

Southern League.

LUTON v. QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.
Played at Park Royal on Saturday. Result :—

Luton 3 goals.
Queen's Park Rangers ... 3 goals.

The teams were as follow :—

Luton—Naisby; Chapman and Potts; F. Hawkes, Bushell, and Johnson; Brown, Quinn, Smith, and Stansfield.

Queen's Park Rangers—Shaw; Macdonald and Fidler; Mitchell, Hartwell, and Wake; McNaught, Wilson, W. Steer, Browning, and Barnes

Referee, L. Bullmer (Northampton).

It will be seen from the above names that the absence of R. Hawkes caused a re-shuffling of the Luton side, but fortunately Quinn was able to resume his position and thus allow Johnson to re-join the half-back line, where, at any rate recently, his best work has been done. This being Luton's first match in London this season, advantage was taken by several hundreds of their supporters to accompany the team, and quite a decent reception was given them as they filed on to the field of play. Smith was scarcely himself, having received news during the morning of the serious illness of one of his children at Wolverhampton. Naturally, this greatly upset him, and he left for home immediately after the match. Brown reported himself at the usual rendezvous as suffering from a stiff neck, but although this undoubtedly handicapped him, he turned out as usual.

The Rangers were at full strength, although Browning was introduced from the reserve team, for he was promoted on the strength of his fine performances in that eleven in preference to Whyman, who had been figuring as partner to Barnes. It was evident the visit of Luton had been looked forward to with considerable interest in London, the trains from Paddington being literally packed, and the crowd must have numbered at least 12,000, in striking contrast to the visit last season, when there were less than half that number present.

Fred Hawkes captained the team, but his old clubmate Barnes proved successful in winning the toss, and the Rangers took advantage of a rather stiff breeze. This helped them considerably, and the Luton defence were pretty hard worked right away. Potts was pulled up for a dangerous rush at Wilson, but the free kick came to nothing. On the opposite side of the field Chapman failed to hold Browning, and he let drive with a "beauty," which Naisby did really well to clear, while again Chapman was compelled to relieve at the expense of a corner. Almost the first time Luton got away, Brown was badly fouled by Fidler. The ball was finely placed, but it was eventually cleared by a kick into touch by one of the home defenders.

But the pressure was mostly at the Luton end, and after Naisby had brought off a brilliant clearance, the Rangers came sweeping down the field in great style. Wilson cleverly tipped the ball over Potts' head, and McNaught was presented with a clear run in, and, taking his time, he centred beautifully. Wilson, however, failed to gather, and the ball travelled well out towards the left wing, where Steer, having wandered a bit from the centre, had the satisfaction of netting the opening goal, which, by the way, was also his first of the present season. It was a fine cross shot, and Naisby had not the slightest chance with it.

...managed to get away in good style, and wound up with a capital centre, but Smith was fouled by Fidler, and thus prevented from an almost certain score. It was not for any length of time that Luton were the attacking party, and a regular pile-driver from Mitchell almost brought disaster, but Naisby, although falling, succeeded in getting the ball away. Still, whenever the Luton wingers got an opportunity they were usually able to outpace the home backs, and dangerous openings were thus made. It was from one of these that the equalising goal came. Brown went clean away, and dropping the ball nicely in front, the home defence was caught in a tangle. The ball first went to Moody, but Bert could not quite get clear, and he neatly tapped it to Bushell, who drove it home at a terrific pace, greatly to his own delight as well as that of the five hundred Lutonians present, who let themselves go at this somewhat unexpected success.

But this jubilation was considerably damped when, almost from the re-start, Barnes got the better of Chapman right on the goal-line, and the ball coming to Browning, the latter scored with a fine cross grounder. The game, however, became faster than before, and Smith had a grand chance at the opposite goal, but he sent wide for a goal kick. As half-time approached, Luton were able to put on more pressure, and with less than a minute to go, Quinn forced a corner which was taken by Brown, and after one or two players had touched the ball without any real effect, it came towards Moody, who promptly had it in the net and Luton were again on level terms. This goal came at an opportune moment, for before the players could line up the whistle went for the interval. As a matter of fact, one of the officials stated that the ball was put through exactly two seconds before half-time. It was a near thing, any way, and one of the Queen's Park directors was just as positive it was 45 seconds over time.

In the second half, Luton, now they saw a chance of saving the game, went all out for a win, and were seen to much better advantage than before, so far as midfield play was concerned. It was the Rangers who were now forced to play on the defensive. Just a little slackness in front of goal at this stage, and an even finer result than was actually the case would have come along. It was one of Smith's unlucky days, for he was presented with a grand opening by Moody, who turned a centre from Brown and gave Smith the easiest-looking chance imaginable, only for him to shoot yards wide, and a minute or so later he made quite as bad a miss by shooting over from another pass from Moody. Both chances would have been certainties if Jack had got his left foot at work, but he is not so sure with his right, and thus Luton still struggled on without reward.

