

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

HEAVY DEFEAT AT COVENTRY.

Luton will not be likely to soon forget their visit to Lady Godiva's city, when they met with such a crushing defeat as has not fallen to their lot for many a long week. The fact is, the Blues were completely routed, and retired defeated by the big margin of six goals to two. Though that result does not look so bad on paper, for the best teams have their off-days, yet when one considers Coventry did a little themselves to help Luton to win, that issue is made to appear all the worse.

It is a fact that Coventry tried, if one may put it so, to help Luton to win; and if the Blues had only taken advantage of their opportunities they might have easily turned a reverse into a great victory. For instance, quite a big slice of luck fell to the visiting team during the first minute. The Luton forwards, who settled down immediately the sphere was set in motion, were quickly on the aggressive, though it did not look as if they were going to do anything very tangible, when Saul, who is a tower of strength in the Coventry defence, accidentally put through his own goal.

The visiting forwards for a time profited from this bit of luck, and Newbigging, the City custodian, was literally bombarded; Smith was particularly prominent with some sharp-shooting, Quinn was often dangerous, while Moody's headers were constantly a source of trouble to the home goalkeeper. However, Coventry found their feet before further disaster occurred, and Jarvis had a hot time of it. All the same, the Luton man did brilliantly between the uprights; it was indeed a marvel how Jarvis saved magnificent efforts by Smith, Buckle, and Tickle. Eventually, the home side was beaten off, but the Luton defence were only destined to have a momentary relief, because the next moment saw Arnold making desperate tracks for Luton's goal. Completely non-plussing the visiting defence, the Coventry man finished up with scoring a magnificent goal that gave the custodian no chance.

This was not all, for the City men soon came again, and the Luton defence once more found itself in serious difficulties. After a most determined attack, Smith, who was doing fine work in the Coventry ranks, gave his side the lead. This reverse, however, did not take the sting out of Luton—unless it was out of the backs—and the rushes of the forwards were always dangerous. Luton's left wing was particularly aggressive, and it took the united efforts of the home defence to hold the Luton men in check. A splendid feature of the game was the excellent centres from the left wing, and eventually success came. From one of these centres Johnson succeeded in beating Newbigging with a fine effort.

However, shortly after this the Luton defence once more broke down. The custodian stopped some hot shots, but the backs were not able to clear their lines, and in a very short time Buckle obtained the leading goal. To make matters worse, a penalty was shortly after this given to the home side. Bradley took the kick, and as might be expected, safely placed in the corner of the net. Right up to the interval there was practically only one team in it, and that was Coventry, who at half-time led by 4 goals to 2.

The Luton forwards were not given so much latitude in the second moiety, the Coventry halves paying particular attention to Moody and Quinn. Save for an occasional break-away, the Blues were kept on the defensive during the second 45 minutes. Luton's backs were very shaky, and the expected soon happened, Arnold notching a fifth goal. Even after this, Jarvis had all his work cut out to cope with the almost deadly shooting of the City forwards. Indeed, the custodian had once more to admit defeat, for after a determined attack, Tickle scored Coventry's sixth and final goal, the whistle going for time shortly afterwards.

As the score itself clearly indicates, the Luton defence was entirely responsible for the heavy defeat. The backs were extremely ineffective, especially in the second half, and according to the play, Coventry deserved to score more than a couple of goals in that moiety. There was no fault to be found with the Luton front line; the five men worked with rare precision, but in the second half they were weakly supported by their own halves, consequently the visiting attack was literally flutted.