

By "Vigilant."

PROMOTION STILL AN OPEN QUESTION.

Luton Drop a Valuable Point at Llanelly.

Homesters Allowed an Offside Goal.

Llanelly presents the longest Welsh journey, and it took the Luton Town team the better part of three days for this trip, with practically no time for anything but travelling, sleeping, and playing. The team which drew at Southend was selected for the task, but on Friday morning there was more than a doubt as to Wileman's fitness. He gave his injured ankle a thorough trial on Thursday, and seemed to go very well, but when he reported on Friday morning it was very stiff and swollen, and Lawson himself agreed with the player that there was little hope of his doing himself justice. This meant that Murphy would have taken the inside right position, but it was ultimately decided to take Wileman down so that if his ankle allowed him to play he could be included even at the last minute. Murphy, of course, travelled with the team, but as will be seen Wileman was able to turn out, and as a matter of fact went well.

Cardiff was made the headquarters as usual, and it was soon discovered that the news of the Luton invasion next Friday has aroused considerable interest, for representatives of the local press together with railway officials and hotel proprietors were all wanting to interview the Luton officials. It appears that several of the hotels propose to make special arrangements to cater for the Luton crowd, and it will be as well for anyone desiring to be made comfortable to communicate with the Supporters' Committee, as the accommodation in the majority of cases will be strictly limited, and it will make for everyone's comfort if the several hotels have their proper proportion. Otherwise there will be much confusion, but if the above advice is carried out it is certain the visit to Cardiff will remain a pleasant memory, always providing the points are brought to Luton.

On the map Llanelly does not appear a big journey from Cardiff, and it is on the main line to Fishguard, but none of the fast trains stop there, and, as one of the linesmen who went up to officiate stated, it is the most difficult place to get at comfortably from almost any part of South Wales. As a matter of fact, the train service was so inconvenient that, although the distance is only some 55 miles, in order to have sufficient time for meals, etc., it took over 12 hours out of the day to make the journey and play the match. Llanelly itself is by no means a beauty spot, and for a town of its size possesses very few decent buildings or shops. Almost in the centre of the town there are large ugly tinplate works, and another curious feature which struck a stranger was the number of solicitors' offices which seemed to be necessary for the town according to the names painted on the windows of what, at Luton, would be voted nothing better than cottages—and not the most desirable at that, to judge by the outside appearance.

The ground is quite a new one, having been laid out this year. In some ways the accommodation is very fair, but as usual in South Wales the pitch itself is terribly soft. Of course, it was no so bad as Newport—for it would be impossible to have anything quite as bad as that—but it has on big patch comprising about one-third of the playing area which gave those members of the party who were not privileged to see "Somerton Park" some idea of what that was like without the ashes. Unfortunately for the Llanelly club it is quite a long distance from the town, indeed it is over three miles from the station. Therefore the crowd was not a great one, and 2,000 would be a liberal estimate of the attendance.

The teams turned out as under:—

Luton:—H. Bateman; Jarvie and Potts; Fre
Hawkes, Wilson and R. Hawkes; Stephenson, Wil
man, Smith, Holland and Worth.

Llanelly:—Bailiff; Peters and James; Gough
Martin and Capel; Osborne, Fuge, Freeman
Payne and Bird.

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

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

The wind was blowing pretty strong, and Bailiff was cheered when he won the toss. It was evident the breeze would prove a big factor in the game, for quite early Potts misjudged the ball, and Freeman was able to get in a shot which Bateman did well to turn away at the expense of a corner kick. Luton's first scoring chance came when Smith was fouled in midfield. Wilson took the kick and put out to Worth, and the latter drove the ball well across the ground. Wileman, however, headed by for a goal kick. Midway through the first half Llanelly, urged on by their supporters who had been very quiet up to this point, made big efforts to open the score, but Bateman held the fort gallantly, and gave nothing away. Although the wind prevented the ball being at Bailiff's end for any sustained period he also had one or two anxious moments. Particularly was this the case when he left his charge and took the ball from Worth on the edge of the penalty area.

There were strong hopes of a clean sheet at half-time, but ten minutes before the interval Fuge got the better of Potts, and found himself with a clear run into goal. The only player nearer Bateman was Freeman, the home centre, and Fuge sent the ball forward for Freeman to shoot well away from Bateman into the net. It was obviously offside, and this opinion was expressed to the writer by more than one spectator, but to the consternation of the Luton officials the point counted. How Lieut. Clover could consider the goal a good one was a mystery. Inquiry after the match elicited that the referee thought Fuge passed the ball back, but in taking such a view he must have looked at the players from an acute angle.

Even although handicapped by such a bad decision Luton made a big effort to equalise, and Stephenson meeting a centre from Worth drove the ball in with terrific force, so much so that Bailiff could only clear at the second attempt. The ball dropped out of his hands from the original shot, but did not go over, although it must have been a matter of inches. Half-time came with the score:—Llanelly 1, Luton nil.

