

Southern League.

LUTON v. WEST HAM.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	2 goals.
West Ham	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

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

West Ham—Hughes; Fairman and Glover; Redward, Woodward, and Blackburn; Ashton, Shea, Harrison, Butcher, and Dawson.

Referee, Mr. A. E. Farrant (Bristol).

Considering the position Luton occupy on the League table, and the many disappointments inflicted upon their supporters in home matches, the attendances keep up surprisingly well, and on Saturday there were between five and six thousand spectators. Perhaps the fact that so much depended on the game, from the Luton point of view, was an attraction, whilst no doubt many were anxious to see the new centre-forward.

Walden, who formerly played for Hull City and has since been with clubs in the Midland League, looked a likely sort of man as he stepped on the field, but his performance during the first half was far from inspiring. He was seldom in the picture at all, and the forwards altogether gave a disappointing display, though credit was due to Stephenson for very plucky and useful work on the left wing, and he and Brown got in some centres which ought to have been turned to account.

It was lucky for Luton during this period that Wightman and Potts were at their best. West Ham played a very smart game, the forwards being well supported by the halves, and at the interval, when the visitors were leading by a goal, there seemed scarcely any hope for the home side.

Subsequently, however, the Luton forwards played with a lot more dash, and during this period Walden did much better work. Once or twice he tricked the backs very neatly, and if he had had a little more pace he might have got right through. Having had only two or three days' training, he was, of course, nothing like fit, and that was probably the reason he did not do better in the earlier part of the game.

Moody, who was all out for a goal, had the satisfaction of putting his side on level terms, just at a time when the spectators were making up their minds to another loss, and he was the recipient of enthusiastic congratulations from other members of the team. The success not only put new life into the Luton attack, but it thoroughly roused the onlookers, who cheered for all they were worth.

Under such conditions, goals often come, and in this case the winning point was soon scored, Moody again being the executant, assisted by Walden. The visitors appealed for offside, and there appeared to be some justification for it, but the referee was quite clear on the matter, and there was a most enthusiastic demonstration as the teams returned to the centre of the field. West Ham made several determined efforts to equalise, but the nearest they came to it was when the ball rebounded from a clearing kick off the referee to the feet of one of the visiting forwards, who was well placed, but fortunately the danger was averted. Now for details.

For the first time for many weeks, Bob won the toss, but there was no material advantage to be gained, and for some minutes neither side could get going. Eventually, however, Dawson, on the left wing for the visitors, got right away, and his centre looked very dangerous, but Potts came in at the critical moment and cleared splendidly. It was following this clearance that Stephenson made a good run down the wing, and he sent in a really fine centre, but there was no one up to take advantage of it. A little later the winger again obtained possession, and was careering down the line when he was cleverly stopped by Fairman, who cleared well.

It was soon after this that the new centre-forward and Streeton made a very neat and effective combined effort, Hughes having to leave his charge to clear. Even then he was very fortunate, and he only just succeeded in taking the ball away from Walden. After this Luton were very quiet, and for some time play was in midfield. About midway through the half the visitors scored. Following several fruitless attacks by Luton, the Hammers' right wing obtained possession, and beating the half-back and back, the ball was neatly passed to Harrison, who scored with a rising shot from fairly long range. Naisby appeared to have sighted the ball all right, but it passed over his head into the net.

This reverse had the effect of rousing the Luton men, and they attacked the West Ham goal with determination. Brown, on the right wing, put in some clever work, and it was through his efforts that Luton forced several corners, each of which, however, they failed to turn to account. Then the visitors had a spell of attacking, and it was much smarter than that of Luton had been, Naisby being given a very busy time, but he played well and saved in fine style several shots from Shea, Harrison and Dawson. Towards the close of the half the Luton forwards improved, and in a smart attack on the Hammers' citadel, Streeton succeeded in beating Hughes with a header, but the point was disallowed on account of offside. Still Luton continued to attack, and Stephenson put in a well-judged centre, but Streeton shot right over when standing in a position from which it looked impossible to miss. Just before the interval Streeton sent in a really good shot, and Hughes had some difficulty in clearing. Half-time arrived with the Hammers still leading by the only goal.

Upon resuming, the Luton men went away with surprising vigour and determination, and Hughes and the backs were given a very anxious time. Stephenson and Brown respectively were playing well, and it was all that the defence could do to prevent the remaining forwards from scoring from their many fine centres. Luton were now playing the wing game, and it proved very effective. About a quarter of an hour from the re-start Luton had equalised. The forwards got away beautifully, and as the result of a well-combined effort between Streeton and Brown on the wing, the latter got in a fine centre, from which Moody had no difficulty in scoring with a header.

The Hammers made a very weak effort by way of retaliation, and Luton were soon on the aggressive again. Within five minutes of equalising, the home team had taken the lead, which they maintained to the end. Walden and Moody, receiving the ball from Bob Hawkes, succeeded in overcoming the visitors' defence, and Moody, running the ball almost into goal, scored with a shot which gave Hughes absolutely no chance.

Instead of the Hammers brightening up after this second reverse, they fell away, and had it not been for their defence, they would have been

beaten much more heavily. The Luton men attacked again, and Bushell had extremely hard luck with a good shot, for with Hughes well beaten, the ball only just rolled by the post. For some time Luton continued to act on the aggressive, but then they relaxed, and the Hammers getting away, Naisby was called upon to save several times, notably two very smart shots from Harrison and Dawson, but the goalkeeper proved himself efficient, and the visiting forwards were once more repulsed.

This was about the last time the visitors attacked the Luton goal, for in the closing stages of the game the home team did almost as they would. On one occasion, Stephenson was getting through in fine style when he was fouled just outside the penalty area, and from the free kick, Bob Hawkes sent in a shot which Hughes only just managed to tip over the bar for a fruitless corner. Luton, from now until the finish, continued on the aggressive, but failed to increase their score.

Speaking as to individual players, perhaps Stephenson was as prominent as any of the Luton forwards. He was very speedy and got in some excellent centres, though he occasionally made a mistake in taking the ball away from goal towards the corner instead of closing in. Moody was in capital form, and Brown also gave a good account of himself. Streeton appears to be better on the wing than at centre, but he missed one very fine chance for a goal.

Bushell, who got a nasty knock, was the most prominent of the halves, and was well supported by Fred Hawkes. Bob did not appear to be himself at all, and it was only in the closing stages of the game that he showed anything like his real form. Wightman and Potts played splendidly, covering each other in capital style, and their share of the victory was a big one. I thought Naisby ought to have saved the shot which scored, but however that may be, he kept goal afterwards with great credit, saving more than once in very clever fashion.

The West Ham team played a good all-round game, and showed much better form than Millwall did a fortnight before, although the latter were successful and West Ham were not. Dawson, the new man from Croydon Common, seems to be an acquisition. He played a very useful game, as did Harrison and Butcher, whilst the halves backed up the forwards when there was any attacking to be done. The backs were good without being brilliant, and Hughes had no chance with either of the goals scored.