

AN UNFORTUNATE GOAL.

Luton's Average Lowered by Chance Shot.

Barry's Plucky Display.

The Luton Town players must be getting quite accustomed to mudlarking in wind and rain. No one, at any rate, can justly accuse them of being a fair weather team, for their last three victories in the Second Division of the Southern League have been registered on water-logged mud heaps, with the players having to face the additional disadvantage of drenching downpours. On Saturday afternoon they encountered a biting wind which brought with it an incessant rain, interspersed with sleet and quite a heavy fall of snow, and it spoke volumes for the keenness with which the Town Club's supporters are following their progress to promotion that the attendance at the match ran to quite 4,500. The gate of about £115 altogether exceeded expectations, and put in the shade the financial returns of many of the First Division Southern League games. The ground was a swamp, water lying about in pools and the pitch has not been in a worse state since the memorable occasion when Luton lowered Cardiff City's unbeaten record in the Second Division last season. In fact, except for the size of the crowd, the players might well have imagined they were playing in Wales instead of in Luton, and it gives some idea of what the Blues went through at Aberdare the previous week when it is stated that they describe Saturday's experience as child's play to it. It is quite true that most of them had had quite enough of it long before the final whistle went, but still it was remarkable how admirably they adapted themselves to the wretched conditions, for it is no exaggeration to say that, in the main, the game was entitled to rank among the most attractive League displays witnessed at Luton this season.

The Blues relied upon the same team that defeated Brentford and Aberdare, and therefore their eleven was like that representing Barry on their first visit to Luton in that it differed in several instances from the team which turned out in the first match at Barry. The visitors, who were captained by Wightman, brother of the deceased Luton back of a few seasons ago, have had since Christmas as their playing manager a Bedfordshire man in Beaumont, the old Watford half-back, who hails from Biggleswade, and was with Merthyr last year. He has been playing centre forward, but he did not turn out at Luton, nor did Catlow, the centre-half. Still Barry had several newcomers, including Fyfe, who was Newport's centre last season. Appended are the respective elevens;

Luton:—Mitchell; Elvey, Robinson; Fred Hawkes, Frith, Bob Hawkes; Durrant, Wileman, Simms, Rollinson, Hoar.

Barry:—Sedgley; White, Wightman; Webb, Walton, Mullineux; Bates, Sheldon, Millard, Fyfe, Ishenwood.

was called upon to end their most dangerous attack of the match by turning outside the post a hot shot at close quarters from Sheldon. With this exception all the scoring attempts were at the other end. Simms had a promising shot just deflected wide of the post, and from the corner Wileman also had a hot drive turned from its course. A smart run by Simms and Durrant led to Rollinson beating the goalkeeper at the second attempt, but he was ruled off-side. Rollinson was having quite one of his off-days from a scoring point of view, missing again when seeming a certain scorer, while on another occasion he ran clean through, and with the goalkeeper coming out to meet him, steered the ball wide of the mark. Simms, heading in from a grand centre by Wileman, had a fine effort fisted away, and so the final result stood:—

Luton 3, Barry 1.

Luton could claim a much greater superiority over their opponents than the score suggests, but although in many respects they were overplayed by a cleverer combination they, as well as the home team, are entitled to every praise for the sterling qualities they exhibited under such adverse conditions. Both teams displayed football of a stamp which was surprisingly good under all the circumstances, and it would be doing the visitors an injustice if it were not said that they acquitted themselves as well as any Welsh team that has visited Luton this season. Millard led the forwards with splendid dash, and fed his wingers with unerring accuracy, and the right wing were responsible for many promising movements, and it was not their fault that they were always effectively checked as soon as they reached the danger zone. The heroes of the visiting team were, however, the backs and goalkeeper. Sedgley made a number of brilliant saves, although his style was not very convincing, and Wightman, at back, played with such marked cleverness as to give the impression that he could do equally well in other positions.

Except for that one unfortunate misunderstanding, which resulted in another smudge on Luton's goal average, the home defence was quite faultless. Both Elvey and Robinson kicked and tackled with splendid resource, and the halves have seldom shone to better advantage. Each excelled in his own particular characteristics, and if one mentions Bob Hawkes and Frith it is because of the wonderfully clever touches with which Bob outwitted his opponents, and the evidences displayed by Frith of talent in other directions than that of

The pitch was in such an awful state that one was quite prepared for nothing more than an exhibition of glorified mud-larking, with slipping, sliding and miskicking galore. There was, of course, plenty of slipping and sliding, and most of the players had their fill of mud baths, and upward as well as downward showers, but from the start both sides showed wonderful aptitude in adapting themselves to the conditions and set a remarkably high standard in the football that was displayed. Barry, evidently not at all strange to the soft and heavy going, were most prominent at the start, but within five minutes Luton were a goal up. Before it came Wileman and Simms dashed clean through the opposition, and Simms looked a certain scorer when Wightman rushed across and brought off a brilliant clearance. Hoar, however, got the ball back into the centre and from a scramble Wileman trickily paved the way for an opening for Simms, who pounced on it, let fly without dalliance and scored a real beauty.

The Blues were quickly back again, and after Bob Hawkes had tested the goalkeeper with a grounder, Simms completely beat him with a similar shot which, however, returned into play from the upright. Rollinson just missed with a lovely header from a corner kick by Hoar, the goalkeeper dropped a hot free kick drive from Fred Hawkes into the sawdust and kicked away when it was perilously close to the line, and then Simms put paid to a gem of a movement in which he, Wileman, and Fred Hawkes figured only to be ruled offside. Another smart passing movement gave Rollinson the easiest of chances, but with the goal at his mercy, this usually safest of shots shot much earlier than he need have done and quite unaccountably lifted the ball over the bar. He missed another chance that was almost as easy from a free kick by Hoar, and Wileman was also somewhat at fault for the same movement.

So the game ran on with Barry playing pretty strongly in midfield, but frequently harassed in front of goal until after twenty minutes Wileman, in attempting one of his characteristic dashes through, was pulled up sharp as he was in the act of shooting, and sustained an injury which caused him to be carried off the field by Trainer Lawson. His absence was naturally felt in the Luton attack, but the Blues' backs were so steady and unfaltering, and the halves so resourceful in attack as well as defence, that the visitors' defence had nearly all the anxiety. A misunderstanding between the goalkeeper and one of his backs was within an ace of giving Simms a second goal, and Hoar, playing in grand style, kept the visiting backs and goalkeeper on tenter hooks. The Luton forwards were splendidly on the target as a rule, and Rollinson was twice unfortunate to find the goalkeeper's hands, while Hoar had a grounder kicked away very riskily. The goalkeeper relied a good deal on his feet and took a number of risks in this direction, but they came off. Once, however, he had to go full length to save a beauty from Simms close against the post, and it was unfortunate that Simms did not perceive that Wileman had returned, because from Hoar's centre he robbed Wileman of one of his favourite drives.

It wanted about ten minutes to the change of ends when Wileman returned, and Luton had controlled the game to such an extent that it was something of a heavy blow when, with five minutes to go, Barry equalised. Whenever they broke away the visitors were directed to let fly, and in quick succession Mitchell had his only two shots of the half, both from long range. Sheldon tried the first and Walton the second. The first one was easily negotiated, but in the case of the second

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a movement by Elvey caused a fatal misunderstanding. He appeared to get out of the way so as to give Mitchell a clear view, but Mitchell seemed to think he was going for the ball, and being momentarily unsighted left his effort too late, and the ball bounced over or through his arms just inside the post. Luton were, however, ahead again in a minute, pretty work by the two Hawkeses enabling Wileman to dart through and score a sparkling goal. He nearly repeated the feat directly afterwards, but the interval came with the score

Luton 2, Barry 1.

The Blues restarted with rare rash, Wileman initiating a brilliant individual run from which a corner was forced by Durrant, and placed so beautifully that Simms easily headed another goal. Wileman, however, hurt himself to such an extent in the effort, that although he remained on the field he was of little service, except to be handy for a shooting chance now and again. Rollinson missed another easy chance from a lovely centre by Durrant, which gave him the opportunity for one of those headers which he rarely misses, and then a heavy fall of snow caused the game for some minutes to take quite a farsical turn. They seemed to have had just enough of it, and the play deteriorated considerably and was woefully lacking in incident. But Barry kept pegging away with such persistency that although they did not succeed in worrying Mitchell they troubled the Luton defence considerably and incidentally aroused the homesters to a sense of the need for a fresh outburst of activity. Durrant made an individual run half the length of the field and got clear, but the goalkeeper simply stuck out his foot and cleared Durrant's shot very luckily. Jamie had another clear field presented to him by Fred Hawkes and should have made no mistake this time, but he ran in too close and was "jammed," before he could make an effective shot. Sedgley also brought off a magnificent save from Wileman who rammed the ball in for all he was worth as it came across from the left at close quarters, the custodian not only being smart in holding on to the ball, but also repulsing a dangerous rush by Simms and Rollinson.

Still Barry gamely stuck to their task, and although they could rarely get to close quarters they had a much larger share of the exchanges than in the first half. The facility with which they swung the ball from wing to wing once completely nonplussed the Blues' defence, and Mitchell was called upon to end their most dangerous attack of the match by turning outside the post a hot shot at close quarters from Sheldon. With this exception all the scoring attempts were at the other end. Simms had a promising shot just deflected wide of the post, and from the corner Wileman also had a hot drive turned from its course. A smart run by Simms and Durrant led to Rollinson beating the goalkeeper at the second attempt, but he was ruled off-side. Rollinson was having quite one of his off-days from a scoring point of view, missing again when seeming a certain scorer, while on another occasion he ran clean through, and with the goalkeeper coming out to meet him, steered the ball wide of the mark. Simms, heading in from a grand centre by Wileman, had a fine effort fisted away, and so the final result stood:—

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