With only fourteen minutes to go a goal came along, and, quite against the run of the play in the second half, it went to the credit of the Rangers. A foul was given against Smith on the half-way line for some very technical offence, and the ball was punted up towards goal, and just touching Fred Hawkes' head, went over to the right wing. McNaught, coming up on the run met the ball before Naisby had a chance, and rushed it through an open goal, Naisby having dashed out in an endeavour to clear. It was an extremely lucky point, but it looked like settling the result, and the crowd began to move away to catch the first train back to town, thinking the match was all over.

But they did not reckon with Luton, who will soon be notorious for their final burst if they continue to cut matters so fine as they have done once or twice this season. Any way, the Luton forwards set to work in good style, and within two or three minutes a nice movement on the part of left wing culminated in Smith putting through after taking a pass from Quinn close in. Naturally, the Luton crowd cheered themselves hoarse, but it was all to no purpose, for the referee judged Smith to be offside. The decision was not to the liking of the visitors, and it will take more than the official's ruling to convince the Luton players that he was correct in this. It must have been a very near thing, for Quinn was well up and quite half-a-dozen players were all in a bunch in the goal-mouth, but from the Press seats in the centre of the stand it is a difficult matter to judge when it amounts to a question of inches at one end of the field.

The question now was whether the home defence would be able to keep out the desperate Luton forwards. Moody sent in a fine attempt, only to get the ball just the wrong side of the upright, whilst just after nothing but a daring save by Shaw prevented Bert from getting what appeared a certain goal. The ball was finely centred by Brown, and with the whole Luton attack making for goal, Shaw dashed out and by the merest shade scooped the ball away from Moody. Again Luton were awarded a corner; indeed, during the final ten minutes it was a continual bombardment of Fidler and Co. Therefore it was only justice when Quinn, with a long drive, beat Shaw in the last half-minute and gave the excursionists from Luton the time of their lives.

On the whole, possibly Luton cannot grumble a deal, for it would have been hard lines for either side to lose after such a spirited display as both teams gave on Saturday. Still, as recorded above, it is questionable if Luton should not have secured both points, for very few referees would have disallowed a goal from what was practically a scrimmage in the goal-mouth. It was certainly the hardest-fought game of the present season, and the spectators had full value for their money. Indeed, it was a series of thrills all through the piece, and scarcely a dull moment the whole ninety minutes.

Naisby did his part well, although the run of the game did not give him so many opportunities of making brilliant efforts as was the case against Millwall the previous week. In this position, Lutonians are quite satisfied that in Naisby the Club possess one of the best in the South. At full back matters were not so satisfactory, but the way the Rangers attacked during the first half would test any pair of backs. Neither Chapman nor Potts cleared well, but the breaking-up tactics of Chapman were often the means of preventing

danger, and on Saturday he was the more effective of the two. Potts was certainly far below his usual form.

The half-back line had plenty of work in such a rushing, tearing game, and Bushell was probably the best of the trio, although Fred Hawkes and Johnson were by no means weak, and considering everything must be said to have done well. If the Luton forwards failed to quite live up to their reputation in the first half, they did wonderfully well afterwards, the only fault being Smith's inability to improve the two or three openings mentioned, but in his case there was every excuse, for he was, as explained at the start, very much upset by the bad news from home. Quinn showed no signs of his injury, and with Brown made a fine wing, while the left pair were also in good form.

If the game had stopped at half-time, then the Rangers' backs would have been voted streets ahead of Luton's pair, but in the closing stages their friends were complaining bitterly of their falling away. The truth was it would take any back division off their game if the attack was made in the desperate fashion in which Luton, in the concluding stages, went about their work. The Rangers, on Saturday's form, possess a fine forward line, their weight serving them well in a fast game, for they were decidedly heavier than Luton in this department. Barnes is still a dangerous man and keeps up his form wonderfully, while Browning promises to fall into his style, and should keep his place in the team.

Commenting on the game, the "Daily Telegraph" says: "In a strenuous match there was not a dull moment. The referee had to keep a firm control of the players, but few unpleasant incidents occurred, and fouls could be forgiven as accidental in so keen a fight. Naisby found plenty to do in the Luton goal, and his skill always left the visitors a reasonable chance of winning, or at least drawing, particularly when the Rangers' defence was put to a severe trial in the second half."

Swindon, the only unbeaten team in the Southern League, went to Southampton on Saturday, and won by no fewer than 4 goals to nil, and Brighton were also victorious at Coventry by 2 goals to nil. Both these clubs are still a point below Luton, but they each have a match in hand. Bristol Rovers gained their first victory, away from home too, at the expense of Plymouth, and Southend were beaten at home by Exeter City by 2 goals to 1. Crystal Palace drew at Watford at 1 goal all, and Northampton effected a goalless draw at New Brompton. Norwich City did Luton a good turn by beating West Ham by 2 goals to nil, Millwall beat Portsmouth 3-1, and Leyton accounted for Brentford to the tune of 4 goals to 1.