

Southern League

LUTON v. CROYDON COMMON.

The visit of Croydon Common to Luton this afternoon called to mind some of the rousing struggles which have been fought between these stern rivals, particularly the memorable game on the same ground exactly a year ago. Then, Croydon were two points ahead of Luton in the Second Division for the same number of matches. By winning as they did by two goals to one, Luton therefore finished level with the "Robins," and, incidentally, maintained their magnificent record of winning every possible point at home.

Croydon's experience in the upper circle has been rather unhappy. The call of the Army in September removed one of their best players, and all through the season they have suffered to a considerable extent from injuries. It is not surprising in the circumstances to find the Commoners toiling at the wrong end of the table.

Owing to slight indisposition F. Hawkes could not play, this being his first absence since the early part of the season. In his stead Tommy Wilson, the utility half-back, came in at right-half. Roe having recovered from his injury at Watford reappeared at inside-right. Of their regular players Croydon lacked Upex, Watson, and Hartness.

In summerlike weather, and in the presence of about 3,000 spectators, the teams lined out as follows:—

LUTON.		
Right		Left
	Mitchell.	
Elvey.		Dunn.
Wilson.	Frith.	R. Hawkes.
Roberts.	Roe.	Simms.
		Rollinson.
		Hear.

O

Goodman.		
Dawson.	Chester.	G. Smith.
Ryder.	Bushell.	Allman.
Hutchins		Little.
Left		Right
	Williamson.	

CROYDON.

Referee, Mr. J. Lilley (Rushden).

Luton won the toss and kicked towards the Hazelbury-crescent end goal.

Croydon early assumed the aggressive and Elvey had to be on his best behaviour to prevent Chester snapping up a good pass from Goodman, when in a very good position. Bob Hawkes stemmed the tide when the Croydon right took up the running, but Allman gathered the ball cleverly, and served up a choice pass to Barnfather. At the critical moment Dunn missed his kick, but luckily for Luton Barnfather tamely shot wide.

Croydon were very quick in their movements at this stage. A lofty centre from Barnfather landed the ball midway between Mitchell and Chester. It was an exciting canter and the crowd cheered when the goalkeeper pushed the object past the on-coming forward, and then kicked clear.

It was not until after seven or eight minutes' play that Luton really got going. Then some good work by the right wing resulted in Hear trying a lovely shot from the wing, which happened to hit a defender and cannon behind for a corner. Hutchins got rid of this, but Luton came again. Once more Hear was well in the picture, and Little was very pleased to take advantage of the touchline within a foot of the corner flag.

Croydon spoilt a business-looking movement by indulging in foul tactics, Frith being the victim.

Roberts showed a fine turn of speed in a run which left Ryder hopelessly beaten, and from his pass the position looked so bad for Croydon that Williamson ran out to block Roe's progress, the outcome being that the goalkeeper's would-be clearance cannoned out of play off Roe. The next time Roberts got away he gave Roe a capital pass, but the inside man aimed badly.

Goodman and Chester showed first-class judgment in a run nearly half the length of the field. Chester was left in position for the final shot, but though the direction was good the pace was insufficient, and Mitchell cleared in safe style.

Three or four times in as many minutes Croydon were penalised for infringing the off-side rule, whereupon some of the soldier-spectators cried, "Play the game."

Twenty-two minutes from the start Luton opened the scoring with a goal of 22 carat quality. Roberts centred finely. Both Simms and Rollinson tried to take command of the ball but failed. Rollinson did, however, touch it, and it bounded off his foot towards Hear, and just too far for Little to reach it in time. Hear, showing the sprightliness of youth and the judgment of a veteran, ran a few paces and drove the ball hard and low into the net, Williamson being hopelessly beaten.

Croydon were by no means discouraged, and Smith, Goodman and Chester all gave considerable trouble, while on one occasion Bob Hawkes, to save from Goodman, conceded a corner.

Dawson cleverly eluded Elvey, but Mitchell, wisely running out, so narrowed the angle that the outside left's shot cannoned off the custodian for a corner.

Frith and Wilson set their forwards going nicely, but when the movement showed promise of developing advantageously Roe was adjudged to be offside.

Rollinson was not quite quick enough to gather a beautifully judged centre by Roberts, Bushell nipping in most opportunely.

It was Luton's turn to suffer under the offside rule, both Roe and Rollinson being pulled up when favourably placed.

With great rapidity Barnfather and Smith carried play towards Mitchell, the goalkeeper having eventually to run out to save from Goodman. The next minute his services were necessary to help Wilson out of great difficulty, the half back being unable to shake off Chester.

Simms showed characteristic skill in tricking Bushell and Little so as to get the ball clear of obstruction, but his final shot was too high.

Frith used his hands to prevent Dawson getting possession near the halfway line, but Dunn came to the rescue. Goodman soon carried the ball back. Here was Elvey's chance. He tipped the ball over Goodman's head, touched it past another oncoming forward, and then cleared. It was a really cleverly judged piece of defence.

Just on the interval, Roberts dropped the ball into the centre, and, to save, Williamson had to dive down to the ball. Half-time:—

Luton	1
Croydon	0

The game was resumed at 4.30, and as the sun was still shining Luton had to face the sun this half. Croydon equalised within a minute, and the goal came in this way. Goodman and Chester forced a corner. Dawson placed this right in front of goal, and some close play with the players all in a hunch ensued. R. Hawkes endeavoured to kick clear, but the ball cannoned back off

another player, leaving Goodman with a clear, easy shot at goal, which he smartly turned to account.

Luton set to work vigorously. The left wing made the running, and the ball travelling across to Roberts, he, from an awkward angle, tried a long, low shot, which Williamson did well to dispose of.

Back play travelled to the other end, where Mitchell had to be very smart to get the ball away before Barnfather could assume possession. A second later Barnfather centred beautifully, only to see Mitchell run out and take the ball like a cricketer accepting a simple chance.

LUTON AGAIN LEAD.

Very shortly afterwards Roberts sent in a stinger which the Croydon goal-keeper could not fully get away, and Robinson dashed up and banged the ball into the net.