

The Southern League.

LUTON v. SOUTHAMPTON.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Southampton	nil.

Teams:—

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

Southampton—Lock; Eastham and Glover; Jepp, Trueman, and Bamford; Bainbridge, Jefferis, Hughes, Jordan, and Hodgkinson.

Referee, Mr. T. Armit (Leek).

The Luton Club is very seldom favoured with such luck as fell to their lot on Saturday, when they met a superior team, but were able to claim the points. The difference between the two teams was very apparent during the first half, and at the interval the Saints might easily have been leading by two goals, instead of which Luton were in front with a lucky goal notched by Stansfield.

By means of improved combination, Luton were able to have more of the play during the second half, and the Southampton goal had at least two wonderful escapes. The visitors, however, still gave the impression of being the superior side, so far as science was concerned, and much credit was due to the home defence for keeping such a smart line of forwards at bay.

Yes, most certainly they are a smart line. We did not see them at their best on Saturday, for Hughes made his first appearance in the centre after an absence of six weeks. Moreover, his knee was injured in the second half, and he did not want to take any great risk in view of his Club's visit to Bristol next Saturday to play the City in the English Cup.

Bainbridge returned after an absence of three weeks, but he was as fast and clever as ever. The right wing was the better of the two, but more real chances fell to the left, where Hodgkinson did a lot of work. He did not, however, seem to like the idea of getting too near the backs, and if his finishing efforts had been characterised by more determination, the result of the match would certainly have been different.

Bamford made his first appearance in the Southampton first team, and gave a surprisingly good display at left-half, especially as he had such a good wing as Brown and Haycock against him. Jepp, the right-half, was also a reserve, and although not so brilliant as Bamford, rendered good service in a side which played so well that for a long time Luton were not able to show anything approaching their true form.

For the greater part of the game Luton acted chiefly on the defensive, and the rear part of the team was not found wanting. Platt saved some very good shots, and he had in front of him a pair of backs who have improved vastly, compared with their play of two months ago. There is a better understanding between them, and Gregory is a very different player from what he was in the opening weeks of the season. The halves were as usual, but Menzies, hitherto a very consistent player, was "off colour."

Southampton are always a great attraction at Luton, and on Saturday there would have been a larger attendance than 5,000 but for the fact that many people had already made up their minds to be present at the Millwall match, but were not inclined to visit the ground two Saturdays in succession. Those who were present cheered loudly enough when Stansfield scored in the last minute of the first half, and later, when there were some exciting scenes in front of Lock.

Southampton are the same team—to look at—as of yore. Tall, well-built men, they looked ideal footballers when they came on the field, wearing the familiar red-and-white shirts. When play started they soon showed that first impressions are not always deceptive. Cool, clean, and clever, they put in any amount of fine work, and but for the facts already referred to, would not have been long in opening their account.

In the first five minutes they made several attacks through the instrumentality of the left wing. After R. Hawkes had cleared one of these, Luton went away and came near to scoring. There was a mix-up between Menzies and Haycock, who kicked round the ball. Stansfield obtained possession and let drive, but not in the correct direction, and a goal kick resulted.

Snapping up a pass from Menzies, Stansfield forced a corner, but this was cleared. At the other end the Southampton left wing rushed past McCurdy, but F. Hawkes had fallen back and cleared with a good piece of defensive work. The left wing of the visiting team came again, but only a goal kick resulted. The next incident was a long pass forward by Hughes. Bainbridge raced for the ball, but Platt managed to get to it first.

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A minute later Bainbridge forced a corner, and Platt caught the ball as it came across. A corner given by Gregory was also cleared, and Bamford next caught the eye with some clever play in robbing Brown. The nearest thing to a goal, so far, came from a centre by Bainbridge. Hughes met it nicely with his head and looked a certain scorer, but the ball went over the bar.

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Gregory, who was playing very well indeed, met a centre from the Southampton left wing in fine style, but a little later McCurdy had to give a corner in order to prevent Hodgkinson from centreing. Moody next got through on the left and sent in a long shot almost from the touch-line. The ball twisted and deceived Lock, but hit the bar and went out of play.

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Following a centre by Hodgkinson, Hughes found himself in front of goal, but he was too far forward to kick straightaway, and one of the home defenders relieved the situation. Then Jepp, who was not far away from goal, put in a hard shot, but McCurdy happened to be in the way, and the ball rebounded off his back. When Luton next attacked, Moody put in a clever shot, which Lock saved close to the post, giving a corner.

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This was nicely placed by Brown, but the defence prevailed, and the Saints were soon attacking once more. McCurdy having given a corner in endeavouring to deal with a centre by Hodgkinson, there was some exciting play near the mouth of the Luton goal, and the visitors all but scored. Platt was about two yards out of goal, having just dealt with a shot, when the ball was returned along the ground by Bainbridge and seemed to be just passing over the line into goal when McCurdy kicked out.

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The Southampton players confidently appealed for a goal, but the referee who had been standing in a good position near one of the uprights, simply allowed play to go on. To most of the spectators round the ground it seemed that the ball must have gone over the line, and from the way in which the people on the big bank at the back of the goal cheered, it was evident that they felt very much relieved by the decision of Mr. Armitt.

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After Haycock had forced a fruitless corner, Southampton came again. Just as Bainbridge obtained possession the referee gave him off-side, but he put in a splendid cross shot which would have beaten any goalkeeper. In one of Luton's infrequent attacks, R. Hawkes passed to Menzies, but the ball went too far in front of the centre-forward for him to turn the opportunity to account.

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Southampton looked certain to score from an attack on the right, and McCurdy was obliged to give a corner. The attack was strong, but as a matter of fact, this corner led to the scoring of the only goal of the match. A long kick sent the ball to Brown, who raced away, and finding that he was well marked, swung the sphere out to Stansfield. That player put in a long shot from the extreme left, and the ball dropped into the far corner of the goal, completely beating Lock.

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This goal, which was scored in the last half-minute of the first half, was not deserved on the run of the play, but it was hoped that, having obtained the lead, Luton would put up a better fight; they were much below normal form in the first half. As matters turned out, Luton did have more of the play as the game progressed, and might have scored two or three times, but Southampton were still the cleverer side.

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In the first minute after the resumption, Stansfield put in a fine dropping centre, and Menzies was in a splendid position with the ball in front of him, but he allowed Bamford to prevent what should have been a certain goal. A centre by Bainbridge was well met by McCurdy, but the next effort by the outside-right was more dangerous. The ball went along the bar, and Platt managed to touch it out.

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Hodgkinson took the resultant corner, and his shot scraped the bar. In the succeeding struggle Hughes had a recurrence of his knee

double, and play stopped for a minute while he received attention at the hands of the rainer. After they had been re-started, Hughes found him in front of goal with the ball on the bow. Fortunately for Luton, McCurdy got to it and kicked away.

From one of the corners which fell to the visitors, Jordan a chance, but he did not put enough into the attempt, and Platt was able to. Another splendid centre by Stansfield. Menzies a further opening, but the forward did not trap the ball smartly enough and so Southampton were let off once more.

A free kick for Luton looked promising. F. Hawkes took the ball, and after one of the defenders had kicked away, Brown centred. The ball went out to the left, but Stansfield failed to reach it before it went out of play. Good play by Jefferis, but he have had some result, but he passed to Inbridge, who shot high over.

The same player almost to a goal being scored a minute later. The shot was right on the target, and it was so that Platt could only fist sideways. Hodson had an easy chance with practically an open goal, but sent wide. A fast run by Brown caused Lock to have an uncomfortable time. He ran out to save, but Moody and Stansfield got so dangerously near that he held the ball for fully half a minute.

Of course, while he stood there, the two Luton players named tried to obtain possession. Finally he threw the ball away. Haycock took a shot at the partly guarded goal, and the ball went out close to the upright—a very near thing. It then appeared that Lock had been kicked below the knee in the scrimmage, but that was hardly to be wondered at. He might have got rid of himself long before he did.

Jefferis deserved to equalise with a fast shot, which Platt cleverly saved from the post, giving a corner. From this Brown shot hard, but one of his own men seemed to be in the way. A centre by Brown was headed over by Moody, and Haycock's foot to a pass forward by Fred Hawkes could not turn the ball sufficiently to make an attempt effective.

Platt having fisted out a shot, Hodgkinson, Gregory was penalised for fouling, and also gave a corner, without result. Moody, Haycock, and Brown made vain attempts to score from a corner, but the ball ended in a free kick for the Saints. A centre by Stansfield gave the visiting defence some trouble, and Brown might, with a bit of luck, have scored. In the last minute Jordan headed over from a corner.

Taking the game all through, it was not so good as that seen in the Northampton match, for the teams were evenly matched. This was not because Southampton are a better side than the Northampton men, but because Luton never really got their stride. This was partly due to the show given by Menzies, but in fairness it should be said that he was so unwell he really ought not to have been playing. He was well marked by Trueman, and Eastwood and Glover wanted a lot of beating.

Luton were exceedingly well served by Gregory, and McCurdy, to whom the best of the game were chiefly due, but the backs also played in capital style. Indeed, Luton defence has rarely shown to better advantage, and it was lucky that there were no weak spots.

It has already been admitted that Luton did not deserve to win, and it may be noted that the result last year at Luton was a win for Southampton by two goals to one. At Southampton on the second Saturday of this season the Saints won by six goals to one. Luton have robbed them of a couple of points which would have been most useful in the duel with Northampton for the leadership.

By beating Bristol Rovers by 3 goals to 1, Northampton still further strengthened their position at the head of the table, as they are now four points ahead of Southampton, and have a match in hand. The only surprise of Saturday was the victory of Coventry City over New Brompton by a goal to nil. The results were: Crystal Palace 2, West Ham 0; Brentford 0, Leyton 0; Millwall 3, Southampton 1; Plymouth 2, Brighton 1; Swansea 5, Reading 1; Portsmouth 1, Norwich City 0; Exeter 1, Watford 0.

In considering Luton's chances in the Cup-tie with Millwall on Saturday, there is one thing that is fairly certain, and that is that the home club will make a better show than they did against Fulham a year ago. The real reason why Fulham won by 8 goals to 3 was never explained to the astonished and amused football world. There is no doubt that the Fulham players went on the field better equipped than the home team, who could never gain a sure foothold in the frozen snow.

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But quite apart from that fact, Luton had to face what was an undoubtedly better team. Luton were then last but one on the S.L. table, with 13 points for 21 games, whereas Fulham were doing fairly well in the Second Division of the League. Moreover, it cannot be said that Luton's team that day was one to inspire anything approaching confidence. It was—Platt; Watkins and McCurdy; Jones, White, and R. Hawkes; Rigate, F. Hawkes, Rankin, Moody, and Walders.

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Millwall went to Bury to play in the first round last year, and won by 2 goals to 1. They are unfortunate in having to play away from home again, for their chances on their own ground would be distinctly good. They are in a slightly better position than Luton, having obtained 25 points for 23 matches, while Luton's record is 21 for 22.

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Out of 11 games played away from home, Millwall have won 2, lost 7, and drawn 2; while Luton have lost 9 and drawn 2. Luton have scored fewer goals away (7) than any other team, while Millwall have obtained 13. On the other hand, Luton have registered 30 goals at home, while Millwall, although they have played one more game, have a total of 25.

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Enough has been said to show that although the record of Millwall is rather better than clubs is in their away performances. Everybody knows that Luton have played better away from home than their achievements would lead one to believe. On the other hand, Luton have done better at home than Millwall, so far as goals are concerned.

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Everything points to the game being sternly contested, but Luton ought to win. The advantage derived from playing at home, however, is not supposed to be so great in a Cup-tie, with its never ceasing struggle, as in the calmer atmosphere of a League game.

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While Luton were snatching points from Southampton on Saturday, Millwall were engaged in beating Southend, and were really good value for the win by 3 goals to 1. Millwall scored two goals in twenty minutes, Shand getting through from a corner, and Jones profiting from a mistake by Cotton. In the second half Tellum scored the best goal of the match, and five minutes from time Jack beat Joyce from close quarters.

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When Hunter went to Bolton a few weeks ago, it was said that Millwall were parting with their best forward, but they seem to have a capable substitute in Tellum, and Dean has been doing well of late on the other wing. On Saturday, Twigg, although rather weak in marksmanship, led the line with dash. The halves kept a firm hold on the opposition, and Stevenson and Jeffery were so sure that Joyce was a spectator for the greater part of the game.

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Comrie was off the field for 25 minutes, having sustained a cut on the nose, and late in the second half Dean was limping badly. Provided these two players are able to turn out on Saturday, Millwall will be represented by the same team. Luton also will make no change. Cheap tickets are being issued by the Midland and Great Northern Railways from London, so we may expect to see a good number of the Millwall supporters.

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The Millwall team last Saturday was—Joyce; Stevenson and Jeffery; Riley, Comrie,

and Blythe; Dean, Shand, Twigg, Jones, and Tellum. The custodian has played for Southampton and Blackburn Rovers. Stevenson has rendered good service for Liverpool, Barnsley, and Wellingboro', among other clubs. He has a capable partner in Jeffrey. The halves are, perhaps, the strongest part of the team, and it will be remembered that Riley has been at Millwall several seasons, while Blythe is an ex-West Ham player.

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The forwards are a smart set. The Luton captain will have to watch a good man in Dean, the outside-right, who has played for Notts Forest, Grimsby, Walsall, West Bromwich, Bristol City, and Dundee. His partner, Shand, played for Middlesbrough at one time, and Twigg is a former Gainsborough player. Jones, like Dean, has returned to his old club, having played for Manchester City in the meantime, and Tellum hails from Gainsborough.

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In view of Menzies' comparatively poor display on Saturday, caused, as already explained, by indisposition, a writer suggests that he should be dropped for the Cup-tie. If the directors want to make the game a gift for Millwall, they cannot do better than follow the advice.

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The following is from Wednesday's "Daily Chronicle":—"The Millwall players are training at home, and the side to meet Luton will be selected from—Joyce; Jeffrey, Stevenson, and Archer; Riley, Comrie, and Blythe; Dean, Shand, Cunliffe, Vincent, Twigg, Jones, and Tellum. Supporters of the club may take advantage of the following trains to Luton from St. Pancras:—12.23 and 1.5, returning 5.40, 2s. 6d.; N.L.R., from Poplar and Bow 12.25, returning Luton (G.N.R.), 2s. 9d."

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Watford fancy their chances against Leicester, for a writer in the "Post" says:—"Watford have a distinct chance of entering the next round, if sound half-back play is forthcoming. The Fosse appear to be going from bad to worse in the First Division of the League, and though on paper they are a class above Watford, one must remember that the locals, with all their shortcomings, are awkward customers to tackle at Cassio-road, and are as keen as mustard on preventing anyone lowering their flag on the West Herts enclosure."

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Biggar is establishing rather a striking record for Watford. He has not missed a Southern League match since he joined the club in 1904-5 and on Saturday he brought his total appearances up to 230. In 1904-5 he played 53 times; 1905-6, 56; 1906-7, 53; 1907-8, 43; and so far this season he has defended the breach on 25 occasions. The matches he has missed have been either friendlies or South-Eastern League encounters, and these can be counted on one hand. Is not F. Hawkes' record as good as the above?

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None of the Southern League clubs having given notice by Dec. 31st of their intention to leave that tourney at the end of the present season, any club which now leaves will be called upon to pay £500 according to the rules. The most recent proposal for the strengthening of the League is that of Queen's Park Rangers, who urge that the best solution of a difficult problem is for the organisation to join the English League and form a Third Division. They have asked the other clubs to agree to the signing of a requisition calling a special meeting to consider the matter.

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Many fine matches and one or two surprises marked the opening round of the Amateur Cup. The most remarkable game was that between Ilford and Romford (for whom A. E. Jones played at centre-forward), at Ilford. Play was extremely keen and exciting, and when at half-time Romford led by 4 goals to 1 the success of the visitors seemed assured. Ilford, however, rallied in splendid style in the second half, and the forwards, playing in irresistible manner, pulled the game round and made the result a 4-all draw.

A writer in the "Football Evening News" says:—I am extremely sorry to see that the obnoxious practice of buying the venues of Cup-ties has crept into amateurism. Luton Clarence, a very go-ahead little Bedfordshire team, were induced to sell their ground rights in to-day's F.A. Amateur Cup-tie for £15, Chesham Town being the buyers. I don't remember the thing occurring before—at any rate, in the South; and if this is so, a very dangerous precedent has been created. It is bad enough, and totally opposed to all the tenets of sport, when a professional organisation—admittedly money-seeking—sells its "birth-right"; but if amateur clubs do the same, well, goodness knows what things are coming to. Happenings of this kind are undoubtedly big arguments in favour of the A.F.A. Sometimes it is necessary, I know, to play matches on different grounds to those indicated in the draw, but to sell the venue of an amateur match—words fail one. There is evidently something rotten in the state of Denmark.

A well-known London weekly gives what is supposed to be a portrait in caricature of Bob Hawkes, but the only clue to identity is the name underneath. In the accompanying notes, Bob comes in for some criticism as well as praise, and it is said:—"He is tremendously keen on his own Club and all that appertains thereto. For years past—it must be getting on for ten now, I think—he has been the life and soul of the Bedfordshire Southern Leaguers. His consistency and his immunity from serious accidents have been remarkable; while his enthusiasm and his willingness to play almost anywhere and everywhere when occasion has arisen, have made him quite the most popular man in Luton. And his fame and popularity are by no means confined to strawhatdom. Everyone knows and likes him, and wherever he happens to be playing you will hear shouts of approval and 'Played, Bobbie,' and 'Good old Bobbie.' Of course, most of the big clubs of the land have cast longing eyes at him from time to time, but Hawkes is not only intensely loyal to Luton, but he is also a staunch amateur." It will be news to some of Bob's friends in Luton to learn that "in ordinary every-day life he is engaged in the furniture-making trade." But so it is averred.