



THE UNITED LEAGUE CHAMPIONS,  
SEASON 1897-8.

[Photo. by Mr. E. F. Welsh.]

## United League 1897-8

Nr	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
1	Luton Town	16	13	2	1	49	12	28
2	Woolwich Arsenal	16	8	5	3	36	25	21
3	Tottenham Hotspur	16	8	5	3	41	29	21
4	Kettering	16	8	1	6	28	24	19
5	Rushden Town	16	7	1	8	24	26	15
6	Southampton St Mary's*	16	6	3	7	23	28	13
7	Millwall Athletic	16	4	4	8	27	27	12
8	Wellingborough	16	3	3	10	16	41	9
9	Loughborough	16	1	2	13	8	41	4

*Weekly Dispatch (London) - 1 May 1898*

Note: The goals for and against columns do not tally

\* Two points deducted for playing an ineligible man.

Winner: Luton Town  
 Runner-Up: Tottenham Hotspur  
 Games Played: 72  
 Missing Results: 0  
 Goals scored: 252/253 (3.5 goals per game)  
 Biggest home win: Luton Town 8-0 Loughborough  
 Millwall 8-0 Wellingborough  
 Biggest away win: Millwall 0-4 Luton Town  
 Highest scoring: Luton Town 8-0 Loughborough  
 Millwall 8-0 Wellingborough

Southampton St Mary's joined the League in 1897. They played their home games this season at the [County Cricket Ground](#) and at the end of the season they dropped 'St Mary's' from their name.

Last season's runners-up, Luton Town, won the League, losing just one of their 16 League games. Woolwich Arsenal were runners-up by the smallest possible margin (goal average 1.458 cf 1.415 i.e. a single goal) from Tottenham Hotspur.

Loughborough finished bottom with just one win and two draws and at the end of the season resigned from the League.

#### United League Home Grounds 1897-98

Kettering Town	Norh Park, Kettering
Loughborough	Athletic Grounds, Nottingham-road
Luton Town	Dunstable -road [Bury Ground], Luton
Millwall Athletic	East Ferry -road, [Athletic Grounds], Isle of Dogs
Rushden	Newton-road Ground, Rushden
Southampton St Mary's	County Ground, Southampton
Tottenham Hotspur	Northumberland Park
Wellingborough	Thomas Field, Union-lane, Wellingborough
Woolwich Arsenal	Manor Ground, Plumstead

#### Results Grid

United League 1897-8	Kettering Town	Loughborough	Luton Town	Millwall Athletic	Rushden	Southampton St Mary's	Tottenham Hotspur	Wellingborough	Woolwich Arsenal
Kettering Town		3-0	1-0	3-1	1-0	2-1	4-2	2-1	1-2
Loughborough	2-0		1-3	0-0	0-1	0-0	1-2	1-2	1-3
Luton Town	3-1	8-0		2-0	5-0	2-0	5-0	4-0	2-1
Millwall Athletic	1-0	4-0	0-4		0-3	5-0	0-1	8-0	2-2
Rushden	1-3	2-0	2-3	3-1		1-0	5-2	0-0	2-3
Southampton St Mary's	2-1	3-0	0-2	4-1	2-0		2-2	3-1	3-0
Tottenham Hotspur	1-1	5-0	2-2	3-2	3-1	7-0		5-0	0-0
Wellingborough	2-3	2-0	0-2	0-0	0-2	3-2	2-2		2-3
Woolwich Arsenal	4-0	4-1	2-2	2-2	3-1	1-1	2-3	3-1	

Home win
  Away Win
  Draw
  Result Not Known

#### Match Results and Details

Date	Home			Away	Match Details
1.9.1897	Wellingborough Murrell Mellor	2 (1)	3 (2)	Kettering Town Dixon Pell Lewis	Heavy rain. Game did not start until 5.40 pm due to the late arrival of the referee.

6.9.1897	Millwall Athletic AN Other Miller Davies (4) Calvey Geddes	8 (3)	0 (0)	Wellingborough	1800 spectators. Evening kick-off. Poor, one-sided game from beginning to end.
13.9.1897	Millwall Athletic	0 (0)	3 (1)	Rushden Bedingfield (2) Denton	1,200 spectators. Surprising result – Rushden played extremely well.
13.9.1897	Wellingborough Lightfoot Mellor	2 (1)	0 (0)	Loughborough	1,500 spectators. 'Battle of the Boroughs.'
16.9.1897	Tottenham Hotspur Clement (5 min)	1 (1)	1 (0)	Kettering Town Dixon	1,200 spectators. Close and hotly contested game.
25.9.1897	Loughborough Pike	1	3	Woolwich Arsenal AN Others	The match was stopped after 82 mins due to bad light, when the score was 1-2. The remaining 8 mins were played after the Football League fixture on 18 December, when Arsenal scored their 3 <sup>rd</sup> goal.
25.9.1897	Southampton St Mary's Meston (25 mins) Key Buchan	3 (1)	1 (1)	Wellingborough AN Other	Southampton's debut in the United League 4,000 spectators. Drizzly rain throughout the game – ground was very slippery.
27.9.1897	Wellingborough	0	2	Luton Town Lewis Gallacher	Even in the opening stage – just before half-time Wellingborough's goalkeeper in saving, kicked the ball back to Lewis, but it rebounded into the net"
29.9.1897	Loughborough Smith	1	2	Tottenham Hotspur Stormont Tammahill	Wet weather.
4.10.1897	Woolwich Arsenal White (2 mins) Farrell Brock Davis	4	0	Kettering Town	1,000 spectators. Panter [forward] retired hurt after 35 mins, leaving Kettering to finish the game with 10 men.
6.10.1897	Southampton St Mary's Naughton (2) Keay	3 (1)	0 (0)	Loughborough	3,000 spectators. Splendid weather. Southampton scored after 2 mins and missed a first half penalty.
11.10.1897	Luton Town Gallacher Little Stewart (2) Ekins	5 (2)	0 (0)	Tottenham Hotspur	Good crowd. Gallacher opened the scoring with a brilliant shot from distance.
11.10.1897	Wellingborough Murray Mellor	2 (1)	3 (0)	Woolwich Arsenal Haywood Brick Farrell	Fair gate (c. 1,000 spectators). Dull/showery weather. Wellingborough were all over their opponents in the first half, but only scored through Murray. The second period was more even, Mellor scoring a second point for the home side. Arsenal scored 3 goals in the final 20 mins to win the game.
16.10.1897	Millwall Athletic	0 (0)	1 (1)	Tottenham Hotspur Jones	8,000 spectators. Both teams missed first half penalties.
18.10.1897	Luton Town Ekins MacInnes Stewart	3 (2)	1 (0)	Kettering Town Miller	2,000 spectators. Fine weather. Luton were much the stronger team throughout.

18.10.1897	Wellingborough	0	0	Millwall Athletic	1,200 spectators Millwall had the sun and wind in their favour in the first half. Wellingborough did most of the attacking in the second period resulting in numerous corners and scrimmages.
25.10.1897	Millwall Athletic	0 (0)	4 (1)	Luton Town McCartney AN Other Stewart McInnes	3,000 spectators. Cold weather. Game commenced at 3pm. The Dockers heaviest home defeat of the season.
25.10.1897	Rushden Bailey	1 (1)	0 (0)	Southampton St Mary's	Keay [Southampton] was injured in the first 15 mins and had to be carried off. Very rough match,
1.11.1897	Kettering Town Panter Wheatcroft Dixon (83 min)	3 (0)	1 (1)	Millwall Athletic Whelan (3 min)	Poor attendance. Foggy weather.
3.11.1897	Southampton St Mary's	0 (0)	2 (1)	Luton Town Stewart (20 mins) Ekins (55 min)	4,000 spectators. Grand weather. "The concluding stages were rough, fouls being numerous on both sides."
12.11.1897	Loughborough Webster	1 (0)	2 (0)	Wellingborough Martin (pen) Underwood	The Luffs fielded principally reserve players. Loughborough were outplayed at the finish, and but for their backs and trainer (Plackett) the score would have been heavier."
20.11.1897	Loughborough	0	0	Millwall Athletic	Soon after the game began Millwall were handicapped by a serious accident to Morrison - who in attempting to head the ball was badly kicked on the head by one of his side. He sustained a severe scalp wound; the bone being laid bare. Dr Phelps attended to his injuries, stitching up the wound. Loughborough had a goal disallowed for off-side.
22.11.1897	Rushden Sale Bedingfield	2 (1)	3 (2)	Luton Town Gallacher Little Ekins	Big crowd and 'big noise.' Both teams were unbeaten in the League prior to this encounter. Stubbornly contested game
4.12.1897	Tottenham Hotspur Tannahill Stormont (2) Black Joyce	5 (3)	0 (0)	Wellingborough	Thick fog enveloped. The players being almost indistinguishable. The game ended in semi-darkness.
6.12.1897	Luton Town AN Other McInnes Gallacher Coupar Catlin	5 (1)	0 (0)	Rushden	Dull weather. Heavy ground. Luton fielded 2 reserves. Luton scored 3 times within 15 mins during the second half.
11.12.1897	Millwall Athletic Gettins Davies (pen +2)	4 (1)	0 (0)	Loughborough	1,200 spectators. Strong wind, heavy ground. "The Luffs have never beaten the Dockers and it seems they never will." - Luton News - 16 Dec 1897.
13.12.1897	Kettering Town Miller	1 (0)	0 (0)	Luton Town	Luton's first United League defeat. Prior to this game: P8 W8 F28 A 3. "The Kettering ground is close upon a mile from the middle of the town, but the jubilant

					<i>yell that arose [when Miller scored] must have been audible in the streets.</i> – Luton reporter 17 Dec 1897.
13.12.1897	Woolwich Arsenal	3 (0)	1 (0)	Rushden	Arsenal, after Luton's defeat became the only unbeaten side in the League.
20.12.1897	Woolwich Arsenal Brock	1 (0)	1 (1)	Southampton St Mary's Turner	
25.12.1897	Woolwich Arsenal Brock AN Other	2 (1)	3 (1)	Tottenham Hotspur Stormont Joyce (2)	7,000 spectators. Fine and frosty weather. Arsenal's first defeat in the United league this season
28.12.1897	Luton Town McInnes Donaldson (2) Stewart (3) Davis (pen) Coupar	8	0	Loughborough	Good gate. Ground was in a terribly muddy condition. Luton had three "good" goals disallowed.
29.12.1897	Southampton St Mary's	A	A	Rushden	Severe storm caused the game to be abandoned at half-time when the score was 1-1. Both goals were scored by Southampton's Haynes.
1.1.1898	Rushden Groves Bamford (3) Beddington	5 (1)	2 (0)	Tottenham Hotspur Hartley (2)	Bamford scored a second half hat-trick.
8.1.1898	Tottenham Hotspur Madden Hartley (2)	3 (1)	1 (0)	Rushden Bedingfield	6,000 spectators.
10.1.1898	Kettering Town Brearley Miller (2) AN Other	4 (0)	2 (1)	Tottenham Hotspur Black Joyce (pen)	1,500 spectators. Foggy weather.
10.1.1898	Woolwich Arsenal White (2) Haywood	3 (1)	1 (1)	Wellingborough Elson	3,000 spectators. Fine weather
12.1.1898	Southampton St Mary's Brown Keay Turner Farrell	4	1	Millwall Athletic Davies	Good attendance (c. 2,500) One-sided game. In this match Southampton brought their goal record up to 102 for all matches.
17.1.1898	Rushden Bedingfield (3)	3	1	Millwall Athletic Calvey	1,000 spectators. Rushden outplayed the current United League Champions.
17.1.1898	Woolwich Arsenal	A	A	Luton Town	Plumstead. Just as the game was about to start at Plumstead a thick fog rolled over the ground and there was a delay for over an hour. Then still in misty weather the game commenced but after 60 mins play the match was abandoned.
19.1.1898	Southampton St Mary's Hayes Chadwick	2 (1)	2 (0)	Tottenham Hotspur Tannahill Joyce (pen)	Favourable weather. A grand game.
22.1.1898	Millwall Athletic Calvey Gettins	2 (2)	2 (1)	Woolwich Arsenal Moore (og) Haywood	10,000 spectators – largest gate at East Ferry-road this season. Eagerly anticipated match. These teams had met 19 times – Arsenal winning 10, Millwall 3, and drawn 6. An excellent game.
24.1.1898	Luton Town	2	0	Millwall Athletic	Gallacher scored Luton's 100 <sup>th</sup> goal.

	Little Gallacher	(1)	(0)		
24.1.1898	Rushden	P	P	Woolwich Arsenal	In view of Arsenal's English Cup tie with Burnley in 5 days, they "desired to spend the week to go into training" and obtained permission to postpone the United League match.
3.2.1898	Tottenham Hotspur Joyce Stormont	2	2	Luton Town McInnes AN Other	Northumberland Park. 4,000 spectators. Boisterous weather. The referee was mobbed at the end of the game.
12.2.1898	Wellingborough	0 (0)	2 (1)	Rushden Beddingfield. Groves	2,000 spectators. Just before halftime Beddingfield converted from a Groves centre and 3 mins into the second half Groves doubled the lead.
14.2.1898	Luton Town McInnes Coupar	2 (1)	0 (0)	Southampton St Mary's	2,000 spectators. Grand weather. The homesters had the best of the first half. After the interval play improved
19.2.1898	Loughborough	0 (0)	1 (1)	Rushden Beddingfield	Few hundred spectators. Loughborough pressed considerably throughout the second period, but had ill-luck. Rushden had to play determinedly to keep their goal intact.
19.2.1898	Woolwich Arsenal Haywood White	2 (1)	2 (1)	Millwall Athletic Geddes (2)	Manor Field, Plumstead. 12,000 spectators.
21.2.1898	Woolwich Arsenal McGeogh Hannah	2 (1)	2 (1)	Luton Town Stewart (pen) Durant	3,000 spectators Good attendance.
28.2.1898	Millwall Geddes	1	0	Kettering	Moderate attendance. Millwall missed several good opportunities to increase their lead.
9.3.1898	Millwall Gettins (2) Calvey (2) Turner	5 (2)	0 (0)	Southampton St Marys	3,000 spectators. Game kicked-off a few mins before 4 pm. Millwall totally dominated the match; Southampton's display was very disappointing.
12.3.1898	Loughborough Pegg (2)	2 (1)	0 (0)	Kettering Town	Meagre attendance. First meeting of these teams this season. Loughborough's first win in the United League this season. Repeated frees were awarded to Kettering for unaccountable reasons, and decisions after decisions at first created roars of laughter, which at length developed into booing. Interest in Loughborough's United League's matches was very meagre.
12.3.1898	Rushden	0	0	Wellingborough	2,000 spectators. The home team lost Clarke in the second half reducing them to 10 men.
12.3.1898	Tottenham Hotspur Davidson Jones (pen) Black	3 (2_)	2 (1)	Millwall Athletic Geddes Fellingham	9,000 spectators. Ply was very fast. Black scored the winner in the last couple of minutes
19.3.1898	Rushden Jacques	1 (0)	3 (2)	Kettering Dixon (5 mins) Heskin (35 min) Brearley	Ground was very wet and heavy.

24.3.1898	Tottenham Hotspur Joyce (2) Stormont Black (2)	5 (1)	0 (0)	Loughborough	Small crowd.. Bitterly cold weather, gale wind..
28.3.1898	Rushden Denton Bedingfield	2 (1)	3 (0)	Woolwich Arsenal Brock (3)	Moderate attendance. Play was fairly even and interesting. There was a complete change in the second period through the looseness on the part of the home team and in 15 mins Arsenal scored 3 goals from corners, and a foul by Brock.
28.3.1898	Tottenham Hotspur Madden Joyce (3) Downie Black St Ormont	7 (3)	0 (0)	Southampton St Mary's	Southampton were fined £5 for not playing their full strength team and were deducted 2 points for fielding an unregistered players.
30.3.1898	Millwall Athletic Geddes	1	0	Kettering Town	Moderate attendance. Soft ground.
30.3.1898	Southampton Buchanan (5 mins) Taylor	2 (1)	0 (0)	Rushden	Moderate gate. Postponed game from December.
1.4.1898	Woolwich Arsenal Haywood (2) Anderson (pen) McGeoch	4 (2)	1 (1)	Loughborough Pegg	Less than 2,000 spectators. Bright, summer-like weather.
2.4.1898	Kettering Town	3	0	Loughborough	Loughborough lost Pike during the first half through injury.
2.4.1898	Wellingborough Mellor (2) Miles	3 (2)	2 (1)	Southampton Buchanan Stevens	2,000 spectators.
4.4.1898	Kettering Town Dixon	1 (1)	2 (1)	Woolwich Arsenal Heywood White	Moderate gate. Lovely weather.
5.4.1898	Kettering Town Hitchcock	1 (0)	0 (0)	Rushden	3,000 spectators.
8.4.1898	Tottenham Hotspur	0	0	Woolwich Arsenal	15,000 spectators. During the game a crowd of spectators clambered on the roof of a refreshment house which collapsed. Several were injured, one having a broken leg and another fractured ribs.
9.4.1898	Southampton St Mary's Weston Brown	2 (2)	1 (1)	Kettering Town Draper (5 mins)	Moderate gate. Showery weather. Neither side was "fully represented."
12.4.1898	Loughborough Tuthall	1 (0)	3 (0)	Luton Town Gallacher McCartney McInnes	800 spectators. Luton played remarkably well. This victory gave Luton the United League Championship.
13.4.1898	Southampton St Mary's Chadwick (pen) Brown Meeton	3 (1)	0 (0)	Woolwich Arsenal	3,000 spectators. Gate was devoted to the benefit of Turner- Southampton's outside left.
16.4.1898	Luton Town Donaldson Gallacher	2 (1)	1 (1)	Woolwich Arsenal Hunt	2,000 spectators. Grand weather. Game created great interest. The home team gave a fine display,
23.4.1898	Kettering Town Heskins (90 secs) Garfield	2 (2)	1 (0)	Southampton St Mary's Thompson	4,000 spectators. Each side played 2 reserves.

23.4.1898	Wellingborough Bury Mellor	2 (0)	2 (2)	Tottenham Hotspur AN Other Stormont	Weather was "too good for football." Great interest was taken in the game - Spurs with a win would have finished as runner-up. They lost out to arch rivals on goal average.
27.4.1898	Loughborough	0	0	Southampton St Mary's	Small attendance. Neither team were fully represented and he play was not of a high quality. So good was the defence of both sides that no goals were scored.
30.4.1898	Kettering Town Pearl (2)	2 (0)	1 (1)	Wellingborough Elson	Stormy weather.
30.4.1898	Rushden Sale (20 mins) Groves	2 (1)	0 (0)	Loughborough	Poor attendance. Loughborough goalkeeper missed the train and Mumford (inside left) played in goal.

## Match Reports

A selection of published match reports.

**UNITED LEAGUE.**

**Tottenham Hotspurs v. Loughborough.**—At Loughborough on Wednesday and won by the Spurs by two to one. The Spurs played by far the better game throughout. The home goal came from Smith, while Storemont equalised after the interval, and five minutes later Davidson put on the winning goal for Tottenham.

*Evening Star - 30 September 1897*

**UNITED LEAGUE.**

LOUGHBOROUGH V. MILLWALL ATHLETIC.

In this match at Loughborough no goals were scored, but although the Blues played a somewhat scratchy team they appeared to have held their own. Unfortunately the game was marred by an accident, when Calvey accidentally kicked his club-mate Morrison. For some unaccountable reason our special report has not come to hand.

*Morning Leader - 22 November 1897*



Further evidence of the painful weakness of the Loughborough team was given on Saturday, when they were beaten at home in a United League match by Rushden. The combination of the home lot was as ragged as it could possibly be, and that of Rushden was none so grand, but they were much smarter on the ball. The chief fault was to be found with the forwards, who were very erratic. Wright was not a success in the centre, and Smith did not show up so well as the week before. Tich put all the other quintet in the shade, and he worked heroically to bring about an equalisation of the score. Loughborough were unlucky, having a good goal disallowed.

*Leicester Daily Post - 21 February 1898*

**UNITED LEAGUE,**  
**WOOLWICH ARSENAL v. LOUGH-**  
**BOROUGH.**

Although the weather was all that could be desired at Plumstead yesterday afternoon, the company on the Manor Field did not exceed 2,000 when the above match was played. The Arsenal held the upper hand from the start, and Hannah scored the first goal for the home team after eight minutes' play. After this each side scored a goal prior to half-time, and the Arsenal crossed over leading by 2 goals to 1. In the second half Woolwich added two more goals, and Loughborough failing to score in this half were beaten by 4 goals to 1.

*Morning Leader - 2 April 1898*

**Additional Information**

## UNITED LEAGUE FIXTURES.

The full list of fixtures between the Clubs in the United League have now been compiled. They are as follow:—

**SEPTEMBER**—1st, at Wellingborough, v. Kettering; 6th, at Millwall, v. Wellingborough; 13th, at Millwall, v. Rushden; 13th, at Wellingborough, v. Loughborough; 16th, at Tottenham, v. Kettering; 20th, at Luton, v. Wellingborough; 25th, Loughborough, v. Woolwich; 25th, Southampton, v. Wellingborough; 27th, at Wellingborough, v. Luton; 29th, at Loughborough, v. Tottenham.

**OCTOBER**—4th, at Woolwich, v. Kettering; 6th, at Southampton, v. Loughborough; 11th, at Luton, v. Tottenham; 11th, at Wellingborough, v. Woolwich; 16th, at Millwall, v. Tottenham; 18th, at Luton, v. Kettering; 18th, at Wellingborough, v. Millwall; 25th, at Millwall, v. Luton; 25th, at Rushden, v. Southampton.

**NOVEMBER**—1st, at Kettering, v. Millwall; 3rd, at Southampton, v. Luton; 12th, at Loughborough, v. Wellingborough; 22nd, at Rushden, v. Luton; 29th, at Millwall, v. Loughborough.

**DECEMBER**—4th, at Tottenham, v. Wellingborough; 6th, at Luton, v. Rushden; 13th, at Kettering, v. Luton; 13th, at Woolwich, v. Rushden; 20th, at Woolwich, v. Southampton; 25th, at Woolwich, v. Tottenham; 28th, at Luton, v. Loughborough; 29th, at Southampton, v. Rushden.

**JANUARY**—1st, at Rushden, v. Tottenham; 8th, at Tottenham, v. Rushden; 10th, at Kettering, v. Tottenham; 10th, at Woolwich, v. Wellingborough; 12th, at Southampton, v. Millwall; 17th, at Woolwich, v. Luton; 17th, at Rushden, v. Millwall; 19th, at Southampton, v. Tottenham; 23rd, at Millwall, v. Woolwich; 24th, at Luton, v. Millwall; 24th, at Rushden, v. Woolwich.

**FEBRUARY**—3rd, at Tottenham, v. Luton; 12th, at Wellingborough, v. Rushden; 14th, at Luton, v. Southampton; 19th, at Loughborough, v. Rushden; 19th, at Woolwich, v. Millwall; 28th, at Millwall, v. Kettering.

**MARCH**—5th, at Kettering, v. Rushden; 9th, at Millwall, v. Southampton; 12th, at Loughborough, v. Kettering; 12th, at Tottenham, v. Millwall; 12th, at Rushden, v. Wellingborough; 17th, at Tottenham, v. Southampton; 19th, at Rushden, v. Kettering; 24th, at Tottenham, v. Loughborough; 30th, at Loughborough v. Millwall.

**APRIL**—1st, at Woolwich, v. Loughborough; 2nd, at Kettering, v. Loughborough; 2nd, at Wellingborough, v. Southampton; 4th, at Kettering, v. Woolwich; 8th, at Tottenham, v. Woolwich; 9th, at Southampton, v. Kettering; 12th, at Loughborough, v. Luton; 13th, at Southampton, v. Woolwich; 16th, at Luton, v. Woolwich; 23rd, at Kettering, v. Southampton; 23rd, at Wellingborough, v. Tottenham; 27th, at Loughborough, v. Southampton; 30th, at Kettering, v. Wellingborough; 30th, at Rushden, v. Loughborough.

Luton Reporter – 27 August 1897



**Rushden team: 1897-98**

Back row: A. Miller (trainer, W George (goal), F Bedingfield (inside left), F Dunkley (left half), J Lilley (left back), W S Knight (secretary)

2nd row: W Cox (linesman), W Clark (right half), A "Joe" Bailey (captain/centre half), W Groves (inside right), H Sale (centre)

Seated front: G Denton (outside right), E Attley (right back), H Bamford (outside left)