

THE WATFORD WAY.

LUTON LOSE ANOTHER POINT AT HOME.

Poor Finishing.

By Crusader.

THE game, the crowd, and the conditions in the match between LUTON TOWN and WATFORD were according to expectations. The conditions for spectators were delightful, for the sun shone brightly, and the weather was not too cold. The ground was very soft, and the effect of the steam-roller was obviously advantageous, for it had broken up the rough knobs and knurs, so that the Saturday morning sun dissolved the frost better. The slight layer of mud was better than hard and unyielding frozen turf, and helped to make control possible.

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The crowd was near the record for a League game at Luton. The previous best was 15,671 in the Boxing Day match with Swindon in 1921. Of course the Cup-tie with Preston North End beat this figure, but Saturday's "gate" of 15,199 was the highest yet recorded at Luton in any League game played on a Saturday. The receipts on Saturday exceeded those of the Swindon match, being £963 as against £904. Hundreds of people came from Watford and the towns and villages between there and Luton, and also from far beyond Luton northwards. Colours were freely worn by Watford partisans, and the approaches to the ground were parking places for motor vehicles.

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The game was one of the best the teams have played since the war, making all allowance for the slippery mud. It was fought in good spirit generally, and the referee had not a hard task so far as the conduct of the men was concerned. He himself was, too, handling his stiffest job, I should imagine, and it was quite evident from the noise the crowd made that he was not pleasing them. This was especially the case in the second half, when a prolonged uproar was maintained against him, certainly the hottest demonstration made against an official in any Luton match this season.

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Richards was preferred to Graham at right back for Luton, the final choice of defence not being made until less than an hour before the kick-off. Vaughan, Luton's new player from Merthyr Town, made his first appearance, taking the inside left position, Yardley crossing over to replace Roe, who was down with influenza during the week. Watford also had to regret the absence of Prior and Smith from the same cause, and Davison moved over to right back, Brelsford partnering him, while Brown deputised for Smith at half.

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Richards captained the Town, and won the toss, electing to defend the Kenilworth-road end. Watford were first away, but were quickly driven back by the Town right flank defenders and were a long time before they became really dangerous. The attack by the Town right wing was cleverly organised, and after a hectic scene in the goal-mouth, during which two or three attempts were made to find a way through a barrier of defenders, Vaughan was left in possession close in, and seemed bound to score, but his shot struck an outstretched leg and went behind.

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This was but the prelude to a series of thrilling attacks, mainly engineered on the Town right wing, for Clark, Fulton and Yardley plied Daly with nice passes, and he was too speedy for his opponents. He middled the ball time after time, and Hewett and his backs were kept in a state of tension. The Watford backs and halves defended desperately, and their inside forwards came to their aid again and again, while Hewett kept his eye on the ball, and made good saves.

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There was one particularly hot period, when the Town forwards shot fiercely from close quarters, but always someone was in the way. The goal was packed effectively, and Watford concentrated almost entirely on defence. They could not get the ball away for many seconds, and when their forwards did get a turn either Harris or Richards swung the ball back into the danger zone again, and the fusillade was resumed.

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Bedford skimmed the bar, Brelsford turned a shot from Daly aside with his foot, and turned round the post another with his hand and saved a certain goal, the appeal for a penalty being ignored, and a corner kick following. Several flag-kicks were conceded in desperate endeavours to frustrate the attack. Shots by Vaughan and Daly were deflected for corners, and once Rennie nearly knocked a defender off his feet with a terrific drive. Later he shot wide when the goal was at his mercy.

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A great shot by Yardley crashed against the bar and was out again before Hewett had regained his feet. Rennie drove in another hard shot for the corner of the net, but the goalkeeper made a lightning stroke with his left hand and the ball swerved past the upright. Hewett saved repeatedly, and, though often lucky, did splendid work. The storm subsided a little while before the change of ends, and Watford made a few rushes, Banes having to be alert to keep out good shots from Sheppard.

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Then again the Town rallied, and the Watford goal underwent a sharp siege, but the ball went anywhere except into the desired home, and just before the cross-over the Town forwards went right down in line and simply beat the defence to a frazzle, but when Daly centred into goal Rennie put the ball just over the bar, and the interval came with the score sheet blank.