Naturally the game underwent a change on the teams turning round, and it was Llanelly who were mostly on the defensive. During one attack Potts got hurt, and the game was stopped. It will be remembered this player was the centre of what trouble there was at Luton, although on that occasion he was on the opposite wing. From the remarks heard all round it was quite a surprise for Peters to get the worst of it in a tussle. He is apparently the one to give rather than take knocks.

All at once a sudden change came about. Jarvie let Payne right in, and it seemed nothing could prevent a goal, for the inside left could have taken the ball up to goal before shooting, but he let drive several yards out and placed yards wide. It was really a very bad miss, although it would have been rough luck on Luton if he had scored, for they were decidedly the better side now. Worth getting a pass from the middle of the field promised to bring along the quite expected equaliser, but he made poor use of the chance by putting by for a goal kick. Bob Hawkes tried to force his way through, and almost succeeded, but was charged over inside the penalty area. The charge itself was quite fair, but while on the ground Peters deliberately gave him a punch. The referee, however, failed to notice this, and after consultation with his linesman he gave the defender the benefit of the doubt. Hereabouts the crowd got on to Jarvie for a heavy charge on Bird, and when he repeated this a trifle later the spectators made quite a demonstration, and the referee gave him a caution.

For some time it had been evident Luton were likely to score, and eighteen minutes off time a nice movement between Bob Hawkes and the left wing pair gave Holland his chance. He took it very cleverly, and beat Bailiff with a fine cross shot from a somewhat difficult angle. This was followed up by another hot attack, when Stephenson squared the ball, with his comrades well up. Wileman tried a shot, and the ball hit the bar, and, touching the shoulder of one of the home backs, just missed Smith, who was waiting for the rebound, and eventually Peters managed to clear right under the bar. It was a lucky escape for Llanelly, and would have undoubtedly won the match. It was a stubborn fight for victory to the finish, with Luton the more often dangerous, but nothing further was scored, and the whistle went with the score standing—

Luton 1 goal, Llanelly 1 goal.

COMMENTS ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

Possibly a draw was a fair result, although there were periods during the game when each side appeared almost certain to win. Bateman had more work than Bailiff, and on the whole did it in a

more finished style than the Welsh International, who took several risks which, fortunately for his reputation, came off. Jarvie and Potts were scarcely so successful as at Southend. Still they played a hard game, and never gave up trying. All the halves did well, while the forward line was an improvement on recent performances, the left wing being more in evidence. Holland, quite apart from his goal, played his best game for Luton up-to-date. Wileman's ankle came through the ordeal better than was expected.

Llanelly were strongest in attack. Fuge was a very troublesome customer right through, and was very difficult to shake off when he fastened on the ball. With the exception of Peters, the home team played quite a gentlemanly game, and contrary to the rumours prevalent after the match at Luton there was little bad feeling. Certainly not more than the usual number of fouls were made, and the majority of these were not at all dangerous. In all probability it was Bailiff's last game for Llanelly, as it is understood his transfer to Everton will be settled after the International at Bristol to-day. They are rather proud at Llanelly at having unearthed an International, and he is quite a hero in the tinplate district.

THE PRESENT POSITION.

Had it stood by itself Luton's draw at Llanelly would probably have satisfied the Blues' supporters, but viewed in the light of the other results of Saturday it leaves something to be desired. The prime cause of disappointment was, of course, the fact that Swansea Town effected a pointless draw at Cardiff, but there is also some cause for alarm in Croydon Common's 2—1 victory at Newport, for the Robins are now almost as well in the running as Southend. Curiously enough, none of the home teams won on Saturday, Pontypridd sharing two goals at Aberdare. This makes the present positions of the clubs as follow:—

	P	W	D	L	F	A.	P.
Cardiff City	20	15	4	1	45	12	34
Luton Town	19	11	4	4	43	31	26
Southend United	17	8	6	3	32	21	22
Croydon Common	17	9	3	5	32	23	21
Swansea Town	15	7	6	2	21	14	20
Pontypridd... ..	18	5	9	4	23	17	19
Aberdare	17	6	5	6	30	30	17
Newport County	18	6	2	10	26	28	14
Llanelly... ..	16	4	6	6	21	27	14
Mid-Rhondda	20	5	4	11	19	30	14
Mardy	18	5	2	11	31	29	12
Treharris	15	4	1	10	12	33	9
Ton Pentre... ..	16	1	2	13	12	62	4

The Easter programme will probably go a long way towards settling the issue, for after Swansea's draw on Saturday it would seem that Luton must gain points at Cardiff to continue in the running. After their Good Friday outing the Blues are to have a rest on Saturday, and then on Easter Monday they will be at home for the first time since February 22nd, with Aberdare as the opposition.

Luton also have a home game on Easter Tuesday, when they receive Portsmouth in the Southern Alliance. Croydon have made the Alliance championship safe by a 2—1 victory at Cardiff on Wednesday, but Luton may still be runners-up, because Portsmouth went down again last week, this time at the hands of Brighton and Hove Albion. Brighton are, however, well up.