

Southern League.

LUTON v. MILLWALL.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Millwall	1 goal.
Luton	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

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

Millwall—Joal; Kirkwood and Jeffrey; Martin, Wilson, and Liddell; Wayment, Quinn, Davis, Vincent, and Elliott.

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

Still another disappointment! The five thousand spectators who assembled on the Luton ground on Saturday had good hopes of seeing the home team triumph over their old adversaries and add a couple of much-needed points to their not very respectable total, but, alas, the hopes were not realised, and hope so often deferred maketh the heart of the football lover very sick indeed.

To what extent Luton's fortunes were affected by the disaster which overtook them in the first two minutes of the game, it would be difficult to say. Certainly it was hard luck to get their centre-forward put hors de combat at the very outset, but notwithstanding being thus deprived of Stephenson's services, they more than maintained their own so far as general play was concerned, and in the first half the forwards threw away enough chances to win two or three matches.

The remarkable thing was that, playing against the wind and with only ten men, Luton made their opponents look very poor stuff indeed, and if it had not been for the steady play of Jeffrey at back, they must have got through time and again. As it was they made for themselves several easy opportunities of scoring, only to show their amazing weakness in the matter of goal-getting.

Early on Stansfield lost the chance of a lifetime, when the ball came across to him from the right wing and he had nothing to do but to touch it into goal. Apparently he was not quite prepared, and his touch was so gentle and so badly directed that Joal was able to save easily, when it appeared that nothing but a miracle could avert a goal.

Again Walker had at least three good openings, none of which was taken advantage of, whilst Moody also showed a wonderful lack of enterprise. In the second half, with a strong wind in their favour, it was hoped that Luton would do better, and Fred Hawkes was sent forward to strengthen the attack. This was a fatal mistake, for the forwards did worse than before, whilst the weakened half-back line placed Luton at a disadvantage in that way.

But if Luton were bad, Millwall were no better, and it is probable that they would never have won the match but for the penalty kick awarded them. This penalty kick led to much unpleasantness with the spectators, who strongly resented the referee's decision, and allowed themselves full latitude in the matter of booing.

But the referee was right. At least, that was the opinion in the Press-box, where Luton directors themselves admitted Potts' transgression, though it is asserted that Quinn had previously handled the ball. The affair happened in one of the few serious attacks set up by Millwall. After two or three desperate attempts to score, the ball went behind, and the spectators cheered at the apparent escape, only to find that a penalty had been given.

No doubt it was very aggravating, but that was no excuse for the persistent demonstration made against the referee, while if it be a fact that someone threw a missile at the official, striking him, it is alleged, on the face, no words of mine can be sufficiently strong to condemn the stupidity of the whole proceeding.

Now for a few details. Millwall won the toss and gained the advantage of a fairly strong wind. They were the first to press, but their effort was somewhat weak, and Wightman and Potts had no difficulty in repulsing the attack. Luton then got away, but the movement was spoiled by offside. A few moments later the forwards, combining together very well, took the ball down the field, and a smart attack on the Millwall goal resulted. It was in this attack that Stephenson was injured, being kicked in the face just as he was in the act of heading the ball. He was first attended by the trainer on the field, but it was found necessary for him to retire, and an examination in the dressing-room showed that his cheek-bone had been smashed. Luton were thus handicapped for the rest of the game. Notwithstanding, however, they played up very pluckily, and Brown finishing a fine run along the wing by sending in a well-judged centre, Moody almost scored with a good header. Luton continued to have the better of the exchanges, and a minute or so later Bushell sent in a magnificent long shot, the ball only just missing the bar. The Millwall goal had another very narrow escape not long afterwards. Walker succeeded in beating the defence, but the back quickly recovering, dashed after the inside-right and attempted to keep Walker off the ball in order that it might pass over the line. Walker, however, succeeded in placing the ball in front of the posts, and Stansfield had the goal at his mercy, but he sent in very weakly, and Joel was able to clear.

For some time after this, Luton were very quiet, and Millwall had a little more of the game. A good piece of combination amongst the Lion's forwards resulted in Vincent being given an opportunity, and the inside-left sent in a very good shot, which Nelsby saved cleverly. A remarkable incident occurred a little later. Davis, Millwall's centre-forward, put in some smart work in beating Bushell and Wightman in turn, and

with only Naisby before him, he dashed towards the goal. Naisby, seeing the danger, rushed out, and Davis shot, and, to all appearances, the ball went into the net, but as a matter of fact it just missed the post. Some of the Millwall players quite thought a goal had been scored, as did also many of the spectators, and the referee had to consult the linesmen before making quite sure.

Millwall now continued to have the better of the exchanges, and set up several attacks on the Luton goal. It was in one of these that they were awarded a penalty, Potts apparently fouling Quinn. The players urgently appealed against the decision of the referee, pointing out that Quinn himself had previously handled the ball, but the referee was firm in his decision. The kick was taken by Wilson, and though Naisby saved the shot he could not hold the ball, and Wilson, dashing in, had no difficulty in netting. The crowd at this point showed their dissatisfaction at the penalty in a very pronounced manner, and there was much booing of the referee. The game had been resumed after the scoring of this goal only a few minutes when the referee stopped the play, and walking towards the stand, beckoned to a police officer, handed him what appeared to be a clinker from the terrace, and complained that it had been thrown from the crowd and had struck him. Although the spectators periodically showed their dissatisfaction, no further disturbance occurred. Play from now until the interval was very uninteresting, Luton occasionally pressing and Millwall in their turn attacking, but no further goals were scored.

Upon resuming, Fred Hawkes took up the centre-forward position for Luton, and with the wind at their backs, the forwards commenced attacking in real earnest, Fred getting in a fine shot almost in the first minute. Play was for some time afterwards, and in fact to the close, spoiled by the very doubtful tactics that were being resorted to by the visitors, and the game was one long series of stoppages. Luton had somewhat the better of the play, and on one occasion Walker had extremely hard luck with a good shot, the ball only travelling a few inches wide, whilst several centres by Brown looked dangerous. For the most part, however, Jeffrey at back proved a sore stumbling-block to the Luton forwards. Later on in the half, Davis, for the visitors, put in a fine individual effort, but his shot went wide. A minute or so later Millwall were awarded a free kick just outside the penalty area, and Wilson, who took the kick, struck the post with a good shot.

Play did not remain at one end long, and in another attack by Luton, Moody just headed over from a corner kick by Brown, and almost in the last minute of the game Stansfield sent in a shot from the wing which caused Jool some difficulty. The game altogether, however, was a very poor one; about the worst, in fact, seen on the ground this season.

Of the individual players little need be said. For the first time for a considerable period, Bob Hawkes was below par, but Bushell and Fred were both in good form until the alteration was made at half-time. Wightman and Potts did good work, but the latter takes a fair number of risks, and he must not be surprised to find himself penalised now and again. The forwards, although handicapped, did well until they got in the vicinity of goal, and then they failed completely.

Millwall gave a very poor display, and showing such form as they did, it is a remarkable thing that they should have been able to attain to fifth place on the League table. The veteran Jeffrey was perhaps as reliable a man as any on the side. The forwards, at close quarters, were just as weak as the Luton men, and Quinn did nothing to make the spectators regret that he had not remained at Luton.