

LUTON'S STIRRING GAME WITH SOUTHEND.

A thoroughly well-contested game was fully anticipated between Luton and Southend, at their meeting last Saturday, for these teams were fighting hard to be one of the top two at the end of the season, and thus be able to return to the First Division of the Southern League. Luton were at full strength; Southend had Frost at centre-forward after his rest, and Curry, the amateur, was at inside-left.

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The teams were as follow:—

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

Southend United — Kebbell; Thomson and Spencer; Emery, Moon, and Axcell; Wilson, Wileman, Frost, Curry, and Parke.

Referee, Lieut. W. C. Clover (Leicester).

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The players took the field early and started before the advertised time (2.45), which was a wise decision, for the light would have been rather bad towards the close. There was already a big crowd to welcome them. Both teams met with most encouraging cheers, for the Southend supporters were present in considerable numbers (over 700). With their bugles and other noise machines, they sounded a merry company.

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Luton got away first, Stephenson slipping the ball out to Wileman, who centred, and Bob Hawkes dropped the ball just over the bar. It was a near thing for Southend, and the home supporters cheered loudly. It was early obvious that it was going to be a very fast game, and soon the United were galloping down on their right. A free kick was awarded against Luton, and in a few minutes the ball was dropping towards the home goal. Henderson jumped up but missed the ball, and Fred Hawkes, who had run back to assist, went to head the leather outside. It was passing just over him, and he swung round, facing his own goal, and to the great surprise of everyone, headed it into goal, completely beating Abbott, who, of course, was not prepared for such an occurrence. Fred was obviously greatly upset. Luton, however, determined not to be downhearted. Bob Hawkes neatly passed to Stephenson, who sent out to Worth, but the left-winger squared his centre too much, and it was an easy matter for the Southenders to take up the running. Henderson was working like a Trojan at back, and cleared with a dash.

Backwards and forwards the game went, amidst the greatest excitement. Southend broke away, and Wilson sent the ball just the wrong side of the upright, after which Curry made a capital attempt, and Abbott did well to get up to it and tip the ball over. Luton's Thompson tried a ground shot, which one of the backs stopped. Bob Hawkes and Wileman struggled hard to pierce the defence, which, however, was wonderfully alive to the situation. The interest then shifted to the home left wing, from which Worth contributed a fine ground shot. Kebbell gathered and cleared, but he was within an ace of being beaten a few seconds after, when Worth shot grandly almost from the side line. Kebbell just managed to steer it to the outside of the post. He then had an argument with one of the backs, from which it appeared that one was trying to blame the other for nearly letting the shot through and giving them such a fright. Luton kept up the attack, and the Southend right back (Thomson) handled in the area. Thompson was selected to take the kick, and to the great delight of the home supporters, netted the equaliser. A few moments later the home left-half got the ball from a tackle, and disposed of it to Streeton, who swung it out to Worth. Bob Hawkes then received it, but fell close to goal as he was about to shoot.

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Fred Hawkes went up as a sixth forward and passed to his namesake, who was running through nicely when one of the Southend halves stretched his leg across Bob's path and pulled him over it. The action was like a wrestling throw, and never was a penalty kick more deserved. Fortunately the incident occurred in the specified area, and Thompson was again called out of the ranks. Amidst great cheers, he put Luton ahead. After further attacks by Luton, the visitors became more prominent, and their Wileman was running in towards goal when Potts cleared the ball almost from the forward's toe. Southend pressed vigorously, and were within a few yards of goal when one of them shot between some of the Luton defenders. But Abbott had been waiting in a crouching attitude and judged the ball nicely. His clearance was a capital save. Streeton and Worth next did good work, and after Wileman had made a dash but stopped on his own account because someone shouted "Offside," the visitors got away. This was certainly a case of offside, but the whistle was silent, and Abbott did finely to stop them at the expense of a corner. The United stayed near this end, and after Wilson had dodged Potts, he swung the ball right across in front of goal, where Parke met it beautifully with his head and netted. This was just before half-time, when the score remained at 2-2.

The Luton players obviously meant to do their utmost to get the two points. Stephenson rushed up, and then Streeton, near the goal, charged right on to a back and smothered his attempted clearance. Nearly all the Luton team were in the Southend half. Streeton got the referee's permission to go off for a change of attire, and was on his way towards the gate when Potts was in difficulties and passed out. Tommy looked round and saw the ball and lifted it over to Luton's right wing. A left-foot shot by Stephenson went outside, and then Luton's end was visited. Later a lovely first-timer by Streeton skimmed the Southend bar. The game was still running evenly. The visiting forwards then lay well up—a policy which paid, for their halves sent the ball to them and Frost dashed away. He ran out to the right a little, gave a look to see where Abbott was, and twisted the ball across towards the far corner. Fred Hawkes ran back to cover the gap. The ball was passing between him and the goal as he faced it, and he attempted to curve the ball out, but it went from his boot smack into the net behind Abbott. The home Club's supporters were dumbfounded. Goodness knows how Fred Hawkes must have felt. To Southend, however, this was very inspiring, and they went away at the game again as though it was all due to their superb play.

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Abbott threw himself at a very short range shot from Frost and saved. Then Fred Hawkes made great efforts to get the ball towards the other end and succeeded. Streeton and Stephenson hustled along with it, and Jimmy made a hole through a stubborn defence and drove in a terrific low shot which simply knocked back Kebbell's hands as he

tried to stop it, and found repose in the net. The air was alive with shouting. It was now a case of both teams going all out for the winning goal. Luton forced a corner, but in about the time it takes to write it, Southend were repeating the manœuvre at the other end. Both were fruitless. Luton looked the more promising. Worth sent in a terrific drive from the left, and Kobbell did marvellously well to steer it just outside the post on the Luton right side. Streeton next hit the upright. The game was terribly exciting. The home team were pressing for all they were worth. Kobbell kept out a shot by the left-winger, but in a few moments Stephenson headed in the goal which gave Luton the lead. The cheering was deafening. Bob Hawkes next gave the goalkeeper a tester, after which Southend went away at great speed, but Potts cleared splendidly and transferred the ball to Worth, who forced a corner. Both teams kept up a tearing pace to the end. Luton managed to retain the upper hand, the score at the final still being 4-3.

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The attendance at Luton's match was 6,500, the receipts being £162. The spectators at Croydon's match numbered 4,000.

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