

LUTON TOWN'S CURIOUS FORM IN THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

Fred Hawkes Scores a Fine Goal.

Luton Players Complain of "Barracking" by Home Spectators.

In recent years Luton have invariably put up good performances when visiting Millwall, and on Saturday, notwithstanding the fact that Walker was unable to turn out, history repeated itself. The poor show of the previous Saturday had prepared the local public for changes in the composition of the side, but if Walker had been able to take the field the only alteration would have been that Stephenson was preferred to Shepherd at centre forward. If the directors had listened to all the suggestions made by the local critics the only line in which no change took place would have been in goal, but although the performances of the side at Luton have been very disappointing up to date, the away form has not been of such a character that wholesale changes are considered necessary. Shepherd was given a trial in Walker's position, although many supporters quite expected Lashbrooke would get another run, but unfortunately he is considered purely a left wing player.

Millwall this season have been going pretty strong, and even with a full side out it was evident Luton were faced with a big task, if last year's success was to be repeated. The "Dockers" were able to field their full strength, for although Wilson and Jack Smith were both fit to play neither were called upon, Borthwick and Vincent getting the preference. Luton's old centre forward so far has not turned out since his breakdown at Reading, even for the Reserves, who are running strong in the Kent League, and he was present at the Den on Saturday to greet his old comrades. The attendance was bigger than when Luton first visited the new home of the Dockers last season, but of course did not reach the sensational figures of the previous week. Still there must have been at least 12,000 just after the start, the big banks on the popular side being well filled.

The teams lined up as under:—

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

Millwall.—Shaw; Kirkwood and Jeffrey; Frost. Borthwick and Liddle; Morris, Carvossa, Vincent, Quinn, and Lipsham.

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The game opened in Millwall's favour, Morris heading just over the bar in the first minute. Again Vincent, who had worked over to the right put across a fine centre, but Quinn failed to reach it with his head, and Lipsham returned it into the centre, but the best use was not made of the opportunity. Luton then got down, Shepherd being fouled near the touch line, and from the resulting free kick Brown forced a corner kick. This was never cleared, for after two or three players had touched the ball without anyone doing any real good with it. Fred Hawkes dashed into the centre of the field, and with a nice drive sent through a crowd of players into the net, the ball never rising more than a foot or so from the ground. The game had not been started more than five minutes, and the Lutonians on the stand made quite a respectable noise in appreciation, although they were scarcely as numerous as at Park Royal a fortnight ago.

Quinn came very near equalising a couple of minutes later, when Naisby could only just manage to touch the ball away two or three yards from a centre from the wing. Tommy promptly returned it into the goal, but did not take proper aim, and the Luton goalkeeper got his hands to the shot rather luckily. Morris at this stage was giving Bob Hawkes a lot of trouble to hold, and he pretty frequently got clear. Potts, therefore, came in for a round of hooting, when he brought the Millwall winger down rather heavily when Morris was making a bee line for goal. The game was stopped for a couple of minutes, but Morris did not leave the field. The referee apparently cautioned Potts, and the spectators called for his removal. Sammy Frost tried a long hard drive which only just failed to find the target, and for some minutes play went in favour of Millwall.

Lipsham made a big blunder when the ball dropped clean across from the opposite wing, but as a rule the Luton backs managed to effectually block the way at the critical moment. Only Naisby stood in the breach, however, when a hard kick by Bushell cannoned on to Borthwick, and he sent Vincent through with a clear opening. The ball was turned over to the right wing, and the three Millwall inside forwards closed in upon the goal in a threatening manner, only to find Naisby just a shade too quick for them.

The referee was pretty keen on fouls against Luton, and Bushell was quite indignant on one occasion with the official ruling. Luton almost increased their lead, when Shaw came out to meet a left wing attack, Moody being just the merest second too late in his attempt to head the ball over the Millwall goalkeeper's head, while another time Bob Hawkes sent in a magnificent pot shot which just missed the cross-bar as it went over. He was promptly bowled over for his pains by Jeffery, and bumped rather badly for a few minutes. Stansfield landed the ball on to the top

of the bar from a screw shot almost off the goal line within a few yards of the corner flag, but it rolled the wrong side instead of dropping in front when it would almost certainly have been turned through, for the Luton forwards were well up. On the whole Luton fully deserved their lead at the interval, and with the least shade of luck might have stood even better than the actual score which read:—

Luton, 1; Millwall, 0.

The equalising goal was not long in coming after the change of ends, and Lipsham's work led up to it. With the ball coming right across the goal Naisby had to come out to prevent Morris having a clear shot at goal. Both players met with the ball between them, and it rolled just out of Naisby's reach, and Carvossa coming up at the same moment netted with a rising shot, which hit the top of the net just inside the bar. It was now a fight for the lead, and the Luton defenders were hard-pressed at times to hold the aggressive Millwall attack at bay. Hard knocks became pretty frequent, both teams suffering in turn. Vincent got into the wars in an encounter with Fred Hawkes, and was eventually led off the field, but he was not away for more than five minutes. Brown was the next victim of the increased vigour imported into the game, and play had to be stopped for Lawson's attention, but Ernie did not leave the field.

Although possibly Millwall were having a trifle more of the exchanges, it was not until Moody went off injured that they really pressed continuously for any lengthened period. Moody was away quite a quarter of an hour, and when he came back it was noticed he had a long strip of sticking plaster decorating his head, and in addition his hand was giving him considerable pain. When Bert returned he made matters a bit easier for the Luton defenders, and indeed almost won the game with a delightful attempt which beat Shaw to the world, only for the ball to pass just a foot or so wide of the upright.

Three minutes from time Potts was brought down badly just inside the Luton penalty area, and was carried off the field in a state of collapse. He received prompt medical attention, and it was thought at one time he had broken a rib, but fortunately it was not quite so bad as that, the injury being just a trifle lower. From now to the final whistle we had the unusual spectacle of Stansfield at left back, but fortunately the goal was maintained intact to the end, the final score standing:—

Luton, 1; Millwall, 1.

COMMENT ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

Not for the first time this season have Luton put up a fine performance away from home after a rather inglorious display in the previous home match. The players themselves consider they have a reason for this in the fact that the spectators at home have recently indulged far too freely in the habit of "barracking" the slightest slip by an unfortunate player, and do not give the same encouragement that most teams receive even when matters are going a bit wrong. As some evidence of this feeling, one of the Norwich City players remarked after the last match at Luton that he should not want to play every fortnight before such "supporters." Anyhow the fact remains that in no match away this season have Luton been absolutely overplayed, and as a matter of fact an actual majority of points have been obtained away from Luton, which is certainly not the usual order of things.