

The Southern League.

LUTON v. SOUTHAMPTON.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Southampton	nil.

Teams:—

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

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

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A free kick for Luton looked promising. F. Hawkes took the shot 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 had some result, but he passed to Inbridge, who shot high over.

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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.

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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 it all long before he did.

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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 with his foot to a pass forward by Fred Hawkes could not turn the ball sufficiently to make an attempt effective.

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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 play 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.

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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 play given by Menzies, but in fairness it should be said that he was so unwell that he really ought not to have been playing. He was well marked by Trueman, and Eastwood and Glover wanted a lot of beating.