

FOOTBALL.

NORWICH CITY v. LUTON.

Played at Norwich on Saturday. Result:—

Norwich City 5 goals.

Luton Town 1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Mitchell; Elvey and Dunn; F. Hawkes, Frith, and R. Hawkes; Roberts, Wilman, Simms, Rollinson, and Hear.

Norwich City—Lonsdale; Allen and Mackenzie; Collins, Woodlands, and Molyneaux; Potter, Taylor, Woods, Ritchie, and A. W. Forsdike.

Referee, Mr. J. T. Hornby (London).

It will be noticed that Luton were at full strength, Rollinson making his first appearance since Christmas. Norwich were also well represented, although short of Wilson, who was being rested for the Cup-tie. His absence caused Woods to come into the centre, and thus leave a vacancy at outside left, which was filled by a local amateur, who was making his initial appearance in the Southern League. It is a trying journey to Norwich, and the Luton players were fifteen hours away from home, and of this period twelve hours and a half were spent in the train or waiting about on stations. Thus they were only two hours and a half in Norwich, which does not give a great deal of margin for dressing, etc., and it was a rush after the match to catch the 5.5 p.m. train, for otherwise it is just possible they might have been stranded in London, as the trains were hours late on the Great Eastern Railway on Saturday. According to the time-table, Luton were due at Norwich at one o'clock, which would have given ample time before the kick-off, but it was nearly half-past two before they arrived, and it was a rush to the ground.

There was a deal of fog about, and at one time it was quite on the cards the game would not be finished, but fortunately, from one point of view, it was possible to play the whole ninety minutes. Still, it is more than likely a very different result would have come about if the game had to be re-played, for the Norwich officials themselves would be the first to admit the heavy defeat was scarcely fair to the Luton players on the actual run of the game. Indeed, it was remarked that of the two goal-keepers, Lonsdale had the greater amount of work to do. It was a patchy game, inasmuch that at times one side or the other quite overplayed its opponents. It should be stated that the greater part of the attacking was done at the bottom goal, and four of the six goals were netted at this end.

At the start it was all Norwich, and it was lucky Luton were able to maintain a clean sheet for nearly a quarter of an hour, for it was during this stage that Mitchell's charge was hotly attacked. When the goal came it was the result of a rare rough and tumble in the goal area, and Mitchell was taking part in the tussle a yard or so out, when Ritchie saw his chance and with a sharp drive sent the ball into the open goal. Dunn made a gallant attempt to save the situation, and actually kicked the ball clear, but it was palpably through before Dunn could get at it, and the referee at once gave the goal. The Luton players attempted to bounce the official, but after consulting one linesman he stuck to his decision. Roberts put in a speedy run on the right, which led up to a corner, but Lonsdale swept the ball away, and Norwich took up the attack again. Potter getting the better of an encounter with Dunn, he had a clear run, and tipping the ball in the centre. Woods had the easiest of openings and increased the lead by netting out of Mitchell's reach.

The City's third goal came as the result of a corner following a fine save on the part of Mitchell, Potter taking the flag kick for Woods to head into the net. A few minutes later, Luton got one back from a throw-in on the right; the ball was sent across, and Lonsdale ran out to clear, but Hear was just one stride too quick for him and kicked into the net. If the score had remained for the interval stage at that margin Luton could not have complained a deal, for undoubtedly the home side had put in the major share of the attacking, but just on half-time Forsdike got the ball across, and Taylor scored a fourth goal for the City with a left-foot shot.

Soon after change of ends, Luton took a free kick for a foul on Rollinson, and Lonsdale falling down after stopping the ball Simms drove it hard against the upright. It was a lucky escape for the City, and they had many such afterwards. Luton were now top dog, and were pressing quite as hard as their opponents did when playing down the slope, but with less

good luck in the openings. Simms looked a certain scorer after taking a nice centre from Roberts, but again he hit the post with a terrific drive. As a prominent Norwich official remarked, it was difficult to realise Luton were three goals down, for they were playing as if they had the game well in hand. Lonsdale was doing splendid work in the City goal, taking many risks, but he came off each time. Naturally, with so much pressure he enjoyed a fair share of good luck to keep his charge intact. One of Roberts' centres, for instance, screwed off Mackenzie's boot and went goalwards, but Lonsdale threw himself at the ball and saved the situation. Lonsdale was applauded for smartly fielding a nasty high shot from Roberts just under the bar, and then an unexpected disaster for Luton came along. A break-away found Norwich attacking, and although Mitchell kept out a header following a corner the ball was not got clear, and Taylor sent a cross drive from an acute angle, which found a resting-place in the net. There was not more than a quarter of an hour to go, and Luton were now in a hopeless condition so far as securing points were concerned, and they fell away to an extent, and the game was more even than at any former period.

As mentioned in Saturday's "Telegraph," there was a strong contingent of Lutonians on the stand, and it was unfortunate for them the defeat was so overwhelming, for they would dearly have liked to do a little crowing. Before the match started they kept the crowd amused by a series of topical ditties, being led by a conductor who had discarded his khaki cap in favour of a miniature light blue straw hat decked with blue and white streamers. Seated on the stand in a compact body they made quite a brave show with Luton favours in straw and ribbon, and naturally greeted Bob Hawkes and the rest of them with musical honours when they trooped -- the field.

So far as the play itself was concerned, Luton did not do at all badly, but they could never quite make up the leeway of the early City success, which came largely as a result of enjoying the benefit of the decided slope in the first half. To make matters worse, the pitch at the bottom goal was several inches deep in mud, and the Luton defenders were greatly handicapped, for they were time after time quite deceived by the ball sticking fast when they were waiting for it to roll towards them, and a Norwich player would come up and try a shot at goal. Naturally, mistakes were frequent, and both sides at times were made to look foolish by over-running the ball altogether, but the City were fortunate enough to profit most by these really accidental happenings.

Mitchell could not be blamed for the heaviest defeat Luton have sustained in the League this season, and it is curious to note it was the biggest victory for Norwich of the season, although only Millwall have won on the ground since September came in. Several teams, however, have managed to divide the honours, and it was common talk that Luton played quite as well as most of the teams which have visited Norwich. If there was any failure, of course the score indicates it was in defence, but honestly they were a trifle unfortunate on being beaten so often. Forward, Luton, when they held the advantage of ground, were quite equal to their opponents, Roberts doing good work, which in the ordinary way would have led up to several goals. Simms was decidedly unlucky with his shooting. Still, as a line, they did well with the all-important exception of finishing their work with goals. It should be noted it was the first away defeat in the Southern League since Southend won over two months ago.

Norwich owe a lot to Lonsdale, who took all kinds of risks, and only once let his side down. As a matter of fact, he probably had more shots to deal with than Mitchell, including those he went out to get. Allen and Mackenzie were a couple of vigorous defenders, and never stood on ceremony, while the home half-backs helped them considerably when Luton were putting on pressure after change of ends. Potter was the home forward most in evidence, but Woods did really well in the centre, distributing the ball nicely. For a new-comer, Forsdike gave promise, but with the exception of his centre which gave Taylor his chance to net the fourth goal, his work did not tell in the same way as that of his comrade on the opposite wing. Although last week the gate was only about £70, they are expecting a big haul next Saturday for the Cup-tie, and the reserved tickets were having a ready sale after the match, and as the charges have been raised to a shilling on the popular side it is expected the takings will exceed £500.