

Southern League.

NORTHAMPTON v. LUTON.

Played at Northampton on Saturday. Result:—

Northampton	1 goal.
Luton	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton--Naisby; A. Brown and Potts; F. Hawkes, Bushell, and R. Hawkes; E. Brown, Streeton, Mardle, Moody, and Stephenson.

Northampton—Thorpe; Clipstone and Davis; Manning, Hampson, and Tomkins; Walden, H. A. Redhead, Lessons, Lewis, and Freeman.

Referee, Mr. J. Baker (Nantwich).

Although quite a number of supporters accompanied the team to Northampton, there was scarcely the old exuberance of spirits prevalent, for it was felt whatever result came of the visit, it would not help Luton to escape relegation, for the fact that Southampton by winning at home could put themselves out of danger was too evident, and as events turned out it would not have helped Luton at all if the result at Northampton had been reversed. The only change in the Luton team from the previous week was that Streeton returned to the side to the exclusion of Walker. The Cobblers were at full strength with the exception of inside-right, the place being given to H. A. Redhead, a local amateur.

The Cobblers had the benefit of the wind in the first half, and on the whole play was chiefly in the Luton quarters. Still, several promising raids were made to the opposite end, Stephenson and Mardle both getting through more than once, but Thorpe or his backs were able to prevent any tangible result. It was evident at this stage Luton were determined to make a fight for the points, but after some ten minutes' play what little chance they possessed was seriously endangered by Stephenson receiving a nasty kick on the ankle in a tackle near the touch-line. He fell rather awkwardly, and for the moment it appeared that still another serious accident had taken place, but after a little attention, he retired to the fence for Lawson to try his powers of putting matters right so that he could resume playing. Stephenson did return to the field, but he never afterwards kicked a ball, for the first time he made an effort to get it, he found it quite impossible to run, and he limped off the field immediately after.

Lawson had scarcely got to the dressing-room before there was a call for his services again, Ernie Brown having received a nasty smack in the eye from the ball. But he did not have to leave the field, and the game continued with ten Luton players for a time. It should be stated that just previous to Stephenson's injury the Cobblers were awarded a penalty kick for what appeared quite accidental handling by A. Brown. Hampson, who took this, made two hard drives, but on each occasion Naisby saved the situation, and his second clearance was a really fine one, for he had scarcely recovered himself and Hampson's shot had plenty of sting in it. But half-an-hour from the start the only goal of the match came along and in a somewhat unexpected manner. A screw shot from Walden was punched away by Naisby, but Redhead, who was the Northampton player to secure the ball, promptly returned it into the goal-mouth, and A. Brown very unluckily back-heeled it right away from Naisby into the net.

Then still another injury called Lawson to the field for the third time during the game, A. Brown being the player on this occasion, and he found it quite impossible to continue playing and limped off the field, having badly wrenched his ankle in falling on the hard ground. There were several minutes to play before the interval, but nothing further happened of any note, the score standing 1 goal to nil in favour of the Cobblers.

Luton were compelled to play with nine men the whole of the second half, and with the help of the breeze they more than held their own in actual play. But the game was never very interesting from the spectators' point of view, indeed at times it was pure farce, for free kicks were continually being given. Of course, most of these were for offside infringements on the part of the Cobblers' forwards, but the Luton front rank were many times pulled up for the same reason, and altogether the season fizzled out in the tamest manner imaginable. There was only one real shout during the whole of the half, this coming when Hampson varied the monotony by a big run from well in his own half. His shot, however, had to be taken from an awkward angle, and Naisby running out charged the ball down and eventually cleared the danger. At the opposite end Ernie Brown almost equalised with a swift ground attempt, which brought Thorpe to his knees just inside the near upright, but really very few shots reached thus far on either side, and it was a welcome sound for the spectators when the whistle called a halt, for they had long since lost all interest in the game.

Potts is to be congratulated on the clever way in which he played the Cobblers' forwards offside after his partner left the field, whilst Bob Hawkes also can take credit for playing a clever game in a curious match. He had a tricky customer in Walden, of course, and although the crowd were inclined to be sarcastic when the little winger managed to wriggle clear, Bob had, on the whole, the better of the argument. Of the others, it can be said they tried to the end under most depressing circumstances, and it was not at all a bad performance to play the Cobblers to a single goal on their own ground.