

The Southern League.

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS v. LUTON.

Played at Park Royal on Saturday. Result:

Queen's Park Rangers ...	4 goals.
Luton	nil.

The teams were as under:—

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

Queen's Park Rangers—Shaw; Macdonald and Fidler; Morris, Hartwell, and Wake; A. G. Wyatt, Travers, W. Steer, Whyman, and Barnes.

Referee, Mr H. P. Lewis (Rotherham).

Kensal Rise, the old home of the Rangers, usually proved a happy hunting ground for Luton, but since they have possessed their present splendidly appointed pitch adjoining Park Royal Station, those visits have been far from successful. In Southern League circles the Rangers have this season been put down as one of the lucky clubs, for although they at present appear the most likely team to carry off the championship, scarcely anyone would claim them to be the best side in the competition. However, in football it needs a bit of luck at times to make a successful team, and by common consent Luton's opponents of Saturday have enjoyed a very liberal share of fortune's favour—any way, they did so on Saturday. They were two short of what is considered their best combination, Mitchell and McNaught being the absentees, and in their positions Morris and Wyatt figured. The last-named is quite a new importation from Uxbridge, and plays as an amateur. Luton were represented by their strongest team, R. Hawkes making a special effort to get away, as this will be his last match until after the holidays, on account of his trip to Belgium under F.A. auspices.

Contrary to the previous Saturday, the weather conditions were favourable, and the Rangers' officials were very disappointed with the crowd, which only totalled some 5,000. The start was delayed a few minutes as Steer had not arrived a short time before the time of kick-off, and no substitute was available on the ground. Indeed, the game commenced before he turned out, but it was only about two minutes after the start when he ran on the field to the evident relief of the spectators, judging by the reception he received. Barnes won the toss, but there was not much in it. Steer was quickly at work, and after Luton had threatened danger on the left wing, the ball was returned into the middle of the field, and Steer promptly passed it out to Barnes, but the kick was a trifle too hard, and the ball went out of play before Barnes could trap it.

The next item worth notice was a grand bit of play on the part of Stanfield and Moody, the ball being taken within a few yards of the goal-line, but Macdonald would not leave Moody and forced Bert into a difficult position to shoot from, and his attempt went behind. It was, however, evident that Luton were determined to have a big say in the attacking department, and as a result of further left-wing pressure a corner was forced. Just afterwards Smith completely fooled both Macdonald and Fidler, and tried to get the ball into the extreme corner of the net, but Shaw just succeeded in pushing the ball away, and Quinn pounced on it, only to strike the upright with his return shot, and the ball coming back to Smith another attempt was made to improve the opening, but unfortunately for Luton, Smith just missed the goal, and the ball travelled behind for a goal kick. It had been a very warm time for Shaw and Co., and the spectators were very relieved when it ended in this way.

Luton were practically monopolising the attack, and still another corner kick fell to them. This Moody all but improved, but Shaw caught the ball and saved finely. It really appeared to be a question as to how long the Rangers' defence would hold out, when a very bad kick by Jones sent the ball direct to Barnes, standing quite unmarked near the half-way line, and by the aid of Whyman the ball was taken down the field. Barnes put across what appeared a harmless centre, for no one was up to receive it, and Jarvis simply waited for the ball to clear the bar, when, behold, it just curled under, to the general astonishment of the crowd. It was a very soft point, but it counted nevertheless, and practically the first time the home players got down the field, while Luton had been simply bombarding Shaw and his backs previously.

Following this lucky goal, Luton returned to the attack, and Shaw was called upon to defend his charge from a shot from Brown, but there was little sting in this attack. Yet another corner was forced without effect, Stanfield not getting the ball far enough over. On the other hand, the first occasion the Rangers were awarded a corner kick a second goal resulted. Barnes took this, and Whyman got his head to the ball almost at the same moment that Jarvis dashed into the melee a yard or so out of goal. The ball came slowly to Steer, who simply hooked through an open goal. Another very tame score, and quite undeserved on the play.

Luton were again promptly down at the opposite end, and a most determined attack was set up by Smith and Quinn, but, assisted by a considerable share of good luck, Shaw managed to again clear his lines. Smith was injured in this rush, and the referee had to call Lawson on the field, but after attention the game once more went on without Smith leaving. Right up to the last minute before the interval it was one succession of attacks on the part of Luton without the least bit of luck falling to their share. Indeed the only lucky

incident for Luton came along as the referee was looking at his watch to call a halt. A breakaway by Travers found that player clear of a'l opposition but Jarvis, but he tamely put the ball wide when he had simply to walk it into the net.

Early in the second half a centre from Wyatt was none too well judged by Jarvis, and with Steer well up another goal appeared likely, but Jarvis recovered and at a second attempt saved cleverly. Smith getting a chance soon afterwards completely beat Macdonald and ran through, only to find Shaw on the alert, and he smothered the attempt at goal, but could not get rid of the ball, and running several yards out at last lost it altogether, falling at the same moment, but even this was not turned to advantage, for while lying on the ground Shaw managed to once more recover possession, and finally the chance was muddled away.

In this half Luton were not seen to so great an advantage as in the first "45"; still they were at least holding their own and making determined attempts to reduce the margin against them. But still another goal fell to the Rangers again quite unexpectedly. Hartwell placed the ball to Steer, who was quite twenty-five yards away from Jarvis at the moment, and the Rangers' centre-forward, without waiting to set the ball, put in a snappy ground attempt at such a pace that although Jarvis threw himself full length at the ball, he was just too late, and it passed under him as he was falling. This was the best goal of the day, although, as mentioned above, rather unexpected. From this point Luton never appeared likely to pull the game out of the fire, and from a corner kick Barnes got another goal, making No. 4. The most exciting incident near the close was when Shaw, in one of his daring rushes out of goal, turned a somersault and lost the ball some yards out with Moody not so very far away, but Bert could not get control and the chance was missed.

Taking the game through, it was a most surprising result, and Luton have played many worse games and won. In no department except goal could the Rangers claim superior honours, for at times their backs were none too safe and miskicked several times. Probably the only difference that could be urged as a reason for such a pronounced difference in the scores was just a shade more smartness in dealing with a promising opening. But when everything is taken into consideration, I think the final verdict must be that in meeting Queen's Park Rangers they were up against one of the lucky sides of the season, and this means a lot.

Shaw was undoubtedly lucky himself, but his anticipation was marvellous, and taking plenty of risk, he came off trumps every time. I have already mentioned that Macdonald and Fidler were not great at back, but their weight and size in comparison with Luton's pair came in more than useful at times. The same thing applies to the middle line, for in cleverness they were not the equal of the Luton trio, but were content to play the spoiling game, and this just sufficed to keep the Luton attack at bay. I should say Barnes was the most effective forward for the Rangers, and his work always spelt danger. Steer is an opportunist pure and simple, but such a player is always useful, and he has a good idea of the whereabouts of the goal.

A four-goal defeat makes it appear that Luton's back division were weak, but this was not so, and Chapman in particular came out with credit in many tussles with Barnes. All the halves did well, but the great feature of Luton's display was the fine midfield work of the vanguard. It really was an accident that no goals came as a result of their first-half endeavours, and they cannot play another forty-five minutes without better results I am certain.

The Southern League clubs who won away from home on Saturday were:—Portsmouth beat Southampton 2—1, Brighton beat Millwall 1—0, Exeter City beat Watford 3—1, Brentford beat Southend 3—0. West Ham drew at Croydon 1—1. Northampton greatly improved their chances of retaining the championship by beating Swindon by 3 goals to nil, and the other results were:—New Brompton 3, Crystal Palace 1; Plymouth 2, Bristol Rovers, 0; Reading 1, Coventry City 0.