

Football.

POLYTECHNIC V. LUTON TOWN—DEFEAT OF LUTON IN THE ENGLISH CUP.

The tie in the third round of the qualifying competition was decided on Saturday, at Merton Hall, Wimbledon, on the ground of the Polytechnic, who won rather luckily, the winning goal being scored about ten minutes before the call of time. The ground, which lies low, not far from the L. and S. W. railway, was heavy and greasy. The late arrival of the referee delayed the commencement until nearly 2.45, when there were about 300 spectators present. The weather was fine and without wind. Julian won the toss and Beach kicked off for the home team. Luton very soon began to press and from "hands" off Cruikshank, Hooper had to dispose of a handfull. Allen got the ball but was dispossessed by Parker, the sphere eventually going behind. Cheshire next put in some fine work, and after Taylor had kicked behind, Luton gained a corner. This was well placed but Watkins unfortunately shot over the bar. Boswarva made a fine run on the left, and Beach looked like scoring, but was pulled up for infringing the offside rule. The visitors pressed in turn, and from a centre by Brown, Watkins again shot over. The "Polys" next had an opening but lost the chance, Sanders relieving grandly. With the aid of Beach the homesters pressed hard, the ball, nevertheless, going behind. The Luton forwards then brought the ball up, a corner resulting from which Brown missed an opening. Then from a mistake by Wright, Boswarva got the ball, and after a fine single-handed run, passed to Beach. The latter scored the first goal after 20 minutes. Luton at once retaliated, and after Brown had shot the wrong side of the post "hands" were given in front of the home goal. From a scrimmage Watkins made the score level with a low shot from a pass by Julian, 5 minutes after the last goal. Luton resumed their pressure, securing a corner, and give and take play followed, "fouls" being awarded against each side. The Poly boys next pressed hard, Burley having to clear, and a "foul" was given against Luton near goal. From a scrimmage, Boswarva kicked the second goal a few minutes before half-time, when the home side were leading by 2 to 1.

On resuming, Luton made splendid efforts to get ahead, and after some fine play by Taylor, secured a corner, which had no definite result. Boswarva again broke away but with a fine return by Hoy, the visitors resumed pressure. Cheshire passed to Watkins who once more shot over. The Poly right wing got away but the offside regulation checked their progress. The Luton men redoubled their efforts, Hooper having to save and Cheshire kicking behind. At last, after nearly 25 minutes' play, F. Whitby, receiving the ball from the left, placed the teams on level terms with a low shot, amid great excitement. The Luton players now exerted all their strength to make at least a draw, and this seemed probable. They gained a corner, attacking hard, but Brown shot over the bar. The Polys quickly changed the scene of operations, Burley having to kick out twice. Luton got away with a goal-kick, and Taylor sent in a long shot, which Hooper fisted out. Boswarva then ran up, Burley clearing the shot, and the Luton backs grandly relieved the danger. Brown brought the ball up and shot behind, across the mouth of the goal. From a pass by Julian, he had another chance but shot the wrong side of the post. Hoy stopped an excursion into his quarters by skying the ball out of play over the fence. The visitors continued to press hard, but, try how they would, could not score, two corners falling to them without any result. The Poly left wing at last broke away, got through the Luton defence, and Barton scored the third goal 10 minutes before the end. Luton retaliated momentarily, Brown sending behind, but Boswarva once more had a clear run, and passing to his right wing, Hastings registered the fourth goal for his side, two minutes before time. The Polytechnic thus qualified for the final round in the 9th division by 4 goals to 2. Teams:—

Polytechnic: H. Hooper (goal), T. Wilkinson and G. A. Parker (capt.) (backs), G. W. Turk, C. H. Cruikshank, and W. Potter (half-backs), H. Boswarva and J. Burton (left wing), E. J. Beach (centre), Frank Hastings and H. Barker (right wing) (forwards).

Luton Town: J. Burley (goal), B. Sanders and J. Hoy (backs), J. Wright, J. W. Julian (capt.) and A. H. Taylor (half-backs), J. Watkins and W. Cheshire (left wing), F. Allen (centre), F. K. Whitby and W. Brown (right wing) (forwards).

Referee: Mr. W. J. Wilson. Linesmen: Messrs. F. Nicholls (Polytechnic), and S. S. Pakes (Luton).

FOOTBALL NOTES.

The Polytechnic have relieved Luton of all further anxiety as regards the English Cup. The result came as one of the surprises of the round, and created great disappointment among the supporters of the Town club. With but few exceptions the match was regarded as a sure thing for Luton, and those professing to have more knowledge and less one-sided enthusiasm, who ventured to counsel caution, and hint the possibility of reverse, were derided by the confident. The unexpected has happened, and Luton's prospects, once so bright, of getting for the second season into the competition proper have been suddenly dashed to the ground. The game was hard throughout, and the Polytechnic played with a dash and go which meant victory.

