

THE ENGLISH CUP COMPETITION.

LUTON TOWN v. CITY RAMBLERS.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result :—

Luton Town.....	8 goals.
City Ramblers	2 goals.

The teams were as follow :—

RIGHT.	LUTON TOWN.	LEFT.
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Bea (goal).

M. D. Nicholson.	McEwen.
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Watkins.	M'Crindle.	Howe.
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Gallacher.	Finlayson.	Galbraith.	Allen.	Prentice
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Poole.	W. H. Bentley.	Nolloth.	J. Meggs.	G. Meggs.
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F. Bentley.	Harmer.	Ingram.
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Ritchie.	McGahey.
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J. May (goal).

LEFT.	CITY RAMBLERS.	RIGHT.
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Referee—Mr. F. Rouse, R.A.; linesmen, Messrs. C. A. Meggs (City Ramblers), and E. A. Barford (Luton).

Successful Luton! Yes, quite so, and Luton will be successful all the time their players look after their feet, a very important item. For serviceable non-slipping boots, Freeman, Hardy, and Willis, Limited, 38, George-street, Luton, defy competition, all at popular prices, they guarantee best value for money. The Rugby and Association Boot, patented, at 6s. 11d., of which they sell many thousands throughout the kingdom, they thoroughly recommend. The largest stock of Walking and other Boots in the town—[ADVT.]

First the calm and then the storm is the usual order of things in the natural world, but in the football world we do things differently, the calm as a rule coming after the storm. So it was that after the excitement of the Millwall visit things fell comparatively flat on Saturday, and even though the English pot was at stake, matters were taken pretty coolly all round.

Of course, the match on the Dunstable-road enclosure did not settle the whole competition or place the issue beyond doubt, as Luton will have a few tougher jobs to get through before they secure possession of the Cup. But, at any rate, we can take some satisfaction from the thought that we are one step nearer the great goal of our ambition.

It was very good of the Ramblers to come down to Luton to make a Strawplaiter's holiday. They had choice of ground, but knowing they had got to be beaten, they thought they might as well come and take the thrashing decently, with the soothing influence of the shekels to compensate them for their wounded feelings.

The Ramblers came down in battle array,
But with never a hope to win,
They were spry enough in going away
For they had their eye on the tin.

The Ramblers arrived on the scene at half-past three, the time fixed for the kick-off, but as they had taken the precaution to don their football toggery on the way down, there was not much delay in starting. The weather was delightfully fine, and about a couple of thousand persons assembled to witness the struggle.

It was a relief to some of us to find a referee on the field. After the terrible tales told in some of the London papers of the barbarous and blood-thirsty instincts of the Luton crowd, it was a matter of surprise to find a man bold enough to jeopardise his life in such an uncivilised neighbourhood.

Mr. Roston Bourke was to have taken charge of the whistle, but illness prevented, and he prevailed on Mr. F. Rouse, of Southall, to incur the responsibility. Whether that gentleman took the precaution to insure his life before coming, I am not in a position to say, but it was gratifying to find that he was a man, who, judging from his appearance, was tolerably well able to take care of himself.

Nicholson again appeared in the Luton team. It was not at first anticipated that he would, because he was pledged to West Bromwich for the cup competition, but at his request the Throstles released him, and he was therefore able to throw in his lot with the Reds. Whereat we all rejoiced exceedingly.

Football is a poor game without boots. Rather than play with bare feet, go and inspect the stock of Football Boots at Freeman, Hardy, and Willis, Limited, 38, George-street, Luton. Prices to suit all, largest stock to select from. Being manufacturing retailers of all kinds of Boots and Shoes, Freeman, Hardy and Willis supply direct to the purchaser. Over 200 branches throughout England.—[ADVT.]

