

# FOOTBALL.

## THE ENGLISH CUP.

### LUTON CHAMPIONS OF THE DIVISION.

CLIFTON V. LUTON.—The final ties in the qualifying series of the English Cup competition were played on Saturday, the result being that ten clubs won for themselves the distinction of being hailed as champions of their several divisions. In this district—the eighth—Luton Town met Clifton and continued their brilliant career by summarily disposing of their antagonists. The encounter had been looked forward to with mixed feelings by those who regard themselves as authorities. On the one hand Clifton could claim the honour of having easily beaten Poole, Somerset Rovers, and Reading, and their form all round was regarded as being exceptionally good. Luton, on the other hand, had defeated Swindon, Windsor Phoenix, and Bedminster, and the manner in which they had been playing for some weeks previously led their admirers to

entertain the feeling that they would acquit themselves worthily. Considering the importance of the fixture the number who availed themselves of the cheap trip on the Midland line to Bristol was surprisingly small, but doubtless the inordinate length of the journey and the uncertainty of the weather conditions deterred many from venturing. Whatever the reason might have been, there was a great falling off as compared with the total of a month ago, only about 80 taking tickets. The members of the team had, it should be stated, journeyed westwards on the previous day, and it afforded their supporters great satisfaction to find that the Luton executive were able to put in the field exactly the same eleven as eliminated Bedminster, Wright and Paul having recovered from injuries recently sustained.

The match had been announced to be played on the County Ground, but as this was not available it was decided at Kingswood. The spectators numbered about 1,000. The ground was in a somewhat unsatisfactory state owing to the recent rains, the turf being soft and swampy. The home captain (Pocock) won the toss and decided to play uphill against the wind. When the sides ranged up on the central line it was found that they were represented as follows:—*Clifton*: Goal, J. J. Hunt; backs, M. L. Owen and W. L. Wynne; half-backs, J. M. Guttridge, G. J. Pocock and R. G. Lowndes; forwards, E. Compton (centre), H. G. Barlow, A. B. Colthurst (left), H. H. Francis and P. F. Newnham (right). *Luton Town*: Goal, J. Burley; backs, A. Sanders and J. Hoy; half-backs, H. Paul, A. Taylor (captain), and J. Wright; forwards, H. W. Oclee (centre), H. Whitby, W. Cheshire (left), F. K. Whitby and G. Deacon (right). Mr. Durban (Aston Villa) was referee, and the linesmen were Messrs. H. E. Rosslyn (Clifton) and F. Scott (Luton). Oclee kicked off and the homesters obtaining possession the sphere was carried into the vicinity of the visitors' goal, where it remained for about a minute. Sanders ultimately relieved the pressure and H. Whitby and Cheshire transferred the scene of operations to the other end, when the supporters of Clifton had an anxious time. Guttridge and Francis managed to clear, the latter dribbling very finely until he was pulled up by the opposing half-backs. The Westerners continued to press for a space and the ball went behind from a shot by Newnham. The Lutonians retaliated and Owen was compelled to make a long kick. "Hands" against either team followed and a free kick was awarded to Clifton for a foul, but nothing resulted on any of these occasions. Oclee at length broke away with his right wing comrades but their stay in the enemies' confines was not a lengthened one, Owen tackling and dispossessing them in grand style. Compton thereafter looked like doing mischief, but Paul, who was playing magnificently, stuck to him like a leech and forced him to kick over the bar. The exchanges which followed ended in the Lutonians making a determined rush, all the forwards assisting in conveying the leather to the home bounds.

assisting in conveying the leather to the home bounds. Deacon finished up by a smart shot, which Hunt handled, but he did not throw the ball far enough away, and H. Whitby, dashing up, sent it in at a pace which rendered the custodian powerless to stop it. This drawing of first blood seemed to put the Westerners on their mettle, and for the first time in the game their forwards displayed really good combination. They played up in capital style, and the result of a hard tussle was that Barlow sent in a hot shot which struck one of the posts. H. Whitby returned the compliment, and the home backs were only able to maintain their charge intact by conceding a "corner." For some minutes afterwards the play was very even, and though Colthurst and Compton seemed to threaten mischief they were never really dangerous, the visiting halves preventing anything like combination by their pertinacious attacks. There was scarcely a pin to choose between them, but Paul and Taylor were working strenuously and in most determined fashion. Their constant tackling seemed to disconcert the Clifton forwards, whose play deteriorated considerably in consequence. Just before half-time arrived, Oclee and his companions made another raid into their adversaries' territory, and the Town centre man ended with a somewhat weak attempt to lower the colours of his opponents. Hunt negotiated the ball, but again failed to knock it away a sufficient distance, and H. Whitby, evading several men who charged down upon him, registered the second point for his side amid enthusiastic cheers from the Lutonians present. At the interval the score stood : Luton, two ; Clifton, *nil*. When ends had been changed the Cliftonians went off with a rush, but they tired very soon and were compelled to act on the defensive, their keeper being called upon to exert himself on several occasions. Pocock endeavoured to infuse renewed energy into his followers, but the forwards failed to score and accordingly relaxed their efforts. Owen, who had been playing a faultless game, rendered himself conspicuous during the frequent attempts to capture the Clifton citadel, and Pocock and Newnham also exerted themselves strenuously. Deacon missed a chance of increasing his side's lead, but this was atoned for by his comrades a little later. Paul obtained possession and passed to F. Whitby. That player kicked into goal but Hunt managed to dispose of the leather. H. Whitby, however, was in the neighbourhood and he obtained his third goal with a very fast low shot which it was impossible to negotiate. There was now only about 20 minutes to play, and it became apparent that all was over except the shouting. The home players were struggling on, though in a half-hearted style, whereas the Lutonians were exhibiting as much dash and brilliancy as ever. The latter soon relaxed their efforts, however, and contented themselves with defending their goal-line. Clifton aroused themselves just before the finish and put on a spurt, but they were unable to penetrate the leaders' defence, and when the whistle announced that the end had arrived they were badly beaten by three to none.