

FOUR POINTS FROM MARDY.

Another Single Goal Victory for the Blues.

Although Mardy are looked upon as rather small "fry" when they are travelling, all the clubs rather dread their visits to the hill country at Maerdy, for curiously that is the way the name on the station is spelt, although the shorter word is more generally adopted. In the forecasts in the various Welsh journals on Saturday morning the comment made on the fact that Mardy ran Luton so close the previous week was that it was practically certain the verdict would be reversed in the return game. Anyway, the narrow win at Luton gave the knowing ones in South Wales an idea that the Straw-workers would be rather an easy prey this journey away from home, but the double victory this week will at least command more respect in the future.

The same team turned out for Luton as at Abertillery. Although Simms was with the party it was thought the small ground would suit

Brewis rather than the Barnsley player, as he would probably be able to shake off his opponents in such a confined space, because play is always among a crowd on the half-sized ground at Mardy. By the way, even if the worst comes to the worst and Luton are again members of the Second Division, they will not play on the same ground again, for another and larger pitch is being got ready, and Mardy expect to have it available in a month's time. It will be a little further from the station, but that will be a small matter if the size is put right. It is being made up by pit refuse being tipped at the side if a ledge carved out of the hillside for a roadway.

The kick-off had been arranged for five o'clock, as is usual in the Rhondda Valley, but the referee was very doubtful as to the light holding out, as on arrival at the railway terminus it was impossible to see the tops of the hills on account of a thick mist which hung up the valley. The Luton officials and the referee himself were in favour of starting at 4.30, but eventually it was agreed to make a prompt commencement at 4.45, and by not leaving the field at the interval get the game finished at 6.15. This programme was carried out, but curiously enough as soon as this was decided upon the clouds lifted and the light improved so much that it would have been quite possible to have finished with sufficient light if the original time had been adhered to, for at 6.40 the light was still good.

The Mardy team was only changed in one instance from the previous week, Cartmill taking the outside-right position in place of the other. The newcomer hails from Blackpool, and played for their Central League team regularly last season. The team was therefore: Middleton; Jones and Jenkins; Arthurs, Griffiths and Tebbutt; Cartmill, Hall, Fitzsimmons, Penney and Lockett. The referee was Mr. E. E. Small, of Bristol.

The game opened quietly before a small crowd on account of the early start, but the spectators were filing in pretty fast, and finally there would be about 1,500 present. Wileman put in the first shot at goal, getting the ball from his partner, but Middleton had no difficulty in getting it away. Within a few minutes Rollinson appeared likely to burst clear, when he was badly fouled, and Bob Hawkes taking the place kick tried to beat Middleton with a clever attempt, but again the goalie was equal to the occasion. It was then Mitchell's turn to come into the picture, but he was not seriously troubled, and cleared easily. A minute later Hall was going through when Mitchell came out and blocked his journey, but got a nasty knock in the effort, and the game was stopped for a minute or two.

Two corners fell to Mardy in quick succession, but a foul against Cartmill relieved the danger on the second occasion, and the game for a time was rather tame. After twenty-two minutes' play a burst down the centre of the field by the Luton forwards culminated in Wileman getting in a shot which Middleton failed to clear promptly, and the Luton outside-right running on had no difficulty in steering the ball into the net. Mardy looked like equalising from a corner kick, but Arthurs headed the ball just over, and it landed on top of the net. The relief was, however, only temporary, for the goal-kick was soon sent back, and Lockett getting clear of Elvey sent in a splendid cross drive which certainly seemed likely to score all the way. Fortunately for Luton the ball struck the cross-bar, and went out of play wide of the goal. Just on half-time one of the many melees which take place on such a small playing area occurred in the Mardy goalmouth, and Brewis standing almost under the bar turned the ball into the net for Luton's second goal. Thus the interval arrived with the score:

at their favourite end, and led upon them to force the play. During one of the attacks Jarvie attempted to charge Arthurs the ball almost in the limit of the penalty area, and the linesman on that side at once waved a flag for something which was not apparent to anyone in the stand. No one thought of a penalty, the referee least of all, for, as he stated after the match, he saw nothing wrong whatever. But three or four players were between him and the ball he accepted the linesman's ruling and gave a penalty kick. It is true he consulted the other linesman, but he was in a worse position than the referee himself, and could give no assistance whatever. Therefore, only one of the three officials had a real voice in the matter, and he not the principal one. Jenkins took the kick, and Mitchell just managed to stop the ball, bringing off a fine save. He punched the ball well out of goal, but as luck had it, Pinney, running on, had the good fortune to get it driven at his toe, and he returned it into the net. It was hard lines on Mitchell after such a brilliant save from the penalty kick itself.

