

LUTON'S BEST PERFORMANCE IN WALES.

Treharris beaten by three clear goals.

It was recognised that if promotion is to be obtained Luton must gain the majority of the points away from home. Therefore it was important a win should result from the visit to Treharris, who are looked upon as one of the weaker clubs. They are not given to winning away, but are considered very difficult to beat on their own peculiar pitch. The previous Saturday, however, they succeeded in gaining a victory at Ton Pentre, and, as a matter of fact, they have not lost a match since their visit to Luton. Only on the previous Monday they beat Swansea, and the team is now stronger than was the case in the early part of the season. They were able to field the same team which won at Ton Pentre and beat Swansea at home, and they were very hopeful of revenging their defeat at Luton. Previous to Saturday only Cardiff City had beaten them at home, and that by the smallest of margins, and on that occasion Treharris failed to convert a penalty kick before Cardiff had scored.

Luton made one important change from the published team, for at the last minute arrangements were made whereby Streton was able to make the journey and Luton were thus represented by what is looked upon as their strongest side at the present time. The young amateur inside left who made such a promising debut at Brentford was therefore left out, although he was at St. Pancras to meet the team on Friday evening. He did not travel to South Wales as he desired to assist his own team if not actually playing.

The usual arrangements were made on the outward journey, but for the first time this season it was decided to make an effort to return to Luton on Saturday night, and this was eventually accomplished. But it meant a deal of hustle, and no doubt several of the players will recall the cir-

circumstances when retelling their experiences in years to come. The kick-off was advertised for 3.15, but Treharris agreed to start at three o'clock and turn round at the interval without leaving the field, because, if the Cardiff connection was caught, it meant leaving Treharris at 4.53, which does not allow a deal of time to change. Indeed, not more than half the players made the attempt in the dressing room, and two or three actually changed on the station platform in the open air, with their comrades acting as a shield! Fortunately, it was a very mild day, and, although practically mid-November, little discomfort was felt from the cold.

It was quite laughable to see the players dashing down the steep decline which leads from the ground to the station, some of them half dressed and the rest carrying their ordinary attire on their arms in full football rig-out. It should be stated that it was quite 3.5 when the game really started, and, including stoppages for injuries and turning round, the game finished at 4.40, which left exactly thirteen minutes to catch the train. To reach the dressing room a stiff climb from the playing pitch has to be tackled, and then by devious stairs and passages the street is reached. The majority of the players arrived at the station at 4.49, just nine minutes from the final whistle. Those who had not completed their toilet when the train puffed into the station did so before arrival at Cardiff, and the experience will often be talked about as one of the peculiar incidents of the game by those who took part in the trip.

One or two members of the party were making their first visit to South Wales, and it was quite amusing to see their faces when they set eyes upon the Athletic ground, Treharris, and the comment was pretty decisive that it was not fair to expect football to be played as it should be played under such conditions. In many ways Treharris have a worse pitch than Mardy, and that is saying a good deal. It is certainly a trifle bigger, although even then far less than the minimum required for a cup-tie, but the playing surface is infinitely rougher, and is altogether devoid of any signs of a roller. As a matter of fact, unless the roller were constructed on the ground, it is difficult to see how it could be got there, and, even if this were accomplished, there is no room for it to remain there, so cramped is the ground. There is certainly a small structure which goes by the name of a "Grand Stand," but it is a primitive affair, and no shelter is provided, and it received very scant patronage on Saturday. Certainly if such accommodation were provided in Luton it would be strongly resented, especially if visitors were required to pay the sum of 1s. 3d., which is the case at Treharris.

The teams lined up as follows:—

Luton:—Abbott; Henderson and Potts; Fred 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.

Bob lost the toss, and the strong wind blowing direct into the goal gave Treharris a big advantage at the start. Before the interval the wind dropped considerably, and in the second half it affected the game very little, so that Luton were not favoured at all in this particular. Before the Treharris forwards settled down Luton made one or two promising raids, and once the game was stopped for a foul on Bob Hawkes when it would have suited Luton better for the referee to have allowed Bob to go on, for he recovered himself and was getting ready for a shot at goal. As it was Fred Hawkes took the free kick, only to send the ball yards over the bar.

