

# TREHARRIS v. LUTON.

Played at Treharris on Saturday. Result :—

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|-----------------|----------|
| Luton .....     | 5 goals. |
| Treharris ..... | nil.     |

The teams were as follow :—

Luton — Abbott; Henderson and Potts; F. Hawkes, Wilson, and Thompson; Wileman, R. Hawkes, Stephenson, Streeton, and Worth.

Treharris—Demmery; Timmins and Hancock; Pyke, Martin, and Jarvis; C. Pickett, H. Williams, Tudor, A. Pickett, and W. Jones.

Referee, Mr. W. E. Russell (Swindon)

Although Luton won so comfortably at home when Treharris paid their first visit to Bedfordshire, it was generally recognised to be by no means certain that they would repeat their success in the return fixture. Indeed, so much difference was the change of venue looked upon as likely to affect the result, that "Soccerite" of the "Cardiff Express," who prides himself on his correct tipping, gave Luton to win outright at Luton, but on Friday he went nap on Treharris. It might be mentioned he was also very confident about Aberdare winning when Luton visited that centre, and therefore his confident forecast for Saturday was not very comforting to the Luton officials. The only time Treharris had lost at home this season was against Cardiff City, and on that occasion they failed to convert a penalty kick early in the game and finally lost by the odd goal.

The posters advertising the match were headed "Come and see the Champions," and as it is presumed Treharris have little hope of reaching top place, this must be taken as a compliment to Luton. But the crowd was by no means a large one, and 1,000 spectators would be quite a liberal estimate. Indeed, at three o'clock, when the gates were opened, not more than three persons were outside, and the Luton players and officials were actually in a majority when they took the field prepared to play. It is true the advertised time for the kick-off was 3.15, but it was pretty well known the game was to start a quarter of an hour earlier. The home team were scarcely ready at the time agreed upon, and it was quite five minutes later when the game commenced. By the way, at least one of the home players came direct from the pit to the dressing-room.

Although at one time Streeton was marked as an absentee, he was able to get away, and therefore the experiment of playing H. G. Hawes was not made. Although he met the team at St. Pancras on Friday evening, he did not travel down



to Wales, preferring to assist his own team. Thus Luton were practically at full strength whilst Treharris also considered they were stronger than when they visited Bedfordshire. The Luton players had been prepared by report and by their previous experience of football grounds in South Wales valleys for a bad ground, and therefore were not so greatly surprised at the actual state of affairs. But Mr. E. Gibbs, who was paying his first visit to Wales as a director, was very emphatic in condemning the powers that be in allowing serious football to be played under the conditions which prevail at Treharris. The ground lies between two streets, but the rise from one to the other must be quite eighty feet. The approach is from the top level, and to reach the dressing-room a descent has to be made through the basement of the hotel, and even then a further drop of at least twenty feet has to be undertaken before the actual playing pitch is reached. Having reached this point, it is rather startling to find you are only level with the chimneys of the houses in a street the roadway of which is within three or four yards of the touch-line on that side of the field. To make matters worse, the pitch itself is rough and bumpy, and Lutonians have no idea of the handicap these Welsh grounds present to a team at all accustomed to proper pitches.

Treharris were fortunate enough to win the toss, and with a strong wind blowing, it took Luton some time to settle down. Fortunately, the home team were unable to score in the early stages, and as they got more accustomed to the conditions, Luton gradually forged ahead, and were soon having quite as great a share of the attack as their opponents, notwithstanding they were playing against the wind. In mid-winter the Treharris ground must, from its exposed position, be a very cold corner of the earth, and Luton must congratulate themselves upon the favourable weather they have so far experienced in South Wales.

For a time the play was chiefly in the vicinity of the Luton penalty area, and it was only occasionally the Luton forwards could get the ball down the field. The first Luton raid was brought about by a dash down the field by Wileman and Bob Hawkes, but the Luton captain, who had placed himself in a good position to receive his partner's centre, just failed to gather the ball near the upright. At the opposite end of the field, Abbott did well to save just under the bar a hard shot from Tudor, while a minute later he caught and threw away another attempt from the same player, although this time no goal would have counted, as the referee gave Tudor offside. Offside again saved Luton's goal when Jones, who was in a fine position for scoring, received the ball from his partner.

The first corner of the match was secured by Luton, through some forceful play on the part of Wileman, but Timmins cleared an attempt from Stephenson, and play was soon at the Luton end once more. The Treharris left wing were giving a considerable amount of trouble at this stage, but they failed to finish their work properly. C. Pickett, on the opposite wing, made an attempt to score on his own from long range, only to find the outside of the net. Abbott brought off a couple of fine saves within as many minutes, but on the whole he was not so busily engaged as might have been expected, considering the ball was well within the Luton quarters for such long periods.

Almost the first time Worth attempted to centre the ball, it actually went clean into touch on the opposite side of the field, although Wileman made an attempt to reach it before it passed over the line. By this time, however, Luton were having a greater share of the game, and they really appeared likely to open the score after a spell of pressure when one of the home players got into the wars just inside the penalty area. The referee stopped the game to enable him to receive attention, but when the ball was thrown down by the referee to re-start the game, the leather was cleared. The first real shot came from Stephenson, and Demmery almost allowed it to roll between his legs into the net. Many mistakes were made by players of both sides in gathering the ball, on account of the uneven surface. Wileman on one occasion appeared to have an easy chance to get off with a pass from Bob Hawkes, but just as he was about to secure the ball, it broke right away from him into touch.



