

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS

Luton's two wins in three days.

Full Back ordered off at Exeter.

Luton Town's teams have been setting up records in almost disconcerting fashion during the second half of the season. The latest is to the credit of the first eleven in winning two games away from home in a week, and incidentally reaching the semi-final of the Southern Charity Cup competition for the first time in the career of the club. It is somewhat singular that the Blues have this season put up nearly all their best shows on foreign soil. In the Southern League they have gained eleven points in twelve away matches, with a goal average of 21 against 27, whereas their thirteen home games have furnished an average of a point apiece with 20 goals against 21, and it is due to the players to point out that there are only two teams in the League who have dropped fewer points away from home than Luton. Saturday's victory at Exeter was the more praiseworthy because it was a case of turning the tables on a side that took points away from Luton, the City being successful by 2-0 in October, and it has given Luton such a jump up the table that they should now be tolerably safe. There are eight clubs between them and the bottom, and the visit of Crystal Palace next Saturday ought to enable them to claim as many points as they have lost.

Exeter is one of the grounds that Luton have not visited during the last two seasons, and with the exception of Bob and Fred Hawkes none of the team who made the journey on Saturday had previously played at St. James's Park. At one time the pitch presented peculiar difficulties on account of its curious formation, and the fact that it was also several yards short of the regulation size, but it has now been extended, and visiting teams are not handicapped in this respect. Still it is quite an undertaking to make a 420 mile journey on the day of the match, and by the time the players reached Luton on their return they had done quite enough travelling.

Saturday was almost an ideal day for football, and quite a contrast from recent experiences. Still 4,000 would be a very liberal estimate of the attendance, although the officials stated it was well over their average of the present season. So far as the positions went the Luton directors went back to the usual formation, and if Frith and Hoar had been fit to turn out it would have been what has been looked upon as the regular side, but as the absentees mentioned were on the sick list, Wilson and Lindley got further opportunities to figure in Southern League circles. On the Exeter side the chief alteration from the team which beat Luton earlier in the season was Dockray at outside left, in place of F. Goodwin, it being stated that Dockray had developed into one of the most dangerous wingers in the league, and had quite earned the position. The names of the players were:—

Luton:—Mitchell; Elvey and Dunn; F. Hawkes, Wilson and R. Hawkes; Roberts, Wileman, Simms, Robinson and Lindley.

Exeter City:—Pym; Marshall and Strettle; Rigby, Layan, and Smith; Holt, Evans, Goodwin (W.), Lovitt and Dockray.

Referee, Mr. E. E. Small, Bristol.

The opening play was decidedly in favour of the "Grecians," and Dockray in particular gave considerable trouble. He was well fed, and for a time Fred Hawkes and Elvey were kept continually on the run, with the City player acting the part of the hare in the chase. If the remainder of the home attack had finished half so effectively there would have been a hot time for Mitchell between the sticks, but fortunately for Luton this was not the case. Indeed, taking into consideration the number of times the ball was in the

Luton goal area it was remarkable the little work Mitchell had to undertake to defend his charge. Within a minute or so of the start Dockray sent the ball cleverly into the centre, and Goodwin pouncing on it at once appeared to have a glorious chance, but Wilson dashing up robbed the most dangerous centre-forward in the Southern League just in time to prevent his taking aim.

After quite a spell of Easter pressure Roberts managed to get in his first run. Although the spectators clamoured loudly for the referee to pull him up for offside he was allowed to go on, but Strettle just managed to get back as the Luton winger swerved into the centre and blocked his further passage. The first really dangerous shot Mitchell had to deal with came as a result of a well placed corner by Dockray, but the Luton goalkeeper fisted the ball away in fine style. The game was still going in favour of the City, and the Luton backs were hard pressed, Dunn using his weight much too freely to suit the local spectators, who hooted pretty heartily once or twice. The referee was also of the opinion the Luton left back was playing a bit too vigorously and administered a word of caution, which certainly met with the approbation of the crowd, judging by their cheers.

Dunn was undoubtedly keeping a sharp eye on Goodwin, and seemed determined to prevent him having much time to manoeuvre for position as the ball came across from either wing. For all the pressure, however, the Luton goal did not appear in such imminent danger as Pym's charge did following a clever run and centre from Roberts. The ball dropped almost under the bar, and with Simms in close proximity Marshall just saved the situation with a fine clearance, Pym being at the other end of the goal for the moment. Midway in the first half Holt was giving almost as much trouble as his left wing comrade had done earlier in the game, and once from a slip by Dunn got clean away with the ball. He sent in a terrific drive with such force that when the ball hit the cross bar it rose high in the air and fell on the top of the net. It was rather a fortunate escape for Luton, for it would have been almost impossible for Mitchell to have stopped the shot if it had been an inch or so lower.

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the lead, but the winning goal proved very difficult to get, thanks to the fine work of the backs of both teams. Roberts gave another chance to his inside comrades following a clever run, and Rollinson tested Pym with a well-directed effort which was cleared by giving a corner kick, which came to nothing.

Probably the best save of the match was made by Mitchell, when Goodwin, having a clear shot at goal, made an attempt to place the ball into the far corner of the net, and the Luton goalie just managed to turn the ball for a corner by throwing himself full length across the goal. If this had scored, in all probability, the points would have gone to the City, for a minute or so after Dunn was ordered off the field for a very mild foul on Holt just on the touch line. It was quite a time before the crowd realised Dunn had got "marching orders," for the referee had a word or two with the linesman before going over to Dunn. Several times previously the spectators had called upon Mr. Small to send him off the field, but this time there was no such appeal, and therefore it will be understood the offence could by no means have been a "bad one." The players of both teams did their utmost to bring about an alteration of the decision, but it was no use, and Dunn, who seemed taken by complete surprise, walked up to Holt and they shook hands before the Luton back retired to the touch line to watch the further progress of the game.

Fred Hawkes took up the vacant position at back, and Wileman dropped into Fred's place at right half, and the game, curiously enough, went more in favour of Luton from this point. Roberts was usually the leader in the attack, and once or twice Pym was seriously troubled from this side of the field. Three minutes off time Luton secured a corner, and from this the ball was never really cleared. Simms seemed determined to get a goal, and appeared to push away the opposing defenders before heading the ball into the goal mouth. He was unfortunate to hit the cross bar with this effort, only to get the return, and he simply drove it into the net with one of his unstoppable efforts. This success at such a late stage was perhaps a trifle fortunate, but one of the home officials had only a minute before expressed his opinion that Luton would win—so well were they playing at this period of the game. Result:—

Luton 2, Exeter City 1.

The Luton team are to be congratulated upon a really fine performance under somewhat difficult circumstances. After the opening half hour they quite held their own, but in the first half certainly Exeter should have taken a bigger lead. Goodwin heads the list of Southern League goal scorers, but on Saturday he failed badly in this particular. Still Exeter have a good side, and to beat them on their own ground must stand as Luton's second best away performance—Northampton, of course, claiming first place. Fred Hawkes did really well at full back in the final quarter of an hour, and the team as a whole had evidently made up their minds to put in an extra effort to make up for the handicap of losing Dunn's services.