But for the first quarter of an hour the most dangerous work came from Treharris, not only he forwards but the halves also having a pop at goal. Abbott did well to save a sharp drive from Tudor; then offside against Jones, who was well placed, saved Luton. A little slim work at this stage on the part of the home attack might have brought about disaster to Luton, but the Luton defence was very safe, and it was only occasionally Abbott's charge seemed likely to fall, although on such a small ground it was not too pleasant to find the ball within a few yards of the Luton goal so often. The spectators were, on the whole, very impartial, though once they clamoured for a penalty against Wilson when there was no just cause for the appeal, but Mr. Russell was not to be bounced. The most dangerous moment for Luton came about when Abbott caught the ball in good style from a right wing shot, but in clearing drove the ball hard on an incoming Treharris forward, and the ball cannoned off the player over the goal line, a little wide of the goal.

Twenty minutes from the start Luton, however, took charge of the game, and it was fully evident that, bar a breakaway goal, which might, of course, come along, they were the more likely side to win. There was more method about their forward work, although Worth did not get the ball across quite so well as is usual with him. Stephenson almost beat Demmery with a sharp grounder, which the goalie fumbled badly. A pass back by Wilson to Potts caused a temporary diversion, for Pickett fastened on the ball before Potts could get to it, and Abbott was hard pressed for a moment

or two.

Luton should have opened the score when Wilman drew Demmery out of goal almost to the corner flag, and the Luton winger centred right across the goal to Stephenson, who was not more than six yards out. It seemed a simple matter to score, and it was with great surprise the spectators saw that Stephenson allowed the ball to pass him without trying a shot. It appears, however, that Timmins, who was a few yards away shouted to let the ball come, and Jimmy, taking this shout to come from Streeton, missed the easiest opportunity of the match. But, after half an hour, the opening goal was netted by Streeton, who, getting a pass in midfield, tricked two opponents and then took aim, and passed the ball just inside the post. For a moment it seemed he had missed, for Demmery went round the post to fetch the ball, but it had gone right through the net, and a goal it was. Two minutes before the interval Tudor sent in a terrific drive, which Abbott made no attempt to reach, but fortunately it travelled a trifle wide of the far post, and the Luton goal had a lucky escape. Interval score: Luton 1, Treharris 0.

There was considerably more life about the game after the interval, and at times the exchanges were very exciting, but Luton appeared to be playing well within their powers. A nice centre from Wilman almost brought along a further goal. Streeton and Stephenson forcing the game, so much so that Martin dashed up and sent the ball flying over his own goal for a corner kick. At the opposite end a burst through by Tudor seemed likely to culminate in the equaliser, for Abbott came out without getting the ball, and Tudor tried a shot, but the rough ground caused it to stop dead a few yards out, and Henderson was able to arrive on the spot and clear the danger before any Treharris player could reach it. Twenty-five minutes of the second half had gone when Bob Hawkes settled the result with a good shot, right away from Demmery, following a neat pass by Worth, who seemed much happier on this side of the field than he did on the opposite. Possibly he felt safer, for in the first half he was playing within a couple of yards of a sheer drop of forty feet into the street, at one point!

The final goal also came from Worth's pass, and Stephenson meeting the ball as it came across drove it into the net in fine style. It was the cleanest goal of the three, and was heartily cheered by the spectators. From now to the finish it was Luton's game almost entirely, and Demmery was distinctly fortunate in not being beaten at least twice more, one shot from Wilson hitting the bar at the opposite end of the goal from where Demmery was placed, but no further goals came along. Result: Luton 3, Treharris 0.

COMMENT ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

On paper it may not appear a great performance to beat Treharris, but no ground is more feared by visiting teams, and, to the writer's knowledge, Cardiff City were very pleased with themselves when they won their first game on this pitch a month ago, by the margin of 2-1. Excepting the first twenty minutes, Luton were altogether the better side, and overcame the handicap of the pitch in a most creditable manner. The whole team played well, and no weak spot was manifest, for most of the failures were the result of the peculiar pranks played by the ball on account of the uneven ground.

Abbott had not a deal to do, so well did Henderson and Potts hold the Treharris forwards in check. Wilson was the hardest worked of the middle division, and in Tudor he was faced by the most dangerous forward, but as a rule, Wilson came out on top. Fred Hawkes was the master of the wing opposed to him, while Thompson's height came in very useful in dealing with the pressure in the goal mouth in the early stages. Taking the game through, Luton's right wing were the more dangerous, but in the second half Worth proved a slippery customer, and was responsible for both goals.

Treharris are rather lightly built as a team, Tudor being the only forward able to force the game. He certainly got through several times in a most promising fashion, and was not too fortunate once or twice, but the others were too small to force home their midfield advantage. Although Demmery was not to blame for the goals, he did not shape too confidently at times, and might easily have been beaten oftener without any complaint of ill luck.