

LUTON'S THIRD WIN OF THE SEASON.

Luton's holiday programme after all did not prove barren, for in their return match with Watford on Boxing Day they achieved what they failed to accomplish on the previous afternoon, defeating the Hertfordshire team on the Cassio-road ground by the only goal in the match. Watford relied on exactly the same team as at Luton on Christmas Day, but the Blues made two more changes in the forward line, Brown returning in place of Stephenson at outside-right, and Streeton being given the centre-forward position, left vacant owing to the injury to Shepherd. Notwithstanding the wretched weather a large holiday crowd put in an appearance, and enthusiastic supporters of the Luton team, many of whom were bedecked with the "colours," undertook the journey in three special trains. The playing pitch had been rendered exceedingly treacherous by the recent heavy rains, and in places presented a veritable quagmire.

Watford won the toss, and Streeton commenced hostilities for Luton. Stansfield immediately got away, and from a judiciously placed centre, Streeton made a commendable effort to open the visitors' account. Webster, however, did well to clear his charge, and Lockett relieved the pressure, but Wightman quickly returned the ball to within dangerous proximity of the homesters' citadel. Grimsdell was penalised for handling, but nothing accrued, and after Bob Hawkes had missed when favourably placed, Stewart cleverly cleared a dangerous centre by Stansfield. Watford then invaded in determined style, but Squires nullified a smart forward movement by infringing the offside rule. Brown became conspicuous for several accurately placed centres, but they were not taken advantage of, and a brief bombardment of the home goal was ended by Bob Hawkes putting wide. The players were experiencing considerable difficulty in maintaining their equilibrium, but despite this handicap either side were displaying surprisingly good form, and enthusiasts gave way to much excitement.

After Streeton had been penalised for fouling, Naisby brought off a magnificent save from F. Gregory, and Wightman cleared in fine style when the whole of the Watford forwards were making an attack on the Luton goal. Maintaining the pressure, the homesters gave the opposing defence an anxious time, and after Naisby had had his capabilities severely tested by Dixon, Wightman conceded a corner when a score seemed inevitable. Nothing came of the resultant kick, and Potts transferred play. Following smart manoeuvres by Moody and Streeton, Webster had to clear two "headers" in quick succession. Lockett immediately afterwards staved off disaster from a combined rush, and placed Squires in possession, but he failed to make much progress owing to the ball sticking to the muddy ground. From a foul against F. Hawkes, Wightman was outpaced by Watford's speedy outside-left, who sent in an awkward oblique shot, which just went wide. Grimsdell next tried a long shot without success, and Streeton initiated an invasion into the homesters' territory.

Clever combination amongst the Luton forwards led up to a successful result, as after a spell of passing in front of the Watford goal, Bob Hawkes secured from a centre by Brown, and beat the redoubtable Webster in brilliant style. Play had been in progress 25 minutes when the Luton captain placed his side in the ascendancy, and the many hundreds of the visitors' supporters present cheered themselves hoarse. Webster threw himself at full length on the ground in his effort to prevent the ball entering the net, but was well beaten. Heavy rain now threatened to bring the game to a premature conclusion, and the players were beginning to present a sorrowful plight, but after a while the climatic conditions slightly improved, and hostilities were continued. From a foul throw-in by Luton Watford became aggressive, and almost succeeded in equalising. Wightman, however, set up a resolute defence, and once cleared the ball from the mouth of the goal after Naisby had run out and failed to gather it.

This was an exceedingly lucky escape for Luton, as the Watford attacking quintette were well up when the burly right-back of the visitors providentially slipped in and managed to avert disaster by conceding a corner. The kick was well placed, but Wightman was again conspicuous in clearing. Squires tried with a low drive, but the ball went aimlessly past the upright, and Naisby almost immediately was well applauded for cleverly negotiating a fast shot from Tattersall. Luton assumed the aggressive for a few minutes, during which Streeton was unceremoniously brought down when getting through by Stewart. The kick availed nothing, and no further incident of note occurred until just prior to the interval, when Potts used his weight on Squires, who was becoming dangerous, and a corner resulted. This was not improved upon, and at half-time Luton led by the only goal recorded.

Upon resuming, it was noticed that F. Gregory, the homesters' inside-right, who had been limping, had taken the outside-right position. Luton at once attacked, and Streeton, following a smart individual run, caused Webster to negotiate a difficult rising shot. Lockett succeeded in effecting a clearance when a goal seemed certain, and Squires got going, but F. Hawkes gave him small chance of becoming dangerous. The visitors were gradually asserting their superiority, and from now until the finish practically monopolised the game. Watford were almost continuously penned in their own half, but they invariably packed their goal when an onslaught threatened, and had Webster to thank for saving the further downfall of their cita-

del. Many of his clearances were exceedingly smart, and he was ably backed up by Lockett and Stewart. The improvement in the Luton forward line came quite as a revelation, and they succeeded in maintaining their mastery of the situation until the cessation of the game.

* * *

Watford failed to cope with the deft movements, despite the mud, of the visitors' attacking quintette and halves, and were almost wholly engaged on the defensive. Bob Hawkes frequently gained loud plaudits for the way in which he made openings, and Webster was consequently often called upon, his clearances from Brown, Moody, and Walker being particularly good. It was not until a few minutes before time that Naisby was troubled, and then he only had the satisfaction of taking one or two goal kicks. Webster was absolutely brilliant in clearing a fine effort by Moody, following which Watford got down, and from a foul throw-in Naisby had to handle for about the first time in the concluding half of the encounter. Although the homesters managed to keep the ball in Luton's half as the end approached, they were never really dangerous, and retired defeated by one goal to nil.