

Southern League

LUTON v. GILLINGHAM.

WOODEN SPOONISTS PLUCKY.

BUT LUTON WIN WELL.

Southern League football was resumed on the Town ground, Luton, this afternoon, and though Gillingham, as visitors, were not for obvious reasons in the nature of a decided attraction, there was a promising number of spectators when the teams lined up. Besides not having won an away game this season, Gillingham had only been able on an average to draw one point from each match at home; consequently, they came to Luton this afternoon from the lowest rung on the ladder.

The four steps separating the teams prior to the game scarcely represented the actual effect of Luton's lead, however, as they were eight points ahead, and a game in hand, of their visitors. As will be seen from the following teams, Wilson appeared at centre-half for the home club, Frith having wired yesterday his inability to play.

The teams were:—

LUTON.

Right.

Left.

Mitchell.

Elvey.

Dunn.

F. Hawkes. Wilson. R. Hawkes.

Roberts. Wileman. Simms. Rollinson. Hoar.

O

Weightman.

Wimsett. Thomas.

Gilligan. Pinkney.

Johnson.

Gray.

Mahon.

Leslie.

Mosley.

Bailey.

Left.

Right.

GILLINGHAM.

Referee: Mr. C. T. Lutwyche (Birmingham).

Bob Hawkes was fortunate in the spin of the coin, and he set Gillingham to kick down the slope. The opening exchanges were at a pace that would require some keeping up, and in two minutes the ball had twice gone the length of the field. At first, a break-away by Gillingham looked dangerous, and Gilligan brought Mitchell to his knees with a swift grounder. His clearance set the Luton forwards nicely on the move, but the incursion came to nothing, nor did Rollinson's attempt two minutes later, after Hoar had sped up the left wing with a pretty pass from Bob Hawkes.

A free kick thirty yards out presented the visitors with a pretty bout of heading, and, similarly good work was seen close in from an immediate corner. But Mitchell was fist-ing with sure judgment, and backs or halves were on the spot to speed the parting ball.

Then Luton had a look-in, thanks to a long centre from Roberts, but Wilson, who received from Bob Hawkes, drove wide of the left upright from twenty yards' range.

"BUCK UP" AND THE RESPONSE.

There was little or no sting in Luton's work up to now, but as if in response to cries of "Buck up, Luton!" Roberts dashed up the wing, and as he tried to pass Mosley, the latter stumbled. This let in Wileman, who brought Bailey nearly to the ground with a stinger, and at the right moment Roberts stepped forward and crashed the dallying ball high into the net. For several minutes afterwards Luton maintained the pressure, and Wileman again fetched the Gillingham custodian to his knees with a forcible drive, but nothing came of the incident.

Hereabouts Luton began to pile up incident, and Simms came full into the lime-light with a solo movement which he also converted into a goal. He had run a quarter of the field on his own, and after shaking off the opposition he neatly beat the goalkeeper, who had come out to intercept.

Simms found the net again almost immediately, after Roberts had flashed the ball right over to the other wing for Hoar to strike the upright wide of the goalkeeper, but the referee disallowed the point.

GILLINGHAM QUICKLY REPLY.

Then Gillingham broke away, and scored very prettily through Weightman, who headed into the corner of the net before Mitchell could fully recover, after negotiating a stiff proposition from another visiting forward.

The game continued fast and very interesting, with first one side and then the other looming large in the picture. For players so far down the League table, Gillingham were showing to unexpected advantage, and Gillingham had hard lines in being robbed at a favourite angle close in. At the other end, Rollinson and Hoar carried out a fine movement, and the former only had his chance spoiled at the expense of a corner.