LUTON		6
WATFORD		0

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The second half opened in much the same manner as the first. The Town were dangerous when Brelsford stopped with his hands a centre from Daly on the edge of the penalty area, but the free kick was spoilt by Clark and Daly between them. Yardley, who had been doing grand work, again put Daly through, and Bedford failed to accept a chance. Hewett cleverly took under the bar a neat header from Vaughan, and Richards came right up and had a shot, the ball travelling wide.

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After a brief exchange of visits, the Town were successful as the result of another fine move by Yardley and Daly, the latter centring for BEDFORD to gather the ball and shoot well away from Hewett into the farther corner of the net. The joy of the Town supporters was renewed a couple of minutes later. Yardley again was the prime factor in the assault. When Bedford had caused Hewett to make a thrilling save close to the upright at the expense of a corner, the little left winger placed the flag-kick splendidly, and VAUGHAN leaped high and turned the ball with his head into the net.

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Playing in sterling fashion it seemed as if the Town had the match well won at this point, seven minutes after the interval, but Watford proved they were by no means finished. Daniels made a strong run, and was stopped near goal by Richards. He turned the ball back, and McPherson had it when charged over by Clark, who was travelling fast, and the referee gave a penalty kick. There was a tremendous protest, and the Town players rushed round him and begged him to consult the lineemen, but he declined, and McPHERSON scored from the spot.

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This took a lot of the steam out of the Town players, and gave Watford new heart. Banes saved neatly two or three times, and other shots went close. Then the Town went all out again, and the Watford goal had narrow escapes, while several infringements were overlooked. The crowd maintained a continuous din against the referee, but Watford were fortunate when Brelsford escaped a penalty kick after he had handled in the goal-mouth.

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Watford once more profited by this, for they set up a rousing attack, and Banes was frequently in action. He made a grand save from Daniels, but the attack was unrelenting, and eventually he was beaten after good work by McBain had put the visiting forwards in dangerous position. A first shot was kicked out, but the ball came to McPherson and SHEPPARD in a scramble, and the ball returned off the latter into the net, Banes being helpless to get at it.

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Watford almost won the match in the next few minutes. They played like demons; Banes won loud cheers by his clever saves, and the shots were always well on the target. Eventually the Town plucked up again, and Bedford got through to beat the defence with a nice cross, and Yardley dashed in, only to send the ball over as Hewett came out in a frantic effort to foil him, and shortly afterwards the whistle sounded the end.

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It was a thrilling struggle, but the Town should have won comfortably before the ends were changed. They had enough opportunities, and their work was really splendid. Halves and forwards played magnificently, and there was good understanding generally, but the finishing was poor, and in spite of the skill of Hewett, and the fine protection of his backs, chances were numerous, and should have been turned to account.

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Yardley was the outstanding personality in the Town front line, his work being really clever, and he opened out the game almost every time he got possession. Daly benefited by this, and has never played better. Rennie was well watched, did good work in constructing attacks, but was off colour in shooting.

Bedford was not at his best by a long way, being patchy, but he had a new partner, and Vaughan, hard though he played, did not know the methods of his fellows. All things considered, he did very well, and will improve.



The middle men were strong and resolute, and for an hour were right on top. The penalty kick probably made them afraid to tackle with the same strenuous and energetic determination, which was a great pity, for they were seldom pulled up. Clark was apt to leave Daniels with a lot of space, but is more than earning his keep, and will take some moving. Fulton played a powerful game in defence and attack, and Millar again shone, thanks to his working understanding with Harris.



Both backs played well together, covering each other nicely as a rule. Richards was as good at right as he has been at left back, and Harris was an astute defender. Banes again kept goal snugly, and wins more confidence with every game. The cool manner in which he gathers and clears, and intercepts the high passes, means much to the defence, and that he can take the low stuff well was clearly demonstrated in the second half.



Watford played well in the last half-hour after being almost outplayed. Hewett is a clever young goalkeeper, and Davison was a solid back. McBain was the finest half-back on view, and all the forwards were clever, this being the hottest department of the side.

LUTON TOWN 2

WATFORD 2 1

LUTON.—Banes; Richards, Harris; Clark, Fulton, Millar; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Vaughan, Bedford.

WATFORD.—Hewett; Davison, Brelsford; Brown, McBain, Woodward; Chapman, Barnett, McPherson, Sheppard, Daniels.

Referee. — Mr. J. Emmerson, East Finchley.