Luton won the toss, but there was nothing in it, there being scarcely a breath of wind. The Reds immediately attacked, and Finlayson sent in a long shot, but it is a moot point as to whether he aimed at the goal or the flag-staff. Pretty passing by the home forwards resulted in a corner, which Prentice placed behind, and then Finny having failed with another shot, handed over to Gallacher, who middled beautifully, and Allen converted into a goal.

Only five minutes had elapsed since the start, and the spectators were not slow in testifying their delight at this early success. Continuing to press, Allen got clear through a miskick by Ritchie, but his shot was a tame one, and May easily disposed of it. Galbraith put in a much hotter one, the ball going into the custodian's hands off McGahey's head, but again May was equal to the occasion.

For some time the homesters had all the play, and frequently came near adding to their score, but at last Bentley got away and sent across the mouth of the Luton goal, when McEwen averted the danger. Then Luton made tracks again, and Finlayson would almost certainly have done the trick had not F. Bentley dispossessed him just in the nick of time.

Bentley cleared by kicking out, but the clearance was of very short duration, for Watkins gave an immense throw, Gallacher took the ball to the front, and Prentice registered goal number two.

After the return to the halfway line, the Luton forwards were conspicuous for a lovely piece of passing, which was deservedly applauded, and Galbraith finished up by enabling May to display his ability between the sticks. Keeping up the pressure, Watkins twice centred very nicely, Prentice the second time heading a few inches wide of the mark. A foul was next given against Galbraith for using his hands, but a moment later he gave ample proof of the fact that he could use his feet with considerably more effect, putting in a grand low shot which completely beat May.

The Ramblers played up very pluckily, Poole and Jimmey Meggs both getting in evidence, while Nolloth hit the bar with a good shot just as the whistle sounded for offside. At the other end a regular clinker by Prentice, who was putting in a lot of smart work, was saved by May on the post, and after the little 'un had had another try, Watkins took a mighty big kick—and missed. Soon afterwards, from a corner well placed by Gallacher, Prentice headed over, and then the whistle blew and the band played.

Yes, the band was there, but this time it was not the Red Cross, but the Luton Town Band. The instrumentalists went away at a very smart pace, but their combination was not quite as perfect as that of their rivals. They showed plenty of energy and dash, however, and their efforts were greeted with applause. This team also appears to have a silver plating fund, for the collecting box went round, and as a consequence many a spectator was taken a step nearer bankruptcy.

Crossing over with a lead of three goals to nil, Luton seemed inclined to take things rather easily, and as a result the visitors several times became a bit dangerous. This did not agree with some of the onlookers, especially those in the grand stand, and the admonition, "Play up, Reds," was given with a frequency which was a far from pleasing. At last, a gentleman impatiently exclaimed to the shouters, "Why don't you go and play yourself, some of you," and this sally had a decidedly sobering influence.

It is one thing to play the game on the field,
Another to shout in the "grand,"
If players their places to shouters did yield,
I wonder how matters would stand.

It was not only a falling off on the part of the Reds, however, that somewhat changed the aspect of the game, the different complexion being due quite as much to the marked improvement of the visitors. For a time the Ramblers developed really good combination, the passing among the forwards being very creditable. Several times they came near opening their account, but were frustrated by the good play of McEwen and Bee.

At length, the home forwards once more got into shape, and Galbraith neatly transferring to Finlayson, the latter headed on to Gallacher, who put in a brilliant shot, which May, in endeavouring to fist, knocked into the net, thus making the score four to nil.

Again, a smart run on the Luton right wing, led to a prolonged attack on the Ramblers' citadel, but ultimately McGahey effected a clearance in a manner which called forth cheers from the spectators. The visitors got away on the left, and after a fine centre by Poole, Ingram hit the post with a clinking shot, Bee then clearing.

Luton responding, Mc'Crindle passed the ball to Finlayson, who hit the cross-bar with a regular beauty, and Prentice, ever on the alert near goal, was prompt in taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the rebound, and the homesters were placed five up.

The next feature of interest was another splendid shot from the foot of Galbