

The Southern League.

WEST HAM v. LUTON

Played at West Ham on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 2 goals.

West Ham 1 goal

The teams turned out as under:—

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

West Ham—Geggus; Shreeve and Fairman; Whiteman, Massey, and Randall; Ashton, Shea, Curtis, Blackburn, and Caldwell.

Referee, Mr. J. G. A. Sharpe (Lichfield).

As neither team had any concern with championship or fear of relegation, the general public were not unduly excited with the meeting of West Ham and Luton; consequently the crowd was one of the smallest of the season on the Boleyn Castle ground. A few weeks since, Lutonians would have been quite prepared for a defeat, but the record of the Club recently held out hopes of at least a draw, and, as will be seen by the result above, the players went one better and earned their fifth away win of the season. With R. Hawkes back in the side, Luton were at full strength, but West Ham had several changes, although I believe their officials were pretty certain of a win, and were by no means pleased at the final result.

It will be noticed the presiding official was no other than the whistle-holder of that unfortunate Cup-tie at Brentford, this being the first occasion he has officiated in a Luton match since he suffered a month's suspension for the one big mistake he made on that day. It will be remembered that but for the one fatal error, he handled the Cup-tie in a most capable manner; therefore no misgivings were entertained on his appointment for this match, although I believe the Southern League Management Committee would not have put his name down if they had thought of the Cup-tie incident. But having made the appointment, it was felt it would be far better to allow it to stand, and Luton made no formal objection.

Luton won the toss, and of course chose to take advantage of the breeze, which was fairly strong. The game opened very fast, Luton being most dangerous right away, Fairman only nipping in in the nick of time when Quinn came through with the ball. Jarvis was called upon to save from Caldwell almost immediately, but as no West Ham player was sufficiently well up, he cleared with comparative ease. The opening corner of the match fell to Luton, and Brown getting the ball as it came out from the goal-mouth, put in a grand drive which sailed just over the crossbar.

At this stage Luton were continually threatening danger, and but for Smith being unceremoniously bundled over inside the penalty area, he would have opened the score within three minutes of the start. No award was made, however, and the game went on rather uneventfully until a sudden change came over the scene, and behold the Luton goal had fallen. It was a most unexpected point, and the spectators were almost too surprised to cheer. Curtis was observed to get a pass, and finding no one blocked the way into goal, took deliberate aim from at least 25 yards' range. It was a speculative shot pure and simple, and Jarvis ordinarily would have stopped it easily, but in some unaccountable way he made no effort, and stood perfectly still while the ball flew into the net. Whether he thought the shot was travelling outside the upright, I cannot say, but the fact remains that he saved several much more dangerous-looking attempts later on.

This goal notwithstanding, Luton continued to do the major portion of the pressing and forced a couple of corners in quick succession, neither of which was turned to account, although F. Hawkes almost got home with one drive, Fairman just turning the ball away for the second corner mentioned. However, matters were soon levelled, Smith getting his chance after some clever work by Brown and Quinn. The ball came to Smith some forty yards out, but the defence had been enticed away from the middle of the field, and Luton's centre had simply to run through. Instead of taking a wild shot, he kept control of the ball, and Geggus could not make up his mind whether to run cut or not before Smith was well on his way to goal, and then it was too late, the ball being placed just out of his reach in the coolest manner possible. It was a clever goal and in quite Smith's best style, without the least fuss or flurry.

Having now brought matters level, Luton settled down to play their well-known forward game, the ball being swung from wing to wing. Stansfield, in particular, was a continual thorn in the side of Shreeve, but the goals did not come. Once when Smith had got through, only to fail at his final attempt, the ball came back to Bob Hawkes, and he sent in a real trimmer, which missed scoring by inches only, sailing just over the cross-bar. At the opposite goal Jarvis was almost beaten with another shot from Curtis, but he just managed to stop the ball, and Potts came to the rescue with a fine clearance. For a few minutes the Hammers were very dangerous, but they shot wildly, and the ball never seriously troubled Jarvis. The nearest they got to scoring was when Blackburn headed a couple of yards wide from a centre by Ashton.

