

LUTON v. CARDIFF CITY.

Played at Ninian Park on Saturday. Result:—

Cardiff City 5 goals.

Luton 2 goals.

The teams were as under:—

Luton—H. Bateman; J. R. Elvey and Jarvie; F. Hawkes, Wilson, and R. Hawkes; Stephenson, Wileman, Smith, J. Chipperfield, and Worth.

Cardiff City — Kneeshaw; Doncaster and Croft; Harvey, Latham, and Hardy; Tracey, G. Burton, Devlin, Clarke, and Evans.

Referee, Mr. F. Curtis (Bristol).

Luton have experienced wretched weather when visiting South Wales since Christmas, and their last visit for the present season was another bad day, for rain fell before and during the game, and what was expected to prove a big gate dwindled to about 3,000, most of whom were on the stand. Luton included the two Clarence players who made such a promising show against Newport, leaving out Potts and Holland. Cardiff also made a couple of changes from the previous week, Kneeshaw being in goal, while George Burton came into the side in place of his brother.

With nothing at stake, it might have been expected that the game would prove a dull one, but this was far from the case, and right away from the commencement the exchanges were pretty lively. The game was not five minutes old before Evans started a movement which led to Devlin opening the score. Evans, beating Fred Hawkes for possession, sprinted by Elvey, and the centre receiving the ball from his comrade's pass, sent it bang into the net at a great pace. The second goal for the City came from a well-placed corner kick by Tracey, for although two or three players touched the ball before Devlin got in his shot, the flag kick was never cleared. The ball appeared to touch one of the Luton defenders after leaving Devlin's toe, and this probably gave the City the goal, for Bateman could not get at it in consequence.

Luton reduced the lead within a few minutes. Stephenson, making one of his characteristic sprints, beat Croft altogether, and keeping the ball well under control, sent it direct to Wileman, who was splendidly placed, and the Luton inside right made no mistake, shooting it right away from Kneeshaw into the corner of the net. This encouraged Luton, who were a bit unlucky to be a couple of goals down so early in the game, and for a time it seemed likely Luton would force the equaliser, but a sudden break-away by Tracey dashed their hopes. The City winger centred on the run, and Bateman coming out to meet the ball, did not clear the danger, and George Burton lying handy, had no difficulty in heading through the open goal. Soon after came the half-time whistle, Cardiff leading by three goals to one.

The opening of the second half was sensational in the extreme, two goals being netted in the first minute. Indeed, except for a slight touch by Kneeshaw, the ball was not touched by a Cardiff player before Luton secured their goal. Smith, Wileman, and Stephenson brought the ball from mid-field, and the latter's centre was practically turned through his own goal by Kneeshaw, who only half hit it as it came across, and Chipperfield really followed the ball into the net and gave it a final touch. Once more Luton appeared to have a chance of saving the game, but the City forwards went direct from the kick-off almost as quickly as Luton did, and Burton snapping up a chance after Bateman had stopped Evans' first attempt, put his side two goals ahead for the second time.

The concluding goal was scored with a long drive from half-back, following a free kick outside the penalty area. Hardy was the player who netted, and although his shot went in at a terrific pace, it appeared that Bateman should have made an effort to stop it, for it was evident that Hardy intended to take a pot shot by the manner he settled on the ball.

The players were as keen as if championship honours depended on the result, and once or twice the referee was noticed to be giving a hint to certain offenders. Clarke, in particular, was cautioned for a very bad foul, and when he jumped on Fred Hawkes while the latter was lying on the ground it brought an order for the dressing-room. It was a nasty foul, but coming so late in the season it was a trifle unfortunate, and the players of both teams appealed to the referee to alter his decision. He consulted one of his linesmen, but it made no difference, and Clarke at once left the field, the spectators cheering him as he did so. Very few of the crowd could have seen exactly what happened, and they were inclined to resent the referee's action. As time was almost up, there was a bit of a demonstration when the final whistle went, but Mr. Curtis had not far to go, and the home officials saw that no harm came to him.

At the fag end of the season, one hardly expects players to show any great vitality, especially in matches where points count for little. But at Ninian Park on Saturday the game was interesting throughout. There were no depressing periods, and both in defence and attack great keenness was exhibited. The City excelled mainly in the front rank, though there was no department where they were weak. Their forwards combined splendidly, and their success was attributable mainly to the smartness shown not only in mid-field, but within shooting distance.

The Luton front rank suffered through not being so well led in the centre. Of course, one reason of this was the wonderful work put in by Latham, the home centre half, who, by the way, is the trainer of the City club. He is by no means a back number, however, and has actually played this season for Wales in the International against Ireland, and his team proved victorious. It was the right wing pair who made most ground for Luton, and Stephenson's pace was really the cause of both goals, as he left Croft standing each time before planting the ball in the goal mouth. Wileman, as usual, proved the cleverest artist in mid-field. All the halves worked hard, and they had a trying time against the lively City forwards.