

FROM THE

FOOTBALL FIELD.

Southern League.

LUTON'S FIFTH WIN.

EXETER CITY OUTPLAYED.

TWO GOALS IN LAST QUARTER OF AN HOUR.

By "Vigilant."

Never were two points more thoroughly earned than those which Luton gained at the expense of Exeter City on Saturday afternoon. As in the match with the Queen's Park Rangers, the Blues were in sparkling form, and there was never any question about their superiority, but up till the last quarter of an hour it looked as if the homesters would have to be content with a draw. They could do everything but score; their luck was atrocious. A goal to the good after two and-a-half minutes' play, they penned the Exeter men in for quite three-fourths of the first half, and yet a really grand goal enabled the visitors to change ends on equal terms. So the state of the score-board remained until the closing stages, but the foul tactics of some of the Exeter players which, thanks to the leniency of the referee, had had a good deal to do with Luton's failure to add to their total, eventually brought about their downfall. Two goals were put on within a few minutes of each other as the direct result of free kicks, and thus gave Luton their most pronounced victory, in the matter of goals, since the defeat of Watford midway through September.

Exeter last season vanquished the Blues on their own ground by two clear goals, and with ideal football weather prevailing a crowd of over 6,000 assembled to greet them. The team from the West were newcomers to the Southern League last season, and they did exceedingly well in finishing fifth from the top. Their present position in the League table would give one the impression that they are not as good a side as last season, but a regular follower of the team assured me on Saturday that this is not the case, and that their non-success is only attributable to the fact that three-fourths of the fixtures they have fulfilled have been on foreign soil. At home last Wednesday they vanquished Portsmouth by no fewer than five goals to nil, and all of the team who did duty on that occasion came to Luton with the exception of the old International centre-half, Chadwick. Luton made an altogether unexpected change from the side which met Queen's Park Rangers. McCurdy, who has played but four times, and only on one occasion with Hedley, was dropped, and Potts was brought from the Reserves into the Southern League team for the first time.

Mr. R. G. Pitchford, of Sheffield, was the referee, and the teams lined up as under:

Luton.—Jarvis; Hedley and Potts; F. Hawkes, Jones and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Quinn, Smith, Moody and Stansfield.

Exeter City.—Crossthwaite; Crelly and Jones; Atkinson, Tierney and Hartley; Green, Watson, Harrison, Bell and Garside.

The opening of the game was of a particularly sensational character. Winning the toss and setting the Blues to face the sun and a keen wind, Exeter ran down from the kick-off and within half a minute Harrison had the ball in the net, but, fortunately for the homesters, the whistle had gone for offside. The next minute saw the Exeter goal have a narrow escape. Stansfield initiated the movement and dropped the ball nicely into the centre. Smith smartly snapped up the centre and effected a square pass to Moody, who again sent across with unerring judgment. Smith could not, however, get near enough to convert, and had to be content to head on to the right wing. Brown was in waiting, and, running in, got the ball back to the centre. His pass left Stansfield with a splendid chance of putting a successful finish to the movement he had started, for the defence had been completely outwitted, but he blazed away rashly and skied the ball across to the opposite wing, and although Brown made a big effort to atone for his colleague's failure it came too late, and the defence prevailed.

It was an early disappointment for the crowd, but it was quickly forgotten, for play had not been in progress three minutes when the Blues scored, and Garside had a promising opening frustrated by an offside ruling, and from the free kick Moody used his head with such admirable judgment that Smith was able to dash through between the two backs. With commendable alacrity he let drive, and, to the consternation of the goalkeeper and the delight of the home supporters, the ball rebounded from one upright across the goal to the other post and then slithered into the net.

This success had a rousing effect on the Luton team, who played with a vim that was most delightful to watch. Smith was soon off again, only to be pulled up for getting offside, and then Brown sped away on the wing, and, getting the better of the half and the back, swung a beauty across. Moody got there with his head, but Crosswhite was on the alert and smartly cleared. Yet again was Bert prominent with a smart scoring effort from a free kick, but it was a trifle wide of the mark. Brown was the next to show up. He completely outwitted the opposition, and the ball came across just right for Smith, who seemed certain to beat the goalkeeper, when he was obstructed by Tierney. Smith evidently appeared to think he had been fouled, and words ensued, followed by a vicious kick on the part of the Exeter man at the Blues' centre. The Lutonians clamoured for a penalty, but the referee did not see fit to go this length, but although he gave Tierney a good talking to. In any case the Blues were unlucky not to have added to their score, because from the throw down just outside the penalty area the ball was sent out to Stansfield, and his centre was half-volleyed in brilliant style by Quinn, only for Jones to intercept a certain scoring shot. The resultant corner kick afforded a chance for Moody, but he slipped up as he shot, and consequently sent wide.

The visitors were quite outplayed, the superiority of the Blues being most pronounced in every respect. Abe Jones and Bob Hawkes were backing up the clever combination of the forwards in very fine style, and Hedley kicked with splendid length. The only source of weakness was Potts, who though he kicked well enough, displayed a fatal hesitancy in tackling. The visitors evidently detected this, and they were always concentrating upon their wing, but their dangerous movements were few and far between. Some of the defenders were not very particular as to the tactics they employed so long as they achieved their aim, and the crowd did not hesitate to express their disapprobation. Tierney had a very warm time of it, and Atkinson got into disfavour for a dirty trick upon Stansfield.

The Blues' front line were not, however, to be daunted, even by foul tactics, and the Exeter goalkeeper was kept very busy. He had to come out to get away a centre from Stansfield and a minute later Crelly came to his aid in heading away another centre from the same player. This was the outcome of pretty combination by Smith and Bob Hawkes, and Bob subsequently also placed Moody in possession, but Bert's shot was beaten down. Smith was frequently in the picture, but the attentions bestowed upon him were very marked. Once he was fouled just outside the penalty area, and from the free kick he seemed a certain scorer, but again he was brought down. Three of the visitors set a watch for him, and it was apparent that they intended stopping him at all costs. One attempted to edge him off the ball, but Smith was not seriously disturbed, and then, just as he was about to shoot, another bundled him in the back and sent him sprawling. It was a most

deliberate affair, and the Blues were thoroughly justified in asking for a penalty. It was not, however, given them, and the crowd became uncomplimentary towards the referee.

Following this incident Garside was enabled to get away on his own, and his centre left Harrison with a good chance. The defence contributed to it with some bungling, but Harrison's effort was a feeble one. By lying up well between the backs Harrison managed to give the defence several anxious moments. His finish was, however, not good, and Jarvis had nothing like the work that devolved upon Crossthwaite. A brilliant run by Brown led to a sparkling piece of combination in which all the forwards but Moody took part. The finish was left with Stansfield, and Harold's shot was a stinger, which Crossthwaite found too hot to hold. Moody was on the goalkeeper like a flash, but, as Crossthwaite had not the ball in his possession a free kick accrued to Exeter. This did not give any very substantial relief, for Brown worked back with marked cleverness. With Moody and Smith harassing the goalkeeper, Ernie's centre seemed likely to take effect, but Jones (not Abe) came to the rescue and headed out for a corner.

From the corner kick Harrison got away and the Luton goal experienced its narrowest escape of the half. The centre forward got by all the defence except Potts, but the latter cast all his nervousness aside and brought him down finely a few yards from goal. Simultaneously Jarvis dashed out and kicked away. He made the mistake, however, of starting to follow the ball up, and though he afterwards turned back the goal was completely open when Bell shot. Had the shot been a low one a goal could not have been averted, and there was a general sigh of relief when Bell was seen to dispatch the ball heavenwards.

With this exception all the exciting incidents were at the Exeter end. Quinn followed up some really clever individual work with a fine left footer which missed by inches. Bob Hawkes, who was putting in a great deal of really fine work, also had a try, without success, and then Stansfield encountered very bad luck. Brown got the ball into the centre in his very best style, and Stansfield ran in and took it, only to have a splendid shot beaten down. Though rankly offside, the Exeter men were allowed to go on, and they got to close quarters, only to shoot weakly. Their next attack was a better one. Potts let Green through, and Hedley came across, but was outwitted. Centreing from the goal line Green dispatched the ball across to the other wing, but Bell, who received from Garside, could make no headway, and his pass to Harrison was snapped up by Bob Hawkes. Play was quickly carried to the other end by means of delightful passing, but Stansfield shot weakly when close in. Clever work by Abe gave Harold another chance, and his centre was splendidly taken by Moody's useful head, Crossthwaite tipping the ball over the bar. It was a splendid save, but a trifle lucky. Great excitement followed the corner kick. Jones cleverly headed in and found the goalkeeper again on the spot.

These escapes were as nothing compared to one which the visitors enjoyed five minutes before the change of ends. A sparkling round of passing enabled Moody to run in between the backs. His shot was a brilliant effort, but once more Crossthwaite kept his citadel intact. He had to go full length to get the ball, and the goal was quite unprotected when Quinn met the rebound with another magnificent shot, which struck the crossbar obliquely and sent the ball out to the other wing. Stansfield smartly gathered and returned to the centre, and Quinn essayed a further shot, which struck one of the backs and went for a corner. Truly Luton were dogged with ill-luck, and we were all musing on Exeter's good fortune to be only a goal to the bad when, a minute before the interval, an unexpected equaliser came. The left wing broke away, and when both the backs had been drawn the ball was sent across to the other wing. Green fastened on it and, beating off Bob Hawkes, had a shot on his own. It was as fine an effort as one could wish to see, and Jarvis was absolutely baffled. The ball sped across the wing like a flash, and entered the opposite corner of the net only an inch or so under the crossbar. Thus the teams crossed over with the score:

LUTON		1
EXETER		1

No one could help sympathising with the Blues in thus being deprived of their lead. The play fully entitled them to a margin of three goals, but the Exeter goal had borne a charmed existence. It was precisely the same story in the second half, though in the early stages the visitors became a little more aggressive. They were the first to get to close quarters, taking combination giving Harrison a chance which he made poor use of. Luton's luck was, however, soon to show itself again. Receiving from Fred Hawkes, Brown worked inwards, and his shot had the goalkeeper well beaten, but the ball literally ran along the front of the cross-bar and eventually came back into play. A lovely centre by Stansfield kept up the pressure, and the goalkeeper had to rush out and touch away. The ball came to Quinn, but, with only the goalkeeper to beat, he failed to keep it low, and blazed over the bar.

Smith was the next to get close, a clever pass from Bob Hawkes placing him in his favourite position between the backs. His shot was, however, feeble, and Crossthwaite had no difficulty in clearing. Quinn seemed to have a chance on receiving from the left wing, but, as he turned, a back barred the way and saved the shot at the expense of a corner. This led to several exciting moments. The kick was splendidly placed, and the headwork of the Blues was such that only a remarkable save by one of the backs prevented the downfall of the goal. Still the ball hovered round about, but the defence prevailed, and though Stansfield returned into the centre Fred Hawkes' shot was wide.

Exeter got going after this, and the situation was rather alarming when Bob Hawkes deftly took the ball off Harrison's toe and cleared. For some minutes the play was of a scrambling order, and then the Luton left got into action, and Moody tried a "pile-driver" from about twenty yards out, which gave Crossthwaite an anxious moment. Jones also raised the hopes of the crowd with a lovely shot which just skimmed the crossbar. Moody was very forceful, and on one occasion it was only a foul of a particularly flagrant character which prevented him scoring. He was hooked up from behind when having only the goalkeeper to beat, and the crowd became very angry with the referee for not awarding a penalty.

So the game went on, with Luton nearly always pressing and unable to drive their advantage home, until about a quarter of an hour before time. Then came a second goal for the Blues, and it was none the less welcome because it came so unexpectedly. During some scrambling play in the left corner the referee gave a foul against Atkinson. The kick was almost from the touchline, and Stansfield landed the ball amongst the players in the goal-mouth. There was a general mix up, and the visitors seemed to have again warded off danger when Fred Hawkes dashed in and landed the ball over the players' heads into the top of the net. Crossthwaite probably never saw it, and Fred nearly had his hands wrung off by his jubilant colleagues.

Exeter became thoroughly roused after this, and for some minutes it was a ding-dong struggle for mastery. The visitors' right wing got clear away, but Jarvis dashed out and cleared Green's centre in refreshing style. Fred Hawkes followed up his great goal by an equally great save when the Luton citadel was in danger. Then Stansfield got away on the left, but the goalkeeper got to his centre a second before Smith and touched it away. This gave Fred Hawkes another opportunity to show up. Gaining possession, he tried to break through, and, failing to get an opening, transferred to Moody, who gave the goalkeeper a hot one to deal with.

With seven minutes to go all doubts as to the result were set at rest by a third goal for Luton. During an exciting assault on the Exeter goal the two Joneses got at loggerheads, and the visiting player of that name fouled Luton's Abe, and was cautioned by the referee. The free kick was taken by Hedley, who sent it straight into goal. Abe and Moody simultaneously made tracks, and the goalkeeper became so flurried that he let the ball go clean through. In the remaining few minutes the Blues tried hard to increase their score. Crossthwaite came out to meet a lovely first-timer from Brown at the same time as Moody and Smith went for it, and Jack was sent yards, and, in addition, performed a series of somersaults. Stansfield missed by inches with a glorious hot, and the whistle sounded for "time" directly afterwards with the score:

LUTON	3
EXETER	1

COMMENTS ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

The sparkling form exhibited by the Luton team was very welcome in view of the cup tie next Saturday, and if the team only do as well at Brentford they will take a lot of beating. Goal scoring was the only direction in which they did not shine, and this was not their fault. Chances were missed,

of course—when aren't they? But, speaking generally, the work of the forwards left little for one to cavil at. It was purely bad luck that they did not score thrice as many goals. Crossthwaite kept a fine goal, but it was the happy knack of the backs and halves in getting in the way of deadly shots, coupled with their employment of foul tactics in the penalty area that kept the score so low.

It may be said at once that the forwards were in their very best form, and it is no disparagement to the others if Brown, Stansfield and Moody are singled out for special praise. Our outside wingers just now are as good as there are in the Southern League. Moody was always there when vigorous work was required, and he has, perhaps, not shown up better this season.

The halves were really great, and I should not like to say who of them did best. Bob Hawkes is playing as well as ever he did, and Abe Jones more than sustained his reputation as a glutton for work. Hedley at back was the admiration of everyone. His kicking was beautifully clean, and the effectiveness of his tackling compensated to a very large extent for the weakness of his partner in this direction. Potts' debut in Southern League football was anything but a success, and many are wondering why he should have been tried at this juncture. Most people thought he would have been given a trial before McCurdy was signed on, but it is a bit late in the day now, especially bearing in mind the fact that there is a cup tie next Saturday and Mac and Hedley have only had one match together. It would, of course, be unfair to judge Potts on one match, because he was evidently suffering from a very bad attack of nerves. Still, he is hardly likely to be given another trial in preference to McCurdy. But for his weakness Jarvis would have had hardly any work to do. As it was he was not overwhelmed, and his display was a worthy one, except that that old tendency to run out caused him to leave his goal in danger on one or two occasions.