It was now a fight for points, and Mardy for a time threatened to pull the match out of the fire, but the Luton defence held out to the end. Recognising that it wanted another goal to make matters safe, Luton made strong efforts to secure this, and it almost appeared that the desired point was coming from a centre from Stevens, but Middleton tipped the ball over the bar for a corner kick, which Wilkie placed finely, only for Stevens to head over. Rollinson all but did the trick with a clever cross drive, which only just missed the target ten minutes off time. Probably the most Mardy done to equalising matters came from a run and centre from Lockett, the ball dropping in the centre of the goal-mouth, but Fitzsimmons shot over. Just before the finish Wilkie got across a good centre, and Stevens being right up it look a "cert" goal, but he was fouled badly, and the final whistle going just after, the score remained:

LUTON 2, MARDY 1.

The game was much more interesting than the one at Luton between the same clubs. Mardy in particular played better football, although they are somewhat a one man side. Jones stands out right away from his fellows, and but for him they would be easy prey. His kicking was very fine, but his judgment was perhaps better, although the fact of his knowing the ground undoubtedly helps him to get into a position whereby defensive play is made to look easy. Wilkie certainly paid him respect, and it would have been better for Luton's goal average if he had got closer in several times.

So far as Luton are concerned, all the team tried, but it needed a little more finish in close quarters to force home the attack on several occasions, and if any fault is to be found, it is here. Mitchell certainly cannot be blamed, for he made no mistake right through the game. Jarvie and Elvey appear to be fitting into each other's play very nicely, although Jarvie at times appears to venture a trifle too far up the field. But Frittlif was usually on the alert, and covered up any temporary absence of Jarvie from the last line of defence. Bob and Fred Hawkes were both in good form, and Bob was watched every time he got the ball with rather anxious eyes by the local crowd, who remembered his two goals on the ground last season.

Wileman and Rollinson were the most effective forwards, and their clever work proved most useful in the cramped area. Stevens also did well up to a point, but he did not always finish his work in the best style. Brewis proved useful, but not brilliant. He also needs to get in quicker if goals are to be scored. Still the forwards at times played pretty football, and the result, inasmuch as two points were secured, was satisfactory although of course it will need a much greater effort when the teams out for promotion are met. For, of course, neither Mardy or Abertillery expect to become First Division teams next season.

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FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS.

By "Vigilant."

LUTON TOP THE SECOND DIVISION.

English Clubs go strong in Wales.

Luton Town have early gone to the head of affairs in the Second Division of the Southern League, in spite of the disappointing display they gave against Mardy in the opening game of the campaign at home. It was a new experience for the players last week to spend the best part of the week in the salubrious atmosphere of South Wales, and a very satisfactory experience, too, seeing that it brought them four points that may prove very valuable. The Blues took the full four points from Mardy last year, but although the Welshmen did not strike one as any very great shakes when they played at Luton, the display of the Blues was also far from convincing, and remembering the accounts given last season of the peculiarities of the Mardy ground most people were prepared to hear of the loss of at least one point. Abertillery were, of course, dark horses, and, from all one can learn, Luton may well congratulate themselves on having been early visitors there. They promise to become a knotty problem, and two points in hand is much better than two points in prospect—probably.

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As I have said, this sequence of three successes places Luton at the head of affairs, for after taking seven goals out of Caerphilly and Barry, Swansea failed on Saturday to do better than a pointless draw with Ton Pentre. It was on the latter's ground, but seeing Caerphilly won there the Swans should have done better. Treharris should provide Luton with a soft thing next Saturday. When they visited Luton last season they were beaten 4—0, and so far they have met with three successive defeats, and scored only two goals against nine. Llanelly, by the odd goal in three, inflicted on them their second defeat at home on Saturday. Still the Luton forwards have yet to find their scoring boots, and it is high time they came across them.

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The English clubs are evidently going to have a big say in the promotion question this season, for all of them were successful on Saturday, and three of them were in Wales. Croydon Common must be regarded as first favourites in the light of their victory at Newport, although it was by the only goal. The County are regarded as the strongest Welsh team after the three points they took from Pontypridd, and on Saturday they had the assistance of a new inside left named Wilkinson, who last season played for Blackpool in most of their League matches. Stoke also won in Wales, scoring 2—0 against Mid-Rhondda, and at home Brentford put on 5—0 against Caerphilly. The other results were:—Aberdare 4, Barry 2. Pontypridd 2, Abertillery 0. The records of the leading clubs are:—