Considering the nearness of the street, the ball was kept in the ground fairly well, but once Potts sent it flying down the road in fine style. But an ample reserve of balls was kept, and play was not delayed at all. It was about half an hour from the start when the opening goal came along, and Streeton was the scorer. He kept control of the ball, and after tricking a couple of defenders, he let fly into the corner of the net. It was rather surprising to find the goalkeeper come round the post to get the ball back, but the nets were in such bad condition that the ball had a clear passage to the rear of the field. Wileman should have netted a few minutes later from a pass by Stephenson, but he drove the ball straight over the goal-line yards wide of the upright. It was now Luton's turn to press, and a fine chance was missed by Bob Hawkes when the holding nature of the pitch near Demmery caused Luton's captain to misjudge the bounce of the ball from a push through by Wilson. Every excuse, however, can be made for these mistakes, for the pitch is far from what is generally looked upon as a fair ground for junior football in England. As it was, Streeton's goal was the only one scored at the interval, which was a very short one, the referee being as anxious as Luton to catch the early train.

The wind had dropped considerably before change of ends, and therefore Luton did not receive the same assistance from this source as their opponents had previously done. Notwithstanding this, the Lutonians were able to maintain a winning advantage, and never allowed Treharris to get the upper hand after the opening twenty minutes. The first likely-looking attempt after the interval came from Streeton, and Demmery only just succeeded in preventing a goal by a clever save a few inches from the far upright. Whenever the home forwards got the ball anywhere near the Luton goal, it appeared they were pulled up for offside at this stage, and the crowd were rather annoyed at this, shouting "Play the game, Luton." But it was not altogether because Luton were playing the one back game, but the fact was that they were so much the superior side that, excepting the backs and Abbot, the other members of the side were almost entirely playing well in the home quarters, and consequently when the ball did get returned down the field, a forward pass invariably found the Treharris forward in an offside position.

A strong appeal went up for a penalty against Potts, following a rather poor save by Abbott, but the referee would not agree, and really Potts simply shouldered the Treharris player off the ball. Although the wind had dropped, the ground was so short that a free kick from the Luton goal and which Potts took, actually went for a goal kick at the opposite end of the field. The home goal had a very lucky escape when the Luton right wing forced matters about a quarter of an hour after changing over, the danger only being cleared when the home centre-half deliberately kicked the ball over his own goal, just in time enough to prevent Stephenson and Streeton, who were coming up at full speed, reaching the ball about five yards out of goal. It was a risky thing to do, and the half-back almost scored for Luton. At the opposite goal, immediately afterwards, Luton had just such another lucky escape, when Tudor sent the ball towards the goal with Abbott away from his post. It seemed nothing could prevent the ball entering the net, but it stuck dead just a yard or two away from the actual goal, and Henderson was able to clear the Luton lines.

As a rule, however, Luton were the attacking party, and Stephenson had very hard lines with a fine drive which Demmery was extremely lucky to reach. The second goal was netted by R. Hawkes some twenty minutes before the finish, the ball being brought down the field by Worth, and Bob meeting the centre, placed it well out of Demmery's reach. It was now only a question as to how many goals Luton would win by, and they swarmed round the home goal without actually beating Demmery for several minutes. Wileman hit the bar just at the junction with the upright with an unstoppable shot if it had been a few inches lower, and it caused no surprise when a further run from Worth led up to Stephenson netting what was undoubtedly the finest point of the game, for he met the ball and with a first-time shot flashed it into the net. By this time the spectators were convinced of the superiority of the Lutonians, and they were quite generous in their praise and cheered very impartially any good play. It was not done in a sarcastic spirit, either, and the opinion of the Luton players was they had not met a more sporting crowd this season.

The win was fully deserved, and the whole team are to be congratulated upon rising above the difficulties of the ground and unusual surroundings. There was really no weak spot, and what mistakes were made, were brought about more through the terribly rough state of the playing pitch than any other cause. Henderson and Potts did splendidly, and, as a consequence, Abbott had really very little to do; therefore he did not show up quite so much as usual. All the halves did their share towards the creditable result, with Wilson possibly more often in the picture, but this, of course, came about from his position on the field. R. Hawkes and Wileman were the better wing of the two, taking the game right through, but in the second half the left wing came out finely, and their work made the result certain. Stephenson, as usual, was a continual worry to the defenders, and kept them busy to a pretty tune, while his goal, as mentioned above, was a real gem.

Treharris suffered partly on account of being light, particularly forward, for Tudor, who has had First League experience, was the only one capable of forcing matters at critical moments. The Picketts are tricky, but too small for forceful football. Undoubtedly the homesters were overwhelmed on Saturday, but, from past results, not many teams will get off so well as Luton, and the win will help promotion perhaps more than appears at present. It was a merry party which hurried to Treharris station to catch the return train for home, and although there was no time to dress properly, no one complained of the inconvenience of stripping in the train; indeed, several of the players actually changed into their walking attire on the platform while waiting for the train. For the first time this season, the players were able to reach Luton the same night as they played an away Southern League match, and this very comfortably too, after the rush at Treharris, Luton being reached just after eleven o'clock.