

LUTON DEFEAT MILLWALL

IN A FAST, HARD-FOUGHT GAME.

Luton played a grand game against Millwall on Saturday in the Southern League, and won by one goal to nil. The home team thoroughly deserved the win—indeed, they had hard luck not to make it one of several goals to nil; but anyway we have the points, and I think with them we're satisfied!

There was a record crowd, coming well up towards 9,000 people. And it was a delighted, enthusiastic crowd too, although certainly it cannot be said that Luton's win was "safe" throughout. The game was a strenuous one, fought out hard right to the finish; and the visiting forwards were trying so hard and so constantly that for a long time one would have been rash to prophesy what the end would be.

Then, as I have recorded in every match Luton has played this season right from the first, the strong stamina and fine training of the home boys began to tell; they began to get more and more of the game into their own hands after the half; and finally it was in the second half that they scored the winning goal, and came very near scoring several others. It was Moody's headwork which brought the coveted goal and the points to the home team.

I said almost before the season began that I could not understand the attitude of those at that time numerous persons who thought that "Bert" should not be included in the team. Throughout this as in every game his head work was invaluable, and in more than one out of every two matches so far it has brought us at least one goal. Moody now has the honour of having scored seven goals already this season.

Of the other forward men the wingers, as usual, did grand work, their speed, their trickiness, and their beautiful centring creating many promising openings for the home team. Smith was evidently still feeling the effects of his injury at New Brompton, and he was distinctly weak. Quinn was still absent, and the team badly missed him. Indeed, it is quite safe to say that had he been in his old place instead of Johnson Luton would have been at least two goals up on Saturday's game. Time after time Johnson was in good positions and missed by shooting a yard or two wide.

I make no reflection on Johnson personally; he is an excellent utility man, and has played a grand game at centre-half: but on Saturday he too like Smith was distinctly weak, though from a different cause. I have wondered several times since where Macdonald was? On the whole the forward line were not quite as satisfactory as usual, but the wing men and Moody worked splendidly to make up for Smith's weakness. Bushell re-appeared in this game at centre-half for the first time in a Southern League match since he broke his finger: and he played well. "Bob" and "Fred" were as satisfactory as ever.

Luton's defence has greatly improved since the season opened; and both the town and the players are to be congratulated on the fact. Potts was kicking exceedingly well, and Chapman was also far safer than in the early matches of the season. But it was Naisby who was the star of the team's defence on Saturday; time after time he saved shots in almost marvellous manner. The defence got through the game with a clean sheet, for the second time this season, and they deserve to be commended on the fact.

Luton's records this week—it is one record to their credit that I have been able to chronicle one or two records for every match they have played so far this season!—are at least two in number. One is the team's, and lies in the fact that they have more goals to their credit than any other team in the three principal football Leagues. Luton have scored 17 goals, while the nearest to their record is Bury, with 13 goals. Bury, however, have also 13 scored against them, while Luton have only given 7 away. This is a most creditable fact, and a record worthy the name for the "boys in Blue."

The other record belongs to an individual member of the team, and that member Moody. "Bert" has the honour of being the most prolific goal-scorer in the South so far this season. He has seven goals to his credit already, or an average of more than one for every game played up till now. Stansfield is not far short of his partner, as he has five goals to his account also. Once more I have to congratulate the whole team in general, and Moody and the defence in particular. The half-back line were especially fine on Saturday.

The teams were:—

Luton: Naisby; Chapman, Potts; F. Hawkes, Bushell, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Johnson, Smith, Moody, and Stansfield.

Millwall: Carmichael; Brice, Jeffrey; Frost, Wilson, and Blythe; Morris, Walker, J. Martin, Vincent, and Lipsham.

The visitors won the toss, and Luton kicked off against a fair wind that was blowing towards the town. Johnson early tested Carmichael, and the visiting forwards responded with a dangerous combined movement. The two front lines for a time took it in turn to make a number of promising rushes. Walker put in a very hard drive from close up, but Naisby cleared well. Moody was fouled by Brice. Johnson twice missed the upright by a few feet.

Jeffrey, in kicking at a ball which Smith was also heading caught the home centre-forward a severe blow with his foot at the back of the head. Smith was knocked dizzy for a few moments. The kick was partly accidental, but the crowd howled in anger at Jeffrey. Smith went on playing, however. Brown sent a pass right across the goal mouth. Both Moody and Smith tried hard to reach the ball in time, and there was a minute's melee almost on the goal line, but eventually Carmichael cleared. Moody had a couple of good tries, and Johnson spoilt a promising movement by shooting wide.

At the other end, Martin made a smart try, and Lipsham dropped a lovely long shot right down by the corner of the goal, but Naisby caught and cleared grandly. "Bob" made a similar good shot a moment later. The home men forced quite a number of corners. In one of them Stansfield headed the ball right on to the post, amid great excitement; and in all of them Moody's head was prominent. Soon afterwards Moody got a wrench that stopped him playing for a minute or two. Half-time arrived with no score.

Play re-opened fast and strenuous. Johnson in a collision with Frost hurt his head. Chapman was also badly shaken up a little later. Martin tested Naisby, and then Lipsham hit the upright with a hard shot, the ball rebounded and was narrowly missed by Martin, and was then cleared. The crowd breathed again. The home forwards took another spell of pressing, and Moody had two good tries. Brown dropped in a grand centre, and there was a full minute's scramble on the goal-line again, but the ball was cleared. Millwall were distinctly lucky in averting disaster several times.

Moody followed up one of the visitors' backs and forced the man to give a corner. Stansfield placed it grandly, and Moody headed the ball downwards and sideways into the corner of the net, well out of Carmichael's reach. The crowd cheered in delighted enthusiasm. Soon afterwards Martin broke away and had only Naisby to beat, but spoilt an easy chance by shooting wide. He nearly redeemed the mistake a minute later, but Naisby was equal to the emergency. Then Johnson was fouled. Moody let Smith through, and the centre forward scraped the upright with a stinging drive.

A foul was given against Luton just off the penalty line. Smith received the ball full in the chest, and was doubled up for a minute. Morris dropped a neat shot right from the corner flag into Naisby's hands. The visitors gained a corner kick, and there was a little exciting play round the home goal. Eventually Naisby fisted out, and the ball was returned ten yards wide or more, amid the derisive laughter of the crowd. The visitors were working hard to equalise, and forced another corner near time, but it proved fruitless. The game closed with the score standing at:

LUTON 1, MILLWALL 0.