find Kitchen again touch the ball and just turn it over the line for a corner kick.

Hereabouts Luton were having the better of the exchanges and several corners fell to them but none could be turned to account. On another occasion, Moody all but scored with a header, which beat Kitchen but just missed the upright.

Considering the share Luton were now having of the game, it was surprising they did not yet manage a goal, and it was more than tantalising that a breakaway by the home right wing should finish up with another goal to their opponents, especially as Foster was undoubtedly off-side when he took the pass from which he scored. During the closing stages, Luton continued to keep the play at Kitchen's end, and Menzies at least should have pierced Kitchen's charge when he was clean through and no one but the home goalie to beat, but he shot weakly and the ball was easily cleared. Result:—

West Ham

Four goals

LUTON

Nil.