Although in midfield the forwards of both teams were playing good football, when they came to close quarters the defence always seemed to prevail. Three minutes from the interval, however, Luton got through, Smith putting in a shot which Geggus could not clear, although he stopped it in the first instance. In his attempt to get the ball round the post, he fell, and only pushed the leather towards Stansfield, who returned it right across the goal from almost the touch-line. Geggus had recovered his position, but Quinn, dashing up at great pace, easily rushed the goal, giving his side a deserved lead, which they held at half-time.

The second half was neither so fast nor so interesting as the opening 45 minutes, although both goal had narrow escapes. The attacks were largely individual in character, and naturally the game suffered. Geggus, who is quite a youngster, was using more judgment when running out, and kept out one or two finely-judged centres as they came across in quite the "Sutcliffe" manner, before the inside players could get control. Jarvis had one or two ticklish moments, and once came out and secured the ball from a crowd of opponents. He could not get away with it until he had dodged his adversaries quite half-a-dozen times, which he did by swerving first one side and then the other. In this manoeuvre he did not travel any distance, but there were loud appeals for a free kick from the crowd, it being asserted he carried the ball more than the regulation distance, but the referee would not agree, and the situation was saved.

Luton were now all out for a win, and the defence put in some fine work, Potts in particular getting into the fray in a most fearless manner, while his kicking was wondrously strong for a player of his weight. The exchanges were pretty even, although Luton always appeared the more dangerous lot when they got on the ball, and several times seemed likely to increase their lead. In one fierce movement Jones got laid out, but he recovered after some attention, and although Luton secured two or three corners, nothing of moment happened, and the final whistle found the score exactly as at half-time.

been real hard lines indeed if that lucky goal netted within the first few minutes had brought about a different result. Without being brilliant, Luton had no real weak spot, and all worked their hardest to maintain an unbeaten certificate for the final month of the season. Although scarcely sound, no one worked harder than R. Hawkes, who evidently had made up his mind that Shea should not shine, and he followed him about the field almost like a centre-half who had received orders to shadow a dangerous centre-forward. Except for the one goal, Jarvis could not have done better, while Chapman and Potts appear to have settled down as the most capable pair of backs Luton have possessed this season; indeed, the forward reputation notwithstanding, the local critics would have it the defence was the strongest part of the team. Jones and F. Hawkes share in these honours, of course. Stansfield was fed the most, and in consequence was more in evidence, but the whole front string, especially in the first half, came out with credit, although, as previously mentioned, they have played prettier football.

On Saturday next Luton will complete their engagements by entertaining Portsmouth, who are going particularly strong just now, as is evidenced by their 4 goals to nil victory over Queen's Park Rangers last week. The match should therefore prove a very attractive one, and it is hoped that a big crowd will assemble. The kick-off is at 3.30.

Luton were the only visiting team in the Southern League to win away from home on Saturday. Southampton drew at Watford (2-2), and Plymouth at Reading (2-2), while the other results were:—Brighton 3, Swindon 1; Portsmouth 4, Queen's Park Rangers 0; Exeter City 2, Crystal Palace 0; Brentford 2, Millwall 0; Southend 1, Leyton 0; Coventry 6, Croydon Common 1; Norwich City 1, New Brompton 0; Bristol Rovers 1, Northampton 0.

A meeting was held last week, when the following gentlemen formed themselves into a committee with a view to organising the effort to obtain sufficient season ticket-holders to provide at least £250 close season expenses:—Messrs T. Burley, E. Gibbs, H. Woods, H. Smart, H. Bottoms, R. Ward, A. Algar, W. Hawkes, H. Cain, D. T. Dockrill, G. Pilkington, H. Godfrey, C. Bagni, W. Loele, and F. J. Crick.

The sum mentioned would not be enough to sign on a full team, but it would enable the directors to retain a sufficient number of the present players to ensure a successful side for next season. Gentlemen willing to assist or to take season tickets, are requested to communicate with one of the above-named, the Portsmouth match on Saturday affording a convenient opportunity for so doing.