

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

Luton Town's Holiday Programme

Heavy Defeat, but an Even Game at Plymouth.

Argyle Forwards Well on The Target.

Twelve players made the long journey to Plymouth on Thursday afternoon. R. Hawkes decided to go at the last minute and therefore the strongest side was available. It was expected early in the week that a new inside left would also travel with the team, but, unfortunately, he met with an injury, and could not assist Luton during the holidays, and therefore Lashbrooke retained the position of substitute for Moody. On Thursday night the players made Teignmouth their headquarters, and were not at all anxious to leave this pleasant little spot when Good Friday morning opened so beautifully, but they were obliged to leave pretty early on account of the Sunday train service, and arrived at Plymouth about noon. Bushell was hardly fit, but he decided to play, and this left out Johnson, who was the twelfth player with the team.

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There was a little trouble with regard to this match at the fixture meeting, Luton strongly objecting to travelling to Plymouth and back on Good Friday, especially as it appeared much more convenient all round for Plymouth to visit Luton on this date, seeing they were at New Brompton on the Saturday, and it meant a long night journey to both clubs. But the Argyle officials held out for Good Friday at home, and on a ruling that they had choice of date this season, on account of coming to Luton first the previous year, Luton were compelled to agree, although it is understood they have some slight compensation towards the extra expense of a two-night hotel bill. The chief reason for the fight made for Good Friday being given to Plymouth at home was the fact that they expected them to be their biggest gate, as on Easter Monday they have a strong counter-attraction with the Rugby Club. As a matter of fact, this turned out to be correct, for the gate was £320, and was considerably in advance of any previous one this season. By the way, the writer was officially informed that through their reduced wage bill, the Argyle will for the first time in their history come out with a balance on the right side on the season. Of course, their travelling expenses are very heavy, and cannot be reduced.

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After the match, both teams travelled by the same train as far as Bristol, which place was reached at midnight. Luton got off here, and found that Exeter City were staying at the same hotel. The Grecians were in bed before the Luton players, as they were obliged to be away before eight o'clock to get to Brighton. Therefore little was seen of each other, the Exeter players having breakfast at the early hour of seven o'clock. After lunch in London, the Luton players arrived home about an hour and a half before the match on Saturday, and were naturally none too fresh for a stiff encounter with the Crystal Palace, who, by the way, were resting the previous day from a League encounter.

The actual teams at Plymouth were as under:—
Luton: Naisby; Wightman and Potts; F. Hawkes,
Bushell and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Walker, Step-
henson, Lashbrooke and Stansfield. Plymouth
Argyle: Sutcliffe; Butler and Atterbury; Mc-
Cormick, Wilcox and Baker; Griffiths, C. V. Green,
Burch, Dixon and Holden. Referee: Mr. R.
Pook, Portsmouth.

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The pitch was very dry and hard, there having
been no rain for three weeks previous, and the
outlook was more pleasant for the spectators than
the players, for the sun was brilliant and the heat
almost oppressive. The first attack of the game
was made by Plymouth, and although Bushell re-
lieved the pressure for the moment, the ball went
to Wilcox, who let drive with plenty of "stuff"
behind the ball. Fortunately for Luton, he was
not on the target, and the ball travelled wide for
a goal kick. The game then opened out finely,
and neither side could claim any real sustained
advantage, although several promising openings at
both ends kept the spectators on the alert. Lash-
brooke almost netted off a fine centre from Brown.
The ball came back to Walker rather unexpected-
ly, and he could do no more than touch through
to Stansfield, who was standing offside.

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A good save by Sutcliffe blocked a well judged
shot from Fred Hawkes, and Luton were still
having an equal share of the game when a sudden
breakaway by the home left wing was followed
by a dropping centre, which Green managed to
secure and beat Naisby with a rising shot, after
fifteen minutes' play. Luton made several raids,
but were not so lucky in front of goal as the
local players, their shots being charged down time
after time. A fine corner kick by Brown looked
likely to result in an equalising point, but although
two or three of the Luton players made an at-
tempt to force matters, they could not quite man-
age to get clear of their opponents. Finally, off-
side was given against one of them, but with the
players all in a bunch it was difficult to say who
it was given against.

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Bob Hawkes tried to find the net with a long
cross attempt, but the ball travelled wide, and
Brown, who made a dash to reach it before it
crossed the goal line, was a second too late. In
stopping a rush, Potts met with an injury, and
went off the field for a few minutes, but he was
not away long. There was really nothing in the
play so far, but five minutes before half-time fur-
ther disaster to Luton came in rather an unlucky
manner. A long pass out from the centre of the
field found Griffiths, but he made a regular muddle
of the opportunity, and the ball slowly rolled
away towards Potts. The back appeared to have
an easy chance to kick down the field, but he
hesitated, and before he could realise the situation
Griffiths got in a pass to Green, and the latter
shot from quite thirty yards out. Whether he
intended it for a shot, of course, cannot be stated,
but the ball travelled at a terrific pace, and quite
beat Naisby. Although Tommy apparently
touched it, he could not stop it entering the net.
This was quickly followed by a third, Holden
getting in a surprise goal with his right foot,
which went just on the inside further upright in
a most unexpected manner.

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It was quite a surprise to the local crowd to
find their side three goals up on the play, but
Luton were not in fortune's favour, evidently, for
immediately afterwards a most palpable penalty
was missed by the referee, when Butler deliber-
ately handled. Bob Hawkes made a strong appeal,
and quite half the Luton players tried to persuade
the referee to consult the linesman on that side of
the field, but all to no purpose, and half-time came
with the score:—Argyle 3, Luton 0.

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Although so far behind, Luton continued to play
a plucky game, but no luck came their way. It is
true comparatively few shots were put in, and
as usual against Luton, Sutcliffe was in fine form.
He made one fine save when Brown shot in from
a difficult angle, but he was beaten when the same
player sent in another cross attempt, only this
time the ball travelled wide. Corners were of
little avail, for the Argyle defence would not give
the three inside forwards any room. Stephenson
tried to rush the situation from a centre by Stans-
field, but Sutcliffe was very cool, and got the ball
away cleverly.

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After some twenty minutes, Plymouth had an-
other look in, and Dixon hit the bar with a good
attempt, Naisby getting the ball as it came down,
and cleared. But it was Luton who were forcing

the game on the whole, and Bob Hawkes was badly fouled when trying to force his way through. A claim for hands against Potts almost led to another Plymouth goal, for several of the players stopped playing, but the home forwards kept on, and Naisby had quite a difficulty in relieving the danger. Brown got across a grand centre, after a brilliant run through, and the ball travelled to Lashbrooke, who was well placed for scoring, but the Luton inside left missed badly when it seemed any odds on a goal.

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Ten minutes before the finish, a fourth goal went to the Argyle, and once more it was quite an unexpected point. The ball was punted up the field, and Potts appeared to stop it before taking his kick, but it just rolled over to Burch, who was standing close in. He was presented with an absolute gift, and he promptly took advantage of such a stroke of luck. The fight was now hopeless from a Luton point of view, but still, even now, they should have scored. Again Lashbrooke failed when given a decent opening, and the game finished with the score standing:—

Plymouth Argyle 4, Luton 0.

COMMENTS ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

Luton were very unlucky to be defeated by such a margin. In mid-field, they quite held their own, but the shooting was very tame. Stephenson did not get in many shots, but there was some excuse, for Wilcox stuck pretty close to him the whole ninety minutes. Brown and Walker were the better wing, Lashbrooke not doing so well as at Bristol. Bob Hawkes carried off the honours at half back, and Wightman proved the great sheet anchor in defence.

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Plymouth, who have come along splendidly since the start of the season, have a fine defence. Butler, who resumed playing the previous week after a month's suspension, appears to be their mascot, for after the side started winning in December, they went for quite a long time undefeated, and then, curiously, failed to win a single game during his enforced absence, but with his return have won both matches without losing a goal. It is quite needless to sing Sutcliffe's praises, except to say he is still a fine goalkeeper. The re-arranged forward line did good work, and the success of C. V. Green at inside right was much appreciated by the spectators. He is a soldier, stationed at Plymouth, and usually plays centre half for his own team, but he appeared quite at home at inside right, and played a dashing game. Burch was scarcely a success at centre, but Holden and Dixon were a very dangerous pair on the left. The last-mentioned player hails from the same League as Stephenson, and during the summer they often meet in sprint handicaps. Since he was transferred from Fulham, Dixon has made himself a big favourite, and many Plymouth supporters consider him about the best inside left in the Southern League.