The forward rank underwent yet another change—decidedly for the worse, as our new centre was not qualified by the regulations to play. The want of Galbraith was keenly felt in front of goal, where his effective shooting would have at least saved Luton from defeat. No doubt the best selection was made out of the men at hand, but it was patent to every onlooker that Luton's weakness lay in front. They rarely got the measure of their opponents, passed across when in goal, and failed lamentably at shooting. Brown and Chesher were both decidedly "off" their usual form, Allen was too well marked by the big men in front of him to be able to do much, though he worked pluckily. Whitby's fancy kicking did not come off, while Watkins repeatedly failed to utilise openings. Julian was scarcely up to his usual form at centre half, as Beach and Parker gave him considerable trouble, taxing to the utmost his tackling capabilities, and even dispossessing him at times. Taylor played a grand sound game, ever in the thick of the fight and finking no one (which cannot be said of a certain one and perhaps two of the forwards). His shoulder sustained a shock in an encounter with Potter, but he played gallantly on in spite of the hurt. Wright, who found Boswarva too much for him, was not up to the mark, but the ground was possibly unfavourable to his speedy progression. Hoy shares with Taylor the credit of having played the best game for his side, his kicking being fine and tacking reliable. Sanders with Wright was fully occupied when the Poly. left wing broke away, and was naturally unequal by himself to the task of checking their onward and overpowering rush. Julian, Taylor, and Hoy fed the forwards at every opportunity, and gave them frequent chances of sending the ball through. The committee have decided to dispense with the services of Burley in goal, in consequence of his failure on Saturday. The Luton custodian has this season played far below the standard of the rest of the team, but he is not entirely to blame for the defeat at Wimbledon, for some of the forwards were almost as much at fault.

The winners played a fast and strong game, being almost as fresh at the end as at the start. They were always on the ball, and on the alert for breaking away. The Polys. went in principally for the kick and rush business, and very dangerous these were too, as all their goals were obtained by means of them. Their plan was to let Boswarva, their speediest forward, get away with the ball, his fellows running up simultaneously, so as to be ready to aid him in goal. The Luton men found this move extremely hard to check, as it was on their weaker wing. The forwards all played a fine game, especially Beach and Boswarva. Parker was most prominent among the backs, and played in brilliant style. Turk (holder of the Essex Quarter Mile Cup for 3 years) and Wilkinson were also good. Hooper defended grandly in goal, and warded off in marvellous fashion very hot assaults on his charge.

The Polytechnic team is composed wholly of good all-round athletes, men who, I am informed, are equally at home in an eight, on the running path, and in the tennis court. The forwards are all good cross-country runners and path sprinters. Parker, the captain, has represented Middlesex. There are seven senior football clubs in connection with the Regent-street institution, of which Mr. Quintin Hogg is the munificent founder, and 170 matches are arranged for the season. Among their vice-presidents are the University football players, Messrs. Paton, Studd, and Staples. They have now to meet Casuals in the English Cup, after having vanquished Luton, Swifts, and Surbiton Hill. They are drawn against Tottenham Hotspur in the third round, London Senior Cup, and have also entered for the Middlesex Cup. On December 27 Luton has a fixture with them.

There was some talk of a protest being lodged on the ground that the cross-bar was $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches too high and a rumour was also current that the ground was too large. Unhappily no one had the wit to "step" the distance and though the posts were measured before the match, no protest was made to the referee, as the Association rules require, before the commencement of the play. Consequently nothing could be done. In cases where the bar has gone beyond the rule by less than four inches protests when made in due form, have been sustained, and matches ordered to be re-played. T. Read, the "old reliable," will play in goal against the Army Cup Holders on Saturday.

From the disappointing reverse experienced by the Town it is refreshing to turn to the successes of the other Luton teams at home. The Reserves simply had all their own way with the Beda Teachers, while the Montrose gained a decisive victory over Hitchin, before a "gate" of nearly 500, and thereby enter the third round of the Luton Cup. They may now be drawn against opponents worthy of their steel, and in February next experience a break in their victorious career. F. Hoy played his wonted brilliant game, Biggs was smart and very speedy on his wing, while C. Colling was as tricky as ever, and Faller did well at centre. Goodliffe was in fine form at half-back, and A. Colling, "the soldier," of the Royal Engineers, was next to Hoy the most prominent man on the field, his splendid kicking being a feature of the match. The Hitchin men went away with a rush in the first R.

ten minutes, but the pace was too hot to last and quickly subsided. Woods and Williams were the pick of their forwards, and Little displayed sound defence in goal. Curiously enough the Montrose have to meet Hitchin for the third time in succession at Luton on Saturday, in the first round of the Kettering Cup. Colling being unable to play then, the backs will be Rowe and Stickles.