

LUTON v. CAERPHILLY.

Played at Caerphilly on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	9 goals.
Caerphilly	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Mitchell; Elvey and Robinson; F. Hawkes, Frith, and R. Hawkes; Durrant, Wileman, Simms, Rollinson, and Hear.

Caerphilly—Bateman; Markland and Peplow; Davies, Lean, and Evans; Barlow, McCall, Mitchell, Pickett, and Jones.

Referee, Mr. A. E. Farrant (Bristol).

After the poor show Caerphilly put up the previous week, most Lutonians expected two Southern League points as a result of the team's journey to South Wales for the return match, but the actual result was a surprise nevertheless. The score is certainly a record for the present season, and in all probability in the history of the club so far as away games are concerned. It will be noticed that for the first time since the Cup-tie at South Shields the three first choice inside forwards were playing together, and although Rollinson, on his first appearance since his illness, only secured one goal, he fitted into the attack and combined to bring about the extraordinary result. Despite the score being such a heavy one, Bateman came out with infinite credit, and for just on half-an-hour succeeded in keeping a clean sheet. During this period he played a brilliant game, and if he had been beaten three or four times it would not have caused any surprise.

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Durrant was playing his first Southern League game in South Wales, and after the tales that have been told about the terrible grounds in that district, would doubtless be surprised at the playing pitch at Caerphilly. As a matter of fact, but for the frost, the pitch, from a playing point of view, would have been an ideal one, and it is not a fair sample of South Wales grounds. It is decidedly the best in the competition, and even in wet weather is fairly dry, being the best drained ground in the whole of South Wales. On Saturday, the chief handicap arose through the sun rendering the top surface the least bit greasy, and as just underneath the ground was as hard as a macadam road, the studs gave no proper foothold. When the players attempted to turn round swiftly they more often than not lost their balance, and several amusing incidents were seen from this cause.

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Both sides were a trifle changed from the previous week, and were reported stronger in consequence. Barlow, the home outside right, was making his first appearance since Christmas, and as Peplow was again fit, Lean was able to take up his usual position at centre half, where he is generally looked upon as a difficult man to pass. Anyway, some of the Luton players have distinct remembrances of his kicking powers in that memorable match on the mud-heap at Newport last season, when the result was very different from that at Caerphilly.

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Mitchell, on making his re-appearance after just on six weeks' absence, had quite a quiet afternoon, and did not have more than three scoring shots to save the whole game. As will be gathered from the result, most of the game was fought out in the home quarters, and Elvey and Robinson were seldom seriously tested, but what they had to do was done in good style, Robinson making his most successful appearance

of the season at left back. The reason Jarvis was not playing was on account of a troublesome abrasion, which had prevented him training all the week, and although it was much easier on Friday, it was decided it was not advisable to play him under the circumstances.

Hear made quite a successful debut as a professional, for although he was the only forward who did not score, he was the direct cause of more than one of the goals by his clever work on the wing. Still, it was scarcely a serious test, and he will often have to face a more vigorous defence if he retains his place in the team. After the opening stages, the Luton right wing were altogether too clever for their opponents, and appeared to come through almost as they liked. As a matter of fact, the Luton half-back line were more often than not acting as extra forwards, and the only surprise is that none of them was among the scorers, so often were they in the vicinity of Bateman.

On the Caerphilly side, only Bateman can look back on the game with any pride, and he as usual was the hero of the crowd. How many shots he kept out it would be difficult to say, but he might have been beaten by at least a further nine without being called upon to explain his weakness. He, as at Luton, was the outstanding Caerphilly player, for although the other members of the side set up a stubborn resistance, they had little method in their tactics, and were quite content if they could just manage to get a kick at the ball without any definite idea as to what should be done with it. The few occasions the home forwards got at all dangerous were individual efforts, usually the result of a lucky securing of the ball from a return from Bateman's area, and one or the other would dash away with it down the field with an almost clear run, as on account of the pressure most of the Luton players were well in the home half of the field.

It is difficult to understand how the Caerphilly officials keep their end up at all, for the support they get cannot pay expenses, much less decent wages. On Saturday the number present would be less than 500, and this was a bigger rate than their previous home fixture. After the match the Secretary was quite down-hearted at the heavy defeat, and said it would mean not more than a £5 rate at the Mardy match this week-end. Caerphilly boasts of a population of just over 15,000, but as most of the miners work two or three miles out the attendance suffers, unless the games commence about four o'clock, but even then the many defeats the team have sustained at home do not create much interest. It is certainly curious that the club have done much better away from Caerphilly than at home, and of the twelve points so far obtained only four have been secured at Virginia Park, as the home ground is styled, with much more claim to the name than certain grounds which are so called, Yna Park, at Ton Pentre, to wit.

It would only be a wearisome task to give a detailed description of the game as it was played at Caerphilly, and except for the eleven times the ball entered the net it would usually wind up with Bateman bringing off a brilliant save or one of the Luton forwards failing to take advantage of the opening, so it will be sufficient just to mention the actual facts relating to the ball entering the net. Before the first goal which went to the credit of Luton was scored, Simms got the ball through twice. First he palpably punched it through, and on the second occasion he got the ball from a scrimmage, and although he was very near Bateman it is doubtful if the referee was correct in giving him offside. Naturally, with so much pressure, Bateman had been pretty busy, and the spectators were hugely delighted with his display, but it could not be expected he could manage to keep Luton out for many minutes, and after half-an-hour's play Rollinson getting an easy opening from a centre by Durrant, neatly turned the ball through, and thus started the scoring. Before the interval, two further goals came along, Wileman driving in from Hear's centre, the ball hitting under the bar and glancing into the net, while Simms headed the third when Rollinson screwed the ball literally off the goal line following a clearance from Bateman, which apparently was going for a corner kick. Just on half-time, Jones got down the field, and Mitchell was very sound in dropping down to his shot at goal from close range. The Luton goalkeeper hurt himself somewhat in making this save, but fortunately it was not his old knee trouble, and he expressed himself after the game as quite fit, not having felt the least bit of handicap from the injury sustained at South Shields, which has kept him from active service for such a long period.

The second half had a sensational opening, for Wileman added to the score without a single Caerphilly player touching the ball, going clean through from the re-start, Simms and F. Hawkes being the only other players to touch the ball. Within a couple of minutes, Simms added goal number five from a burst through the centre, and with the home defence now thoroughly demoralised, it seemed goals were the easiest things to score, and ten minutes from the re-start Simms had netted again, following a corner kick, Fred Hawkes giving Simms the ball. This was followed by another, Durrant being the one to beat Bateman, this time after closing in to meet a centre from the opposite wing. Still another corner brought along another goal for Luton, Simms heading through. As the five goals in the second half had been netted in little over a quarter of an hour, speculation arose as to how many would be scored before the finish, but only one other came along, Durrant getting through on his own and beating Bateman with a clever cross drive. There was still some twelve minutes to go, and hopes were high for a double figure score, but Bateman just prevented this, and once or twice the home forwards, for the first time during the match, flattered their supporters by giving Mitchell an opportunity of distinguishing himself, but he was never really pushed, and kept a clean sheet.

FOOTBALL NOTES.

[By CRUSADER].

It was a case of Luton v. Bateman for the greater part of the match at Caerphilly on Saturday, and it ended very satisfactorily for Luton. Nine goals to nothing is good reading from the winners' point of view, and seeing the poor show that the Caerphilly team as a whole made, the score might have been double without causing a deal of surprise to those watching the game. Bateman played really well, as is obvious from the fact that no more than nine goals were scored against him, although he had such very small assistance in stemming the tide (from the River Lea!).

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The game was not much of a test for the new professional—Hoar. It was a pleasant introduction to the South Wales grounds both for him and Durrant. Simms did splendidly, scoring four of the goals, while Durrant and Wileman each scored two. The other was netted by Rollinson, who was playing his first game since recovering from a rather bad chill. It was also Mitchell's first game for some time. About the only occasion that he had anything to do was when Jones (who was the best of the Caerphilly men in the match at Luton) broke away in company with Caerphilly's Mitchell, and Luton's Mitchell got winded in keeping out the attack.

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Stoke, at home, did not do particularly well against Ton Pentre. They won by 2-0, it is true, but we have come to expect the English clubs to make much more of a meal than that out of two or three poorest Welsh teams. For 45 minutes Ton Pentre were a man short, because R. Jones, their outside left, who has been laid up with a damaged knee, resumed his place again on Saturday, only to have the experience of his knee giving way again twenty-five minutes from the start. As a matter of fact, Ton Pentre's performance is considered their best of the season. The first goal was scored ten minutes from the start, and after that Ton Pentre kept the Potters out right up to a quarter of an hour from the finish, when Stoke only got home again by means of a penalty.

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Further cases of players being ordered off occurred in the Second Division of the Southern League on Saturday. At Treharria, where Abertillery had one of the two goals, Jamieson, the visitors' right half, and Hugh Williams, the home inside right, were sent off in the second half. There had been some roughness in the first half. Mid Rhondda got beaten by two goals to nothing at Newport, where the home team about deserved the victory.

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Luton are filling up their blank day next Saturday with a friendly match against Southend at the seaside. The Luton ground will be occupied by the Clarence, who have Finchley at visitors.