

The Southern League.

LUTON v. NORWICH CITY.

Played at Luton on Wednesday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Norwich City	1 goal.

Teams:—

Luton—Jarvis; Chapman and Hedley; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Smith, Quinn, Moody, and Johnson.

Norwich—Beale; Hampson and Reynolds; Wolstenholme, Bushell, and French; Barnfather, Dunning, Ronaldson, Hubbard, and Allsopp.

Referee, Mr. A. Adams (Nottingham).

The weather yesterday was not very favourable for the opening match, but notwithstanding the rain, some two thousand people were present when Quinn kicked off. Later on there were nearly four thousand spectators, but the inclement weather must have kept many away. Last year the "gate" at the opening match realised £115.

It was a typical beginning-of-the-season game. Some people no doubt blamed the referee for blowing his whistle so often, but in my opinion he adopted the right course. At one period early in the first half there was an almost constant series of stoppages, and if Mr. Adams had not been firm then the players might have got out of hand. There were no bad fouls, but most of the players were very keen and used their weight to advantage.

"How did the Luton men shape?" is a question which must have been asked in the town many times last night. It can be best answered by saying that the goalkeeper, backs, and half-backs fulfilled expectations, but the forwards were not so good, taking the line as a whole, as Luton people have been used to seeing.

Luton's team was as advertised; it will be noticed that Hedley went to left back in order to allow Chapman to play in his usual position. Norwich, who had made the journey by motor, included some new men, some of whom were known to the spectators. Ronaldson operated in the centre for Southend last season, and on his left was Hubbard, the ex-Watford player. Barnfather and Wolstenholme played for Croydon Common last season, and Hampson hails from Rochdale. T. Allsopp again appeared at outside-left.

The first real attempt was made by Johnson, who received from Moody and put in a splendid cross shot while on the run. At the other end Allsopp found himself in possession near goal (following a throw-in), but he kicked the ball over. Brown forced the first corner, but it was cleared, and, the scene being again changed, Jones was cheered for robbing Ronaldson when he might have become dangerous. A chance next fell to Johnson, for the Norwich men thought he was offside and left him unmarked. Instead of working his way in, he ran to the line, and his centre went behind the other forwards.

Dunning, the player about whom so much has been written, made tracks for goal and sent out to Allsopp, who returned the ball. It was an awkward situation for the Luton defence, but F. Hawkes managed to get in a kick, conceding a corner. Bob gave another directly afterwards. When the ball came across from the corner Bob failed to trap it properly and almost presented Ronaldson with a fine opportunity. The Luton captain, however, recovered just in time, and the attack ended by Wolstenholme kicking wide.

Once more Dunning attracted notice, and this time he eluded the attentions of Hedley. Chapman rushed across and charged Dunning, enabling F. Hawkes to kick out. Then the Luton forwards got away in a line, but Quinn kept the ball too long and passed to Johnson, who was offside. After Allsopp had forced a corner, Brown did ditto giving Beale a warm handful with a high shot. Jones next tried his luck, but Smith was stopped for a foul on the goalkeeper.

A very good attempt was made by Moody, who, although hampered, essayed a rising shot which was a trifle too high. An attempted back-kick by Hedley in front of goal did not come off, but Chapman cleared. A hard shot from Johnson was saved by Beale. Then Luton were awarded a penalty. Smith was being marked by Wolstenholme, who "handled," and Hedley scored with a shot which no custodian could have saved. The offence, which occurred about two minutes before the interval, hardly seemed to warrant a penalty, and Luton were lucky to cross over with a lead.

Fred Hawkes gave away a corner directly after the resumption, but Jones cleared. A shot by F. Hawkes curled away from goal, and when Norwich got away, Jones nullified an effort by Allsopp. A long kick on the part of a Luton defender caused Quinn and Brown to rush forward. Quinn took the ball and was given offside. Brown, who could have reached it, was on-side. In an attack by Norwich, the ball went over Bob Hawkes to Barnfather, from whose centre Dunning scored rather easily.

With thirty-five minutes remaining for play there was plenty of time for other goals, but Norwich seemed to be more likely to meet with success than Luton—not because the home players were not having a fair share of the game, but because the forwards, or rather some of them, were lacking in resource. A long shot from Dunning travelled over the bar, and some time afterwards Allsopp made a bad mistake in touching the ball over the line when he should have centred to Ronaldson, who had presented him with the opportunity.

From a touch forward by Moody, Quinn seemed to have a chance, but Beale rushed out and cleared. In front of the Luton goal Hedley was smart enough to prevent Ronaldson from getting in his kick, and when the centre-forward did manage to get in a curling shot Jarvis was equal to it. Smith next attracted attention, but he did not have sufficient command of the ball, and Hampson rushing across, kicked out of play. Hampson was then slightly injured in a hot attack, but managed to put the ball behind for a corner.

In the last ten minutes Luton warmed to their work, and the spectators got quite enthusiastic. It was evident that Norwich were content to play for a draw, and Allsopp was frequently to be seen among the half-backs. Beale jumped up to a shot from Bob Hawkes, and almost fell as he was saving. Then Hedley tried a long shot which Beale gathered on the ground. From a free kick taken by Chapman, Quinn headed, but the ball went wide. In the closing minutes Luton were awarded a free kick and two corners, but the score remained unaltered.

Two of the best men in the Luton team were Hedley and Brown. The former evidently did not extend himself in the practice matches. By his display yesterday he showed that he is one of the best backs who have played for the Club. Brown was not given much to do in the first half, but he was fed more after the interval, and generally made good use of the chances that came his way. It is a great pity that in private life he is so situated that he may not become a regular player. He is well worth keeping if a way out of the difficulty can be found.

At the close of yesterday's match I had no reason to regret even one word of the notes which will be found on an inside page. Everyone who has watched Quinn will agree that he is too fond of keeping the ball when he might part with it to advantage. Perhaps a course of Southern League football will cure him of this habit, which is certainly too pronounced. Smith's only fault is a tendency to get offside. Moody was as good as ever. Johnson did one or two good things—he was loudly cheered for that first shot of his—but his form yesterday did not shake my conviction that Stansfield is the more suitable man for the position.