The Luton team were playing finely to a man, and it was only the brilliance of the Gillingham defence that held them in check. Roberts shot in, and Wileman tried to get the ball into the net, but Gillingham saved at the expense of a corner. Play was taken into the Luton quarters, and after some sharp give-and-take play, the tussle ended in the ball being shot wide. Roberts was fouled near the Gillingham goal, and the subsequent kick resulted in the ball being returned to mid-field. Luton obtained possession, and F. Hawkes shot, but the ball went over. Some strenuous tussling occurred in mid-field, and the ball was taken near the Luton goal, but the movement was spoilt by Gillingham being offside. The Luton forwards carried play to the opponents' goal, and Roberts passed to Rollinson, who shot over. Gillingham made the running, but Mitchell saved from a rather feeble shot, and Luton took the ball into the visitors' quarters, where Bob Hawkes was tripped in trying to get through. Gillingham fought desperately during the rest of this half, but failed to make any alteration of the half-time score, viz.:—

Luton ————— 2

Gillingham ————— 1

During the interval the Red Cross Band played some stirring choros music.

On resuming Dunn supplied Hoar with a fine pass, but he missed a good opening with nobody to trouble him and shot wide. Simms spoiled a nice movement by putting short to Wileman, and shortly afterwards the Luton men were again in possession as the result of good tackling by their halves.

Gillingham for a few moments had the ball in the Luton half, and a long shot went

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very wide. The Gillingham forwards smartened up somewhat, but the defence was too strong for them. Luton took up the attack and Mosley distinguished himself by checking the "Blues" right wing when going at full speed.

LUTON APPEAL FOR A PENALTY.

Shortly afterwards Hoar was responsible for a magnificent centre which fell at the feet of a small crowd of players. The next instant two of the "Blue" forwards were hugging Mother Earth, and Luton claimed a penalty, but it was not allowed. In mid-field another decision of the referee was unfavourably received by the crowd, whose desire to see Luton increase their lead found expression in further cries of "Buck up, Luton." Rollinson was tripped 30 yards out from the Luton goal, and experienced an undignified fall which proved a diverting incident. About this stage the Gillingham halves tackled finely, and gave their forwards plenty of scope for short passing, but it came to nothing.

Gillingham were playing just as good a game as Luton at this time, and the spectators would not have been surprised had they at any moment levelled the scores. Wimssett had hard lines in not getting through for them on his own after a dogged run on the left in which he showed a nice turn of speed and some good dribbling. Still, Luton had to be reckoned with, and after they had revived, Wileman set hopes running high again by going down the centre. Simms had a fine opening from him, but he shot weakly, and the goalkeeper had no difficulty in dealing with the situation.

Luton should have gone further ahead in the next moment, if they had had any luck. Hoar sent in a beautiful long dropping shot which the goalkeeper could not get out to. Roberts drove the ball along the ground straight for the net, but Mosley met it and cleared as it was going over the line.

In a subsequent sprint, for which he was applauded, Simms had the mortification of finally overrunning the ball at a moment that was ripe for his final drive, and so the opening was lost. Gillingham again rallied to the attack, but the shots directed at the Luton net were wild, and missed.

Afterwards, Luton got the ball. Simms tricked the only half near him, and then gave to Wileman what appeared to be the easiest chance of the match, but Wileman disappointed by shooting right over the bar.

LUTON ON TOP.

The Gillingham men very soon tried to secure the ball, but several false kicks were made, and the movement was stopped. Each side was struggling hard for another goal, Luton being responsible for the major effort, and Wileman almost got through on his own. If he had not slipped he would certainly have given Bailey a handful. Rollinson, during a run, handled the ball. Gillingham tried hard to answer to the appeals of their supporters, but the Lutondans were too strong, and followed up every opening, keeping Gillingham on the defensive. Rollinson had to be spoken to by the referee for tripping an opponent.

THE THIRD GOAL.

Simms worked round to the left in a determined manner, but he was hampered so much by Mosley that his shot was weak and easily negotiable. Luton followed up, however, and Roberts, driving from thirty yards, scored the third goal for Luton with a fine high shot, which reached the corner of the net.

Final score—

Luton	3
Gillingham	1