

The Southern League.

LUTON v. COVENTRY CITY.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 6 goals.

Coventry 1 goal.

Luton—Platt; McCurdy and Gregory; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. Hawkes; Stansfield, Haycock, Menzies, Moody, and Johnson.

Coventry—Archer; Juggins and Drennan, Chaplin, Dodds, and Dougherty; Tickle, Arnold, Warren, Fisher, and Hopkins.

Referee, Mr. T. P. Campbell (Blackburn).

Rain fell shortly before the start of the game on Saturday, and during the whole of the afternoon the weather was dull. The conditions were in keeping with the play, which never aroused anything approaching to enthusiasm on the part of the spectators. Coventry sent the worst Southern League team seen in Luton for many a long day, and if the home players had been in earnest throughout the ninety minutes they could, without doubt, have attained to double figures.

Play was very ragged during the first half-hour, and although it was evident that Luton could win easily, the onlookers gradually settled down to spend a deadly dull afternoon. But the outlook improved when Haycock scored after half-an-hour's play, and three others were notched before the interval. In the first quarter of an hour of the second half, two more were added, and Coventry's solitary goal was registered fifteen minutes from the close.

It will be noticed that Brown was absent from the home team and that this necessitated Stansfield being transferred from the left, Johnson being included as partner to Moody. Farrant, who played for Luton last year, did not turn out for Coventry, but Warren (centre-forward) was given the preference to Hickman, who has only recently been acquired by the Club. Dougherty reappeared at half, but Buckle (forward) was absent on account of an injury sustained against Carlisle at Manchester.

Bob Hawkes won the toss, but this did not carry with it any advantage. Luton kicked from the town end, and in the first two minutes the right-wingers missed a good chance between them. Coventry's first attack was stopped by McCurdy, who headed the ball, and a little later Platt rushed out to save. Haycock seemed likely to rush through when he was pulled up for being offside. Menzies next had a chance, but was charged off the ball, which went out to Johnson. That player tried a rising shot which was a trifle too high.

Although the Luton forwards were playing much below their usual form, the home team were doing most of the attacking. Following a free kick for Luton, both the Coventry backs skied the ball, but it was not driven home when it came down in front of goal. After Bob Hawkes had conceded a corner, F. Hawkes headed out a good centre by Tickle. In the subsequent play both Moody and Haycock were given offside.

Up to the present Luton had done nothing worthy of commendation, but two fine cross shots by Johnson were applauded. Archer had to be very smart to dispose of them, and before the attack was cleared Haycock had hit the bar. After play had been transferred to the other end for a very brief spell, Haycock fastened on to the ball, and, despite the attentions of one or two of the Coventry players, shot into the net.

This was really a fine goal, for many players would have lost the opportunity by passing. Haycock controlled the ball well and gave Archer no chance, finishing with a hard low shot. Coventry were not disheartened, and almost immediately Jones was so hard pressed that he had to pass back to Platt. In the succeeding play the best effort was made by Moody, who shot after a few inches wide.

But the second goal was not long in coming. Haycock gave Archer such a warm handful that he could not clear properly, and Menzies kicked the ball into the net. A free kick was next taken by Juggins, who shot straight to Platt. After the Luton custodian had saved from Arnold, the Light Blues went away and forced a corner. This was taken by Johnson, and Bob Hawkes scored the third goal with a shot which went in near the post. Moody was in the way of the shot, but bent and let it pass over his head.

An attack by Coventry was finished by Warren shooting wide, and then Archer brought off a very fine save from Moody, this resulting in another corner, which was cleared. Haycock finished a piece of good play by centring, but Menzies, Moody, and Johnson were given offside. Luton were to score another goal, however, before the interval. A back happened to be in the way of a drive by Bob Hawkes, but Menzies obtained possession, and, dribbling away from one or two opponents, scored an easy goal.

Luton having established such a comfortable lead, it was hardly surprising, though regrettable, that play did not improve in the second half. The home players were not long in adding two more goals, and then they slackened to such an extent that the chief feature in the subsequent exchanges were the sudden bursts of the Coventry forwards. So superior were Luton to their opponents that it seemed very improbable that the latter would score. But they did.

Still, that is anticipating. Directly after the resumption Gregory conceded a corner which was followed by another. Then Luton went away, and Archer saved from Fred Hawkes and Menzies. Five minutes after the resumption the Coventry goalkeeper only just saved a shot by Moody, and was robbed by Haycock, who fell. Stansfield, however, was close at hand, and had no difficulty in touching the ball over the line.

A flying shot by Arnold went over, and a good run by Johnson resulted in Archer being again called upon. At the next time of asking, Johnson did a piece of work which led to Luton's sixth goal being scored. Receiving from Moody, he sent the ball across nicely, and Haycock had the joy of heading through. The cup was now full, but the Coventry players had become so used to being on the losing side that the effect was not by any means so great as it would have been upon most teams.

Johnson was again conspicuous with a shot which travelled right across the goal, and a little later one of the backs was so hard pressed as a consequence of Haycock's perseverance, that he came very near to putting through his own goal. The ball, however, went out of play at the side of the pitch. At the other end Platt cleverly saved a shot which seemed to be going in just under the bar, but a little later he narrowly escaped being beaten, for he trusted to Gregory to clear, but the back slipped.

From now to the end Coventry had a fair share of the play, and Arnold had a good chance to score, but allowed the ball to go to Warren, who did not take advantage of the shining moment. Tickle, the outside-right, went off for a few minutes on account of an injury to his face, and while he was off Coventry scored. Just before this Johnson essayed a shot when he could almost have walked in with the ball, and Archer, like the good goalkeeper he is, saved.

Coventry's goal was the outcome of a characteristic rush. Arnold and Warren suddenly broke away and were too quick for the Luton backs. Warren found himself in front of goal with the ball, and he made no mistake this time. In the concluding stages Jones took a free kick, and Stansfield's centre was met by Moody, who headed over. One of the best attempts made for Coventry during the afternoon was a fine cross shot by Chaplin. Fortunately for Platt, it went wide of the mark.

A report of the game would be incomplete without mention being made of the fact that Mr. Campbell, the appointed referee, was late, having missed a connecting train on the journey from Blackburn. One of the linesmen had charge of the game during the first ten minutes, Mr. H. Smart holding his flag meanwhile. The decisions of the temporary referee were satisfactory, and he was cheered as he walked off the playing pitch, having handed the game over to Mr. Campbell, who stopped the play to consult him as to the time when the game started.

Haycock stood out more prominently than any other player on the Luton side, for he was ever ready to rush in whenever there was a chance of doing anything useful. His exhibition would have been really great if he had not attempted to do too much off his own bat, so to speak, and perhaps this was partly the reason why Stansfield did not show up so well as usual, although everyone who has watched him closely in recent matches would say that he always gets on a lot better on the other wing.

In the opening period, when the home forwards seemed almost incapable of combining to any useful extent, Menzies seemed a trifle

slow, but he improved as the time went on, and made many openings for the other forwards. Jones was almost too robust in his methods, most of the free kicks against Luton—there were not a great many—being given against him; it was also a bit of gallery play on his part which gave Coventry the opportunity of getting their goal. Fred Hawkes was as consistent as usual, and Bob performed splendidly. Gregory once more showed improved form, and he and McCurdy both played well.