

LUTON V. EXETER CITY.

(Special to the "News.")

Played at St. James Park, Exeter, on Saturday. Result—

EXETER CITY	Three Goals
LUTON	Two Goals.

Teams:—

Luton:—Summers; Elvey, Dunn; Urwin, Rutherford, Parker; Grimes, Tomlinson, Simms, Roe, Hensman.

Exeter City:—Pym; Colebourne, Shroove; Rigby, Popplewell, Milton; Connor, Makin Goodwin, Lovett, Dockray.

Referee: Mr. C. A. Rogers (Southsea).

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Travelling in these days is not quite the joy ride or picnic clubs experienced before 1914, and the Luton players' experience on the Exeter journey was not altogether to be envied. They were away from Luton half-an-hour over the full day of twenty-four hours, and of this time they spent no less than twenty-one hours either actually in the train or walking about station premises. The journey down was not so bad, for, leaving Luton at nine o'clock they arrived at Exeter at 2 o'clock, which gave them plenty of time to stretch and strip, but for the rest of the trip it was either a hustle or a wearying wait.

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The kick-off was brought forward a quarter of an hour to enable Luton to catch the 5.30 at Exeter, and this meant no bath after the game and taxi-cabs to the station. Although ordered days before, one taxi failed to turn up, and it was only by one making a double journey that the whole party were landed at Exeter station in time to get the express. Even then it meant standing in the corridor for the majority as there were no seats vacant on the train, and what meal could be obtained was taken squatting in odd corners. The train was a quarter of an hour late at Exeter, but seeing that there was an hour and twenty minutes margin between Paddington and St. Pancras, no misgivings were entertained at that time about making the connection, but time was lost on the journey, and on arrival at the G.W.R. terminus it was calculated that it would be a near thing, but the party hurried to the Metropolitan station. Minute after minute ticked by, and no train arrived, and the prospect of catching the midnight at St. Pancras began to fade. As a matter of fact there was a wait of no less than seventeen minutes at this stage, and by the time the train started it had practically been agreed to make a dash for the train arriving at Harpenden at 12.45, and if a conveyance could not be obtained, to tramp to Luton. All hope of this, however, fled when the party ran on St. Pancras, for they saw the train steaming away as they reached the platform. Inspector Walpole, who was at Luton for so many years, was on duty, and he at once suggested that the best thing to do was to catch the eight o'clock train in the morning, this starting from No. 2 platform. The party divided themselves into pairs, and by each pair occupying a compartment, made themselves as comfortable as the outside bustle of a big railway station allowed for the eight hours before the train started.

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To get to the match. It was rather a disappointment to find less than 5,000 spectators were attracted by the game, for now that 10 per cent. of the takings go to the visiting clubs we must take more notice of the gate. Apparently the gate at Exeter was the smallest in the Southern League on Saturday, judging from the estimates in the Press. It is four years since Luton last appeared on the ground, and to show the big change time has wrought it was discovered only three Lutonians and five City players were playing on both occasions, Elvey, Dunn and Simms being the Luton trio. Elvey was captain for the first time in the Southern League, but, unfortunately, lost the toss, and it was a distinct handicap to face the brilliant sun, to say nothing of a fairly smart breeze. Still, the players went off with plenty of dash. Indeed, taking into account the conditions, the pace was a cracker throughout the first half. Certainly energy was not lacking, but the great failing was method in attack, both sides being at fault. In the first half most of the danger to Luton came from Dockray's efforts, and it was only right he should have the honour of scoring. Still, the goal itself was somewhat of a freak, for he pushed the ball along the ground while little more than three yards from the goal line, and it actually hit the bottom of the near upright, and swerved over the line in a surprising manner. The equalising point came as the result of a penalty against Colebourne, who tried to hook the ball down after it was tipped over his head. Elvey himself took the kick, and repeated his success of the previous Saturday, and, at this rate, will be a serious competitor for the lead of the goal-getters in the side.

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The game slowed down for a bit after the change of ends, but livened up midway through the half, three goals coming in less than five minutes. The first fell to the City as a result of a break through by Connor, who finally tipped the ball over to Lovett after stumbling badly. Lovell sent in a fine shot which Summers came out to meet, but although he fisted it away from the point aimed at, he just failed to turn it by the farthest post, and it landed in the net.

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Hensman, who had been showing prominently on several occasions, was badly fouled just on the side line of the penalty area, and from the free kick, well taken by Parker, the ball was headed into goal by Tomlinson close in.

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By the way, the nearest Luton came to scoring in the first half was as a result of a direct forward attack. Tomlinson all but heading a fine goal, but the ball passed just the wrong side of the upright with Pym well beaten if it had been a few inches nearer. If the scoring had finished at this point it would have been fairer to the Luton players, who would then have gained at least a point they had worked so hard to get, but luck was against them, in the shape of a bad ruling by the referee on the advice of one of the linesmen. The ball went over the goal-line from Dunn's kick, but undoubtedly touched a City player after it left Dunn's foot, and should have been given as a goal kick. However, a corner it was, Summers neatly tipped this over the bar, but from the second corner, taken by Dockray, the ball was placed well across, and Makin just got his head to it a mere fraction of a second before Rutherford could do so, with the result both heads met, and down went Makin like a log, but the ball was resting at the back of the net, and as events turned out, the game was won for the City, although Makin knew nothing whatever about it till a minute or so later, for he was knocked clean out.

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Luton were unfortunate in losing, under all the circumstances, for they certainly gave a brighter display than the two previous games. As a spectacle, the match was quite interesting, and except for a few minutes in the second half it was never dull. The result hung in the balance up to the final whistle, and there were repeated calls for "Another one, City" to make matters safe. There was one curious fact which possibly rather tells against the Town, inasmuch as during the whole game, not one corner was forced by them. It is not often a whole game goes through without a single corner falling to a side, but Exeter monopolised the lot on Saturday. Little fault could be laid at the door of the Luton defence, which again was the stronger department. Elvey was unanimously voted the best back on the field, and Dunn would rank next. The Luton halves all did well as defenders, but rather failed as a line in assisting the attack, Rutherford getting the ball too often well over his forwards' heads, with the result that the home backs had too many free kicks.

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Grimes, on his first appearance, was not given sufficient to do to enable one to judge of his ability, and, as a combination, the line did not shine, although individually all tried hard.

The City forwards were not altogether convincing. Goodwin being comparatively subdued by the manner Rutherford tackled him when he attempted to burst through. They were very patchy. Dockray being much in the limelight at the start, but he fell away, and Connor and Makin were the local heroes after change of ends. Of the halves, Mitton seemed the most effective, and Shroove did fairly well on his first Southern League appearance, although Colebourne was the better of the pair. Pym did everything he was asked, but as a team the City on Saturday's form will not be among the first flight in the competition, and were extremely lucky to get both points.

EXETER COMMENT.

Writing in the Exeter Express and Echo, "The Chief" says:—

"At first sight the result of the match at St. James' Park last Saturday between Exeter City and Luton—three goals to two in the Grecians' favour—does not seem at all impressive. The City had the advantage of ground, and the Luton men only arrived in Exeter an hour and a quarter before the start of the match, and they had had a long and tiring journey. If the home team had not won it would have been exceedingly disappointing. But Swansea Town and Gillingham, at all events, will appreciate the merit of the City's performance, for in the matches with those two clubs the Luton defence had been penetrated once only, and that was five minutes after the start of the opening game of the season.

"The Exeter attack gave the same Luton defence such a tying-up on Saturday as they are only likely to experience at rare intervals in the course of the season.

"Elvey, the right back, proved a tower of strength, and in Dunn he had a fine partner. The two understand one another perfectly. Rutherford, the centre-half, was also an outstanding figure, whilst Summers gave a magnificent display. Yes; whatever goals are chalked up against Luton Town whilst this defence remains intact will be very, very hardly earned. It was so on Saturday. Times out of number it appeared as though a concerted movement by the City forwards was about to end in a brilliant success, but almost as often the last word rested not with an Exeter attacker, but with a Luton back.

"The Luton forwards were good, without being brilliant. Simms, in the centre, is an experienced player, and he made the most of any chances that came his way. He and Tomlinson, on his right, were the pick of the line, although now and again Ree and Hensman put in some good work on the other wing.