

Southern League.

WITH LUTON TOWN.

POINTS DIVIDED AT WATFORD.

Offside Goal in the Last Five Minutes.

By "Vigilant."

A rank offside goal scored in the last five minutes of the match at Watford yesterday denied Luton Town the satisfaction of repeating their feat of last season, when they took four Southern League points out of their Hertfordshire rivals. "Same old tale," I guess some will exclaim as they read this, but nevertheless no impartial person present at the match would deny the accuracy of the statement. It is as unpalatable to the writer to make excuses for loss of points as it is for readers to peruse them. Still, it is due to the players who wear the Luton colours to publish the fact when a referee's mistake robs them of a richly deserved victory, such as was the case yesterday.

The offside goal referred to made the result one goal all, and I hasten to add that the Blues only deserved to win because of the fact that they were the better of two poor teams. Luton were a good way ahead of their rivals, but they did not display the superiority they should have done. An early goal appeared to induce them to take things very leisurely, and they never afterwards seemed able to contend successfully with the kick and rush tactics of the homesters. The result was an exceedingly poor game—one of the poorest it has been my lot to witness between professional teams, and contrasting most unfavourably with the sparkling display we witnessed at Luton last week.

Most delightful weather conditions attended the fixture, but it was nothing like the attraction as when the game was decided on Good Friday last season. Though a large party went from Luton by train or road, the attendance at Cassior-road could not have been more than 2,500. Luton had the same team as represented them at Leyton, Moody for Moore being the only change from the side which beat Watford last week. The homesters made several changes. Biggar had charge of the goal in place of Higgins, and Fayers, Grieve and Squires were absentees. I heard "Tiny" refused to play on account of having been put in the Reserve team for the last match. The places were filled by the inclusion of H. Smith (a new centre-forward), T. White (an outside right from Chesham) and Skinner (a full-back from Southend), who was played in the forward line. The half-back and forward lines were entirely reconstituted—with not a great deal of satisfaction.

The teams lined out as follow:

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

Watford.—Biggar; Lockett and Betts; Cleaver, Kent and Fyfe; T. White, Skinner, H. Smith, MacLaine and Moore.

There was little in the choice of ends, and this was a fortunate circumstance for the Blues, as Fred Hawkes, who captained the side, once again demonstrated that he is not an adept at the art of winning the toss. For some minutes play was nothing more than a scramble, Smith being the first to exhibit anything approaching cleverness. He got Brown away with a delightful pass, but Betts effected a clever clearance. A corner, conceded to Watford by Chapman, caused Jarvis to rush out to clear. Fyfe returned a lofty shot, but it gave Dick no difficulty. At both ends the backs showed up in fine style. Lockett smartly averted danger from Stansfield, and Hedley was rather lucky to get in the way of a shot from Smith.

Less than ten minutes' play brought a goal lead to the Blues. It came rather as a surprise. A fine run by Smith was brought to a standstill by Betts, but Fred Hawkes prevented the homesters clearing, and, by a stylish piece of work, he placed Stansfield in possession. Lockett got his head to Harold's centre and placed the ball to Moody, who, taking deliberate aim, landed his shot over the heads of the backs into the far corner of the net. It was a splendidly-judged shot, and Biggar was completely taken by surprise. The goalie did not stir an inch—and you should have heard what the crowd said about him!

Watford ought really to have been on level terms within three minutes. Jarvis showed poor judgment in running out to meet a centre from White, and, missing the ball, left Skinner with an open goal. The new inside-right was less than half-a-dozen yards away, and, figuratively speaking, had a week in which to take aim. Nevertheless he was two or three yards out with his shot.

The Blues after this settled down to play very pretty combination, but polished as their work was it did not meet with the success which attended the rough and ready tactics of the homesters. The efforts of the Watford halves and forwards at combination were crude to an extreme, but their dash covered up their mistakes so effectually that they were near goal quite as often as the Lutonians. Good finish was, however, lacking on both sides.

With a crowd of forwards round him, Jarvis smartly handed out a troublesome "skier," and at the other end Biggar was tackled by Moody as he was in the act of dealing with a lofty centre from

Stansfield, but was unmoved. A series of mistakes by the Watford halves led to the Blues getting to close quarters, and Biggar had to fist out a smart shot from Brown. Smith was prominent on one or two occasions, once spoiling a good piece of work by handling when within shooting range.

Following an attack by the Watford left, Hedley placed his side in danger by a lofty kick in the mouth of goal. Jarvis rushed out to fist away, but did not get the ball properly, and it was a relief to the Blues' supporters when the whistle sounded for an illegal charge upon the goalkeeper. Stansfield and Moody ran down in fine style and transferred to Smith when within close range. It was not a good opening, and the centre-forward made a splendid attempt from an awkward position, but was not equal to the effort.

The crowd were saying hard things about the weak display of the Watford attack, and although it had improved since the start it deserved all the criticism it was subjected to. Nevertheless, towards the end of the second half a couple of free kicks for fouls led to a prolonged attack by the homesters. The first was made poor use of, but the second was splendidly placed, and Jarvis had to smartly clear from Smith. An exciting minute or two round the goal was put an end to by Fred Hawkes, who left his wing and rushed across to rob Skinner in the nick of time. The Blues could not, however, relieve the pressure, and after Maclaine had shot wide, a bad kick by Hedley came near letting Luton down. Jarvis rushed out for the ball, and met with opposition from the home centre-forward. To save his charge he had to lie on the ball, and with three forwards round him he experienced great difficulty in extricating himself from a nasty position. A minute later he literally fisted the ball off the head of Smith, and, thanks to these two fine saves, Luton were enabled to cross over with the score:

LUTON	1
WATFORD	0

Watford were the first to get dangerous after the restart. Maclaine got to close quarters in the first half minute. An appeal for offside against him was not entertained, but it proved of no account, as his shot was a very poor one and did not trouble Jarvis. A pretty run by the Luton right transferred matters, and Brown got by the back with an exceedingly clever hook, but Kent came across and conceded a corner. From this, Jones headed in and Biggar effected a nice clearance.

The home forwards made the running for some time, but their work was spoiled by their ineffectiveness near goal. Stansfield twice broke away in clever style, and Quinn failed to utilise a fair chance. Still, the Blues' stay in their opponents' territory was but brief, and the efforts of the homesters to equalise aroused great excitement. Chapman was fortunately handy to meet a header from close range, and conceded a corner. From this, Jarvis once more had to leave his charge to clear, but try as they would the Blues could not get the ball away, and a hot shot from Kent gave Dick an anxious moment. Tackled by two opponents, he was unable to clear effectually, and it was lucky for Luton that Moore put weakly behind.

When the Blues eventually got down to the other goal their attack was very promising, and Biggar had to come out to save three times in quick succession. First Brown and Smith troubled him with capital efforts, and then he robbed Moody before he could shoot. While the custodian was away, Stansfield gained possession, but Betts spoiled his shot. At the other end MacLaine was unlucky to have a shot rebound out of danger off the back of Hedley's head, and two of the halves missed a fine chance through a misunderstanding.

A miskick by Lockett let Moody in, and the inside left had no one but the goalkeeper to beat. As he steadied to shoot, Biggar came out of goal, and, to the delight of the home supporters, tipped the shot over the bar. It was a smart if somewhat lucky save. The corner led to a deal of exciting play, and a free kick against Watford threatened danger, but Moody skied over the bar. The home goalkeeper had many opportunities to distinguish himself during this period of the game, and he did splendidly. Twice he intercepted smart centres from Brown and also smartly cleared from Stansfield twice in succession.

Jarvis at the other end made the most miraculous save of all, however. A frightfully bad kick by Trueman placed Moore in splendid position, and from his centre Smith was left with only the goalkeeper in the way. Jarvis, without a moment's hesitation, pounced down and took the ball from the centre's toe, clearing in wonderfully fine style. Biggar had another turn a moment later. He was the only obstacle in the way of Stansfield, and he just managed to deflect a cross shot across the goal, Brown being unable to keep the ball in play.

Both teams were now fighting hard, and six minutes before time Watford were presented with an equalising goal. Quinn, heading in the wrong direction, sent Moore off. The centre came to Smith, who was yards offside, and with ample time at his disposal the centre-forward had Jarvis well beaten. From this point to the finish Watford did nearly all the pressing, and attacked so hotly that the Blues had all their work cut out to prevent them gaining the lead. Once Hedley tried to break through, but Brown, to whom his pass went, was brought down. From the free kick Moody headed in, to find Biggar was on the qui vive. Jarvis had to save more than once, but the homesters' effort came too late, and they had to be content for the final score to read:

LUTON	1
WATFORD	1

Though the Blues undoubtedly merited a victory, they did not do themselves justice. Their play was completely upset by the kick and rush methods of their opponents, and after the first quarter-of-an-hour they lost much of their effectiveness. This being so, detailed comments would be superfluous. Brown, Smith and Stansfield were the best of the forwards, and Fred Hawkes was supreme at half, though Trueman again fully did himself justice. The backs were inclined to be faulty, and even Jarvis, in spite of his wonderful save, was hardly as sure as usual. He ran out far too often to make one feel comfortable.

Watford were remarkably strong in defence, but their forward play entirely lacked good qualities. They have to thank Biggar, Lockett and Betts for being saved from a heavy defeat.