

Southern League.

WITH LUTON TOWN.

FIRST HOME WIN.

TWO GOALS IN A MINUTE.

By "Vigilant."

Luton Town broke their sequence of drawn games at home yesterday, when, to the delight of some 3,000 spectators, they vanquished their nearest professional neighbours, Watford, in fine style. Keen rivalry is always looked for when these teams meet, and expectations of a strenuous contest were realised to the full last evening. Too often encounters between near rivals degenerate into a sorry exhibition of rough play and foul tactics, but, thanks to the firm and tactful manner in which the game was handled by the referee, there was never any danger of it suffering in this respect. The result was we had a fine sporting game of a ding dong character from start to finish, and Luton spectators will certainly not complain if this standard of home match is maintained right through the season.

The game was all the more pleasing to the Blues' followers because of the fact that their favourites gained a distinctly welcome victory, and that in spite of being without Bob Hawkes and Moody. It did not always appear likely to be so, for Watford were on level terms at the change of ends, and the issue was still an open one a quarter of an hour before the finish. Then a brilliant five minutes produced a couple of the loveliest goals one could wish to see, and this settled the point, the Herts team, by four goals to two, suffering their third Southern League defeat of the season.

The Watford team differed considerably from that which was beaten by 1-0 at Luton last Boxing Day, but there were six of last season's players in the side. Biggar, the well-known goal-keeper, has not yet recovered from the injury he sustained in the opening match, and Higgins, the local man, was again between the posts. The teams lined out as follow:

Luton.—Jarvis; Chapman and Hedley; F. Hawkes, Jones and Trueman; Brown, Quinn, Smith, Moore and Stansfield.

Watford.—Higgins; Lockett and Betts; Kent, Fayers and Grieve; Fyfe, MacLaine, Cleaver, Squires and Moore.

Referee.—Mr. D. Hammond, Heywood, Lancs.

There was little in the choice of ends, and both teams were quick to settle down to bright football. The Blues lost no time in making tracks for the town end goal, which was their objective in the first half, and Higgins had to save in the first minute from both Moore and Brown, while Moore also forced a corner. Watford retaliated hotly, and their supporters became very enthusiastic as Jarvis was twice called upon to handle shots from MacLaine. One of these brought Dick to his knees, and he was doubtless glad to have Fred Hawkes near at hand to throw out to.

Abe Jones seemed as delighted as the crowd at his re-appearance. The back of his neck was plastered up, but he was soon in the thick of it, evidently enjoying himself immensely. A lofty kick of his sent Moore through, and Harold Stansfield was given an opening, but Lockett cleverly relieved. Trueman returned with a beauty, and a loud appeal for "hands" greeted Betts as he came out with the ball, but it was not entertained. For some minutes there was a bombardment of the Watford goal, Jones testing Higgins with a hot one, while Quinn just landed by the wrong side of the upright.

Fred Hawkes was repeatedly cheered for his pretty work, and from one of his centres Smith headed on to Moore. Only the goalkeeper barred the way, but the inside left could not get to the ball in time. Still the goalkeeper was unable to make an effective clearance, and, returning with a smart "header," Abe missed by inches.

Although they were doing by far the greater part of the attacking, Luton were not the first to score. Hedley, in attempting to beat the opposing forwards, instead of clearing into touch, was dispossessed by MacLaine, and Fyfe was set on the move. When tackled, he returned to MacLaine, and the latter tested Jarvis with a stinging shot. Dick caught the ball, but before he could clear it was knocked out of his grasp by Squires, and Moore shot in from a very difficult angle.

It was an altogether unexpected goal, and the equaliser two minutes later was not less of a surprise. The crowd could not realise it for a moment, and when they did they yelled like beings possessed. Luton had previously gained a couple of unproductive corners, and from some scrambling play on the extreme left Stansfield let fly into the centre with a right-footer. Betts rushed across and missed, and the goalkeeper clean misjudged it, and, running out, saw it screw behind him into the opposite corner.

Some fine work by the Watford forwards immediately followed. A hot shot by Cleaver came direct to Jarvis, and was quickly thrown away. Smith became prominent by the accuracy with which he dispatched the outside wingers off. From one of these passes the ball was given over to Quinn, who made a fine effort to break through. Once he was robbed, but he quickly recovered and got by the backs. Higgins came out to meet him, and Quinn endeavoured to steer the ball by, but the goalkeeper brought off a splendid save on his left side. A minute later the inside left had another try, and again found Higgins equal to the occasion. Then Smith called upon the goalkeeper, and before the pressure was relieved Fred Hawkes tried to break through, and was unfairly brought down within half a yard of the penalty area. The ruse adopted by Jones and Smith over the free kick did not, however, come off.

A shot by Jones spelt danger for Watford. Smith failed to get his head to it, and this misled the goalkeeper, who only got the ball away in time to stave off Quinn's rush. A splendidly placed corner led to some exciting play in the goal mouth, but the defence prevailed. The Blues were frequently getting to close quarters, Abe Jones heading in fine style, while the placing of the halves and backs was all that could be desired. From a free kick placed by Fred Hawkes, Quinn tipped the leather to Smith, who turned it into goal with a smart overhead kick, and the goalie might have been excused had he been caught napping.

Watford at last broke away. Jarvis easily dealt with a shot from Fyfe, but a run on the other wing was not so easily broken up. Twice Chapman barred the way. Squires eluded him and sent

to Maclaine, who gave Dick a nasty header to deal with. From this, Quinn broke away, and the Watford men were barefaced in their efforts to bring him down. Once he recovered from a trip, but he was afterwards brought down near the penalty area. The free kick was placed out to the left by Jones. Stansfield failed to trap it, and instead of leaving it to Quinn, ran across the goal and interfered with the inside right, with the result that a gift goal was missed.

Amends were made for this seven minutes before the interval, Moore jumping well into the air and scoring a fine goal from a corner kick finely placed by Stansfield. For a few minutes Luton seemed likely to add to their lead. A dodgy run carried Brown to the goal line, and his centre was deftly turned goalwards by Smith, who was unlucky to find Higgins on the spot. The goalie was tackled by Smith and Quinn, but he threw away, and a foul was given against the impetuous forwards.

Trueman was unfortunately conspicuous with a couple of mistakes in the last two or three minutes of the half. He placed his side in danger by kicking into the goal mouth, but Cleaver missed a glorious chance with a wretched shot. A free kick against Quinn brought Luton another anxious moment or two. Maclaine was allowed to run through under the impression that he was offside, and a goal seemed certain, but Jarvis brought off a marvellous save at the expense of a corner. The play following on this was very exciting. Chapman and Fred Hawkes in turn endeavoured to relieve the siege, but Watford were not to be beaten off, and eventually Moore sent across the goal mouth. Cleaver shot out his foot, but could not reach the ball, which came to Trueman. The Blues left-half gave a lusty kick, meaning, of course, to clear into touch, but to the chagrin of the home players and their supporters the ball found a resting place in the net. Twice after this Jarvis had to save in quick succession from Maclaine and Foyers, and "lemon time" arrived with the score:

LUTON	2
WATFORD	2

In consequence of the uncertainty as to the light holding out, the game had been commenced some few minutes before the advertised time, and, contrary to the usual practice, the team did not leave the field. The Blues set up a strong pressure on the restart, and from a long punt by Jones, Smith came near getting through. He was tackled on either side, however, and his shot was not effective. A centre from Brown led to some exciting play. Smith was undoubtedly robbed of a chance by a foul trick, but there was no excuse for Moore missing an open goal. He was only about four yards off, yet he sent the ball flying over the bar. Fred Hawkes was the next to become prominent. He followed up a nice pass to Smith, and when the centre-forward broke down took up the running and got clear, but his wretched shot quite took the gilt off the brilliant work which had preceded it.

A run by the Watford right saw Squires with a capital opening from Fyfe's centre. He let drive at once, and Jarvis never saw the ball, but fortunately it did not find the desired mark. Luton were soon attacking again, and Higgins, running out to intercept a flying centre from Stansfield, was dispossessed. Two or three of the Blues were on the ground with him struggling with the ball, but the goalkeeper never lost control, and eventually threw out of harm's way. Then, from a centre by Brown, Moore distinguished himself with a crashing shot, which was only a trifle too high.

Just at this stage of the game Jarvis distinguished himself with a series of particularly fine saves. Hedley let Maclaine through, and Squires was admirably placed, and, although harassed by Chapman, made a beautiful shot from the left foot. Jarvis just reached it and cleared in his very best style. Then Fyfe got away, and, getting the better of a race with Jones, turned in a trimmer. Dick came out and snapped it up, and as he threw away Cleaver bundled into him and the pair came a nasty crash together.

Relieved only by one sparkling run by Jones and Brown and a characteristic centre by Ernie, the Watford pressure lasted for some minutes. Eventually Smith broke away, and in stopping him Betts came down heavily and hurt his head. For a minute or two the visitors kept their opponents in check, but the Blues were now playing in irresistible form, and their work was quite the best of the match. Brown came out with the ball from some scrambling play on the right, and a glorious centre passed over the heads of the backs. Smith and Moore were waiting to receive it, and the centre's head darted into the air like a flash and sent the ball spinning into the net. It was a grand goal, and the crowd were delighted, for there was only a quarter of an hour or so more to run.

But there was more to come. From the kick-off Brown made another fine run and another fine centre. Smith's head was again there, but the goalkeeper was waiting and sent away. Not to be outdone, Brown came again, and met with the same support from his centre. This time Higgins rushed out, but his plan proved unsuccessful, and for the second time within a minute Smith showed how goals should be scored.

More excitement followed, for Luton were now keeping up a very strong pressure. They forced a corner, and Brown's aim was so unerring that Higgins had to leave his charge and concede another corner. The next time one of the backs headed away, but Jones prevented relief and gave to Ernie, who sent in another lovely centre. Moore attempted to emulate Smith, but was wide of the mark.

The Watford outside might eventually transferred with a very clever run, which, in spite of the persistent tackling of Trueman, he wound up with a well-judged centre. Squires, left with only the goalkeeper to beat, shot wide, and this was the last look in the visitors had. In the closing stages the Blues were always round their opponents' goal. Quinn made two fine shots, both deserving to score, and a couple of corners provoked considerable excitement, but the necessary finishing touches were not forthcoming, and Luton had to be content to see the final score read:

LUTON		4
WATFORD		2

COMMENTS ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

Yesterday's was the third Luton match in succession to produce half a dozen goals, but it was the first of the three in which the Blues had gained the majority of the goals. The winning pair were beauties, and now that Smith has shown us the way they should be scored we shall want to see a lot more.

A week ago "Tam," a London football writer, told us that the Luton forwards had not found their form, but let me tell him they are rapidly improving. They do better every time out, and no one who witnessed that last quarter of an hour yesterday will say they do not possess goal-scoring abilities.

Ernie Brown was hardly so taking as usual in the earlier stages of the game, but in the second half he was simply irresistible, and in the praise that is awarded to Smith for his two grand goals the outside right must have a big share for the admirable centres which contributed so much to the actual scoring. Quinn, too, is evidently coming along very nicely. He passes well, is losing a lot of his indecision, and promises in the near future to justify his reputation as a goal-getter.

Of Smith nothing more need be said than that he justifies, at every appearance, his removal to the responsible position of centre. His feeding of Brown yesterday was splendid, and so long as the outside right is in form, his efforts in this direction will not be wasted. Stansfield played as well as ever, and Moore has evidently gained valuable experience from his Southern League games. There need be no fear of drafting him into the first team at any time.

Fred Hawkes was again the leading figure in the Blues' half-back line. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that he was the best man on the field. Abe Jones ran him close, and was always invaluable. It was unfortunate for Trueman that he presented Watford with their second goal. Otherwise he played a very sound game, though he tired considerably in the second half. He is much speedier than he would appear, and he never shirks work.

Hedley was as clever and polished as usual, but made rather more mistakes than is his wont. Chapman added to his reputation as a "spoiler," and his tackling made up for his kicking deficiencies. Jarvis was Jarvis, and that is saying a good deal. Dick surely cannot have a superior in the Southern League, judging from the displays he has given this season.