

Southern League.

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS v. LUTON.

Played at Park Royal on Saturday. Result:—

Queen's Park Rangers 2 goals.

Luton nil.

The teams were constituted as under:—

Luton — Naisby; Wightman and Potts; F. Hawkes, Bushell, and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Walker, Shepherd, Moody, and Stansfield.

Queen's Park Rangers—Shaw; Macdonald and Ovens; Whyman, Mitchell, and Wake; A. R. Smith, Revill, McKie, H. V. Thornton, and Barnes.

Referee, Mr. A. Green (West Bromwich).

Luton were represented by the exact side which proved victorious over Leyton the previous Saturday, and on the side of the Rangers the only change from the week before was the substitution of their local amateur, H. V. Thornton, for Browning, this, according to the official view, making for improvement, although there were misgivings in certain directions, judging from the remarks one heard on the journey down.

The new professionals with the team since last year were Ovens, who was secured by Chelsea at a big figure from Bristol Rovers, but was given little chance with the Stamford Bridge Club, and Revill, who was secured from Chesterfield by the Rangers when that club was rejected by the English League. It was stated in the local handbook that the fee paid to secure Revill was the largest sum ever paid by Queen's Park Rangers. The Club have also the assistance of another amateur player in A. R. Smith, who last season did splendid service for Brierly Athletic, and being engaged in the scholastic profession is able to get off for Saturday matches.

This season the Rangers have been carrying everything before them, except for a draw at Exeter, when the home club secured the only goal registered against Shaw in the Southern League this term. Naturally, the gates have been very large, and on Saturday, notwithstanding the fact that much doubt was felt as to the match being played on account of the fog in Town, there must have been 14,000 present. The home officials stated that the local players had not been extended in any game at Park Royal this season, therefore the opening stages on Saturday must have come as a great surprise to the crowd, for Luton were the attacking party right away, and for some minutes the Rangers' forwards did not get a look-in.

The opening movement was made by Bob Hawkes, who placed the ball to Moody, but Bert could not manage to get control before he was bundled into by Macdonald and the chance was gone. But it was only temporary relief, for Stansfield getting across a fine centre, Shepherd caused Shaw to punch away in the first minute. This save was cleanly and cleverly accomplished, but a return shot from Walker almost did the trick, for Shaw only just succeeded in catching the ball behind his head just under the bar. Indeed, the Luton players claimed that the ball was actually through, and this opinion was shared by many at that end of the ground, but from the stand it was impossible to say if the referee was correct or not in giving the defending side the benefit of the doubt.

The first time the Rangers got away Barnes was the player to bring the ball through, but Bob Hawkes met the centre and kicked into touch, and play was quickly transferred to the opposite end of the field. Shepherd boring his way through the centre, was about to take his shot, when Shaw, risking injury in the most daring manner, literally

Stansfield forced a corner after fifteen minutes' play, but the Rangers' goal was relieved by the referee awarding a free kick near the post. A sudden attack on the part of the Rangers found Naisby somewhat unprepared, but he just succeeded in tipping the ball over the bar, although for the moment it seemed he had really turned it over his head into the net. Anyway, Naisby himself looked behind for the ball, and was evidently relieved to find it at the back of the goal on the outside of the net.

But after some twenty minutes' play the second goal came along, McKie heading a fine centre from Barnes just out of Naisby's reach, and Luton's task was now an almost hopeless one, for they had sadly fallen away from their form in the first half, the defence in particular being a trifle unsteady under pressure. One reason for this undoubtedly was the fact that Bushell was scarcely himself after getting a nasty smack on the head with the ball, and he stated after the match that he did not know where he was for quite twenty minutes of this half.

Still Luton made one or two promising attempts towards the close to at least notch one goal, Shepherd on one occasion having hard luck with two shots, one after the other. The first was saved by Shaw and the second went wide. Again, the Luton centre-forward all but did the trick by cleverly beating Ovens, and, taking aim, was just a shade off the target. Luton's last chance came from a run through on the part of Brown, and the ball was placed accurately to Moody, but Bert headed a trifle wide and the opportunity was missed.

It was easily Luton's finest display of the present season, especially in the first half, and, as all the critics agree, they were very unlucky not to possess a lead at the interval. Shaw played a masterly game, it is true, but he took so many risks that with average luck he would have been beaten more than once. Everything he undertook, however, came off, even when he made a blunder, as on the occasion when he went over to the corner flag in a vain effort to get the ball. Certainly no forward line could give a finer exhibition than Luton did at Park Royal in midfield work, and just how they missed scoring must remain a mystery. In awarding praise it is difficult to single out one man above another, for they each did their part, except in the all-important matter of crowning so much effort with some tangible result.

Bob Hawkes was in brilliant form, and had no equal on the field for clever footwork. Indeed, the half-backs backed up the attack in the most approved manner until they were compelled to fall back to relieve the pressure just after the interval. Wightman and Potts were a trifle overworked when the Rangers were pressing at this stage, and did not show to the same advantage as in the first half, while Naisby could not be blamed for the defeat.

Shaw was perhaps the chief factor in the actual result, for although both his backs played well, they made more than one mistake, but every time Shaw covered these up. The Rangers' halves were a fine trio, although no one of them was as clever as the Luton captain. Forward, no one was more effective than Barnes, who several times managed to slip Wightman in fine style and usually finished up with a good middle. Revill, on Saturday's form, is worth the sum it is reported he cost his new masters, and was the real forager in midfield, McKie being content to wait his opportunities. On the whole it was a grand game, and taking the match right through possibly the Rangers deserved their win, although the clear two-goal lead flatters them a lot, and they will not have a harder task this season. Except for the result, the Lutonians who made the journey one and all seemed more than satisfied with the fine show Luton put up against their formidable opponents.

Watford did surprisingly well on Saturday to beat Swindon by a couple of goals, especially as the champions were at full strength, and the Hertfordshire men appear to have been very good value for their victory. It was Swindon's first defeat this season. West Ham drew at Exeter and Millwall at Brentford, the score in each case being 3 goals all, and Bristol Rovers effected a goalless draw at New Brompton. The other results were:—Plymouth 1, Brighton 0; Southampton 1, Stoke 0; Norwich 2, Leyton 0; Reading 3, Northampton 0.