

The Southern League.

LUTON v. COVENTRY CITY.

Played at Luton on Good Friday. Result:—

Luton 4 goals.

Coventry 1 goal.

Teams:—

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

Coventry — Evans; Barnacle and Saul; Hickleton, Bradley, and Johnson; Parkes, Arno'd, Powell, Hendren, and Buckle.

Referee, Mr. J. T. Ibbotson (Derby).

Favoured by fine weather, the directors had the satisfaction of seeing a very good holiday crowd, some six thousand strong, and the crowd had the satisfaction of seeing the home team win a handsome victory over opponents who made themselves famous in the Cup-ties this season.

Fred Hawkes was successful in the spin of the coin, and in the first half Luton had the assistance of a very slight breeze, but what was more important the sun shone in the faces of the visitors. Powell kicked off towards the Dunstable end, and Coventry's very first movement brought them down to the vicinity of the goal. The attack left Chapman and Potts in each other's way, and but for the alertness of Jarvis and Jones the score would have been opened and Luton would have been one behind. This indecision seemed to presage a bad time for Luton, but the backs were not caught in a similar predicament during the rest of the game. Bradley handled the ball right in front of the referee, but this was not noticed by Mr. Ibbotson. Coventry soon earned the displeasure of the referee, who awarded Luton a free kick for a foul, but Jones sent wide.

Luton forced the play to their opponents' end, and here an action of Johnson's, the Coventry half, had an important bearing on the result of the match. Quinn was nicely through when he was elbowed down by Johnson a yard from goal. The referee pointed for a penalty, and Smith made easy work with the kick, sending in a capital left-foot drive, Evans making a dash for the opposite end of the goal.

The two extreme wingers on the Coventry side were giving the Luton defence more trouble than all the other men, and twice Jarvis had to fist out from both. The second from Buckle was more than usually severe, and Jarvis fell down with the ball, and locking up, found three opponents in front of him. He had no alternative but to give a corner, and this he rather scrambled behind than anything else. Hardly had the danger been cleared than a miss by Potts let in the visitors again, and Jarvis once more caught the ball and was immediately surrounded. In an endeavour to get through, and as he dashed by, one of the Coventry men put out his foot and tried to trip him. The referee then came to the goal-keeper's relief, though at first it seemed that Jarvis was being penalised for carrying the ball.

Bradley was lucky not to have the wrath of the referee down on his head for a bad foul on Smith. The Luton centre was in front of goal when Bradley brought him to the earth. It was a much more flagrant case for a penalty than the foul by Johnson and it must have been the forbearance of the referee that saved Coventry having a second penalty given against them.

However, Luton were not long in beating the defence again. This time Brown ran down the wing, and sending the ball across, Moody breasted it forward and then easily turned it by Evans, who had no chance to save. Johnson made the hair of the visitors' defence stand up-right twice by smart drives from long range, and each time the ball missed the post by a few inches. Evans never would have got to either shot. Evans did not hesitate to run out of goal on occasions, and once this trick came off splendidly. Half-time was called with Luton leading by 2 goals to nil.

Moody created a sensation on the re-start by heading the ball against the post, but as the referee pulled him up for offside it was just as well that the ball did not go into the net. A melee in the penalty area at the other end saw Potts prostrate after the ball had been cleared, and while Lawson was crossing the field it was seen that the Coventry trainer was lending a hand, which little kindness was not unrecognised by the crowd. Potts quickly recovered, and a smile went round as he took a nip from Lawson's magic bottle.

Moody and Smith added to the gaiety of the crowd by a little duet performance. Smith was shouting for Moody to send him the ball, and the inside-left obliged, and with plenty of powder behind it, too. Smith could not dodge the ball, and received a staggering blow on the head, which made him look queer. Parkes seemed for all the world a scorer as he got by Potts and was racing for goal, but Chapman was on the alert, and with a long jump landed on the ball, which he then sent behind.

Next Arnold met the leather unintentionally with his head, and as Barnacle had sent it along with one of his strongest kicks, it seemed that some damage must be done to the player's cranium, but fortunately this proved not to be the case, and though the referee stopped the game it was quickly resumed. Stansfield immediately secured and raced away, closely followed by Barnacle, who hung on to him with great tenacity. Stansfield waltzed round him and was forced on to the goal-line, when he lifted the ball over Evans' head for Quinn to fall back and just turn the leather into the open goal.

The game up to this point had been rather lifeless so far as the second half was concerned, but again both teams went at it with renewed vigour. Before the end two goals unexpectedly turned up, one for each side. That by Luton should not have been allowed, because there was no doubt that Evans had just before been charged down by Smith and Moody in their impetuous dash for goal. Stansfield centred and these two men tried to fasten on the ball, knocking down Evans in the process, whilst Quinn netted. The referee consulted a linesman, but his opinion did not upset that of the referee, and the goal was allowed to stand.

When the score sheet looked likely to be clean on the Luton page the unexpected happened. Powell received the ball in the Luton half, and, hampered by Jones, he still managed to run round Chapman and dodge F. Hawkes, and after beating about and tacking a good deal he saw an opening and scored a very smart goal, Jarvis having no chance of stopping the shot. Thus the match ended in a win for Luton by 4 goals to 1.

The Luton men gave a very good account of themselves, though the rear division, except Jarvis, was weak. Of course one cannot expect youngsters, comparatively, to play like veterans, and this fact has to be borne in mind. Jones was the same indefatigable man as of old, with F. Hawkes consistent, and Johnson showing much smartness at half. Smith well led the attack, and his wings were always throwing in centres for the benefit of the inside men.

Saul is getting old for a footballer, and did not play such a good game as when he came here with Plymouth. Bradley has the same old style that we knew last season. His legs reach all over the place, and his head is brought into use pretty frequently. Buck's was the best forward if we except the brilliant dash through by Powell which brought the solitary Coventry goal. Evans had no chance with the shots which scored.