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Played at READING v. LUTON.

Luton leading on Saturday. Result:—

Reading 2 goals.

The teams 2 goals.

Luton—Placed up as under:—

Hawkes, White, Tildesley and Gregory; F. Menzies, Moody, and Jones; Brown, Haycock, Reading — and Stansfield.

Smith; Bartholomew; Newbigging; Wilkes and H. Burch, Leonard, Comew, Hancock, and Boden; gins. Wheatcroft, Morley, and Hug-

Referee, Mr. A. G. Steers (Brighton).

Luton's two previous Southern League journeys to Reading ended disastrously, the score being 7-2 and 3-0 respectively in favour of Reading; therefore the result set out above is a very welcome change. It will be noticed that Tildesley was included at right full back, this being his initial appearance. Reading Southern League ap-
 strength, for although we were really at full ing, Herbert Smith and Orump was not play-
 fore it could not be his place, and there- at all weakened. It was charged that the side was
 absentee was Mainwaring, the only other prominent assured that it would be and the writer was
 ter to say which of them would have been a difficult mat- would have been left of the half-backs playing

It will be remembered that last season a fruitless journey was made to the Biscuit town, it being impossible to play on account of the snow, and at one time during last week mat- ters appeared likely to assume a similar aspect. But on Thursday the ground was cleared, and the Reading officials advised the Luton secre- tary that the match would be certainly played. Naturally, the playing pitch suffered, and it was decidedly soft in places; still it was quite fit enough to play on; more so, indeed, than the frost-bound ground at Norwich earlier in the week.

The game opened in an exciting manner, for Burch was observed making tracks in great style for goal, and he dropped the ball across finely to Wheatcroft, who got by Tildesley pretty easily, and the way into goal appeared quite a simple matter, but Gregory dashed up at the critical moment and cleared with a big kick. It was at once apparent that we were in for a fast game, for before the home specta- tors had time to recover from their pleasant anticipation of an early goal, the ball was taken to the opposite end by Stansfield, and he all but did the trick with a fine drive, Newbigging just touching the ball over the bar for a corner. This was well placed, but Newbigging catching the ball sent it safely away for the moment.

Burch once more took up the running, and he also sent in a good hard drive which Platt met and punched away well down the field. Wheatcroft, however, secured, and letting fly, put in a grand shot, which sailed a foot or so over the bar. Brown snapped up a pass-out from Menzies, and cleverly tricked Smith by placing the ball by, and running inside of the Reading back, thus getting it again before Smith could recover, but Wilkes forced the Luton winger to the line, and the ball even- tually went for a goal-kick. In meeting a punt up the field, Tildesley, after kicking the ball, was seen to fall heavily, and it was apparent his knee had given way. This looked likely to have serious consequences for Luton, but Trainer Lawson's well-known skill soon remedied matters sufficiently for the ex-Newcastle player to remain on the field, and, as a matter of fact he finished the game.

Brown was being well fed both by Menzies and Hawkes, and he was a continued source of trouble to the Reading defence, but his centres did not meet with the best of luck, al- though once or twice they were dropped in finely. Bartholomew was deservedly applauded for checking Moody from one of those oppor- tunities made by Brown's dash and speed.

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On the opposite side, Burch made another dash into goal, finishing with a terrific shot, which, fortunately for Luton, travelled a yard wide of the extreme post. A technical foul by Wheatercroft gave Luton a chance to get down again, but H. Smith came across and cleared before Moody could quite get up. The game up to this point was remarkable for the number of fine runs made by the extreme men of both sides, and each time a goal seemed certain, but either the final effort was badly directed or the defence prevailed, and the score-sheet remained blank until after thirty minutes' play.

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But, after that, the opening goal soon came. Huggins, receiving a fine pass from Wheatercroft, dashed through, just managing to elude Hawkes. Steadying himself for a shot, he put in a real beauty, which Platt did well to reach at all. By throwing himself full length, however, Peter just prevented it finding the corner of the net, but although he thus managed to stop the ball, he could not get it away, and before he could rise from the ground Wheatercroft came up and put through the opening goal.

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Within five minutes Luton were again on equal terms. Stansfield being responsible for a spirited dash down the wing, Wilkes gave a corner. Stansfield himself took the flag kick, and the ball dropping almost on the goal-line, a desperate scrimmage took place under the bar. Newbigging never got a sight of the ball after it pitched, and with at least three Lutonians right on the spot, it was not surprising that it finally found its resting-place in the net. Haycock did the trick.

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Reading re-shuffled their half-back line, Boden taking up his old place in the centre, but it made little difference to the game, for neither side could claim a decided advantage. It was generally commented on the stand that Luton's attack was about the smartest quintette which have visited Reading this season, and they gave the crowd more than one anxious moment, but nothing further in the way of scoring was done up to the interval, and the teams retired on an equality both in play and goals.

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Resuming, Luton were quickly at work, and some good generalship on the part of F. Hawkes gave Brown a chance, but Hancock checked the movement by kicking into touch. From the throw-in Brown got in his centre, but Bartholomew cleared finely, to the delight of the crowd. Reading retaliated, and Wheatercroft was brought down just outside the penalty area. Boden lifted the ball over to Wheatercroft, but the Luton defence again hustled him off the ball, and the situation was once more saved. Luton were now having a far greater share of the exchanges, and both Brown and Stansfield were constantly dropping in centres, only to find Boden and Co. packing their goal and thus making it very difficult to force an opening.

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Wheatercroft managed to force a corner, and from this Leonard, standing well back, skimmed the bar with a fine shot. Again the Reading goal was placed in jeopardy, for although most of the defensive brigade had fallen back, they appeared quite unable to control the ball until it went out luckily to H. Smith, who cleared with a mighty kick well up the field. Brown out-distanced Hancock and shot strongly in Newbigging's direction. The latter grasped the ball but could not hold it, and some desperate work ensued, which was only finished when a free kick to Reading brought relief.

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Luton hereabouts were attacking so strongly that Reading were well content to concede a corner from Stansfield, but this only led up to Haycock giving his side the lead after the ball had been got away twice from Stansfield's well-placed kick. Haycock, standing a few yards back, lifted the ball over at least half-a-dozen players' heads, quite surprising Newbigging, the shot dropping just inside the upright. Luton now appeared to have the game well in hand for they were playing far better football than Reading, but a rather lucky movement by Burch gave Wheatercroft the opportunity of equalising within two minutes of Luton getting the lead.

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Seeing there was yet a chance to bring off a victory, the Reading spectators urged their players on, and we had quite a lively time in consequence. Luton laid themselves out to hold their own, but it was quite as much as they could do to withstand the fierce onslaughts of the now thoroughly-roused Reading attack. Wheatercroft did get through once more, but the whistle had gone for offside, and Luton were saved from defeat, for I doubt if they would have been able to again draw level.

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Before the finish Luton had another lucky escape, for a grand drive from Huggins cleared everybody and looked a certain goal, but the ball struck the upright with a bang and rebounded to Gregory, who luckily cleared. Just on time a rally by Luton ended up with a fine shot from Moody, which made the spectators almost shudder for the result, but Newbigging gathered the ball finely and the situation was saved.

when they were clean overplaying their opponents. But the final rally by Reading might also just as easily have resulted in a crop of goals, and thus opportunities were pretty equal. Platt had no chance with either goal, and although it was the first time Tiddestey and Gregory had played together, they offered a stubborn resistance under pressure. Still, there was not quite the same understanding that McCurdy and Gregory have shown in recent matches. The half-back line played their part in fine style, White especially doing well in the centre. Freddy always seems to revel in the mud, and there was a lot of it about towards the close. I have previously mentioned the fine work of our extreme wingers, and I can only say all three of the inside forwards played to them with good judgment, Haycock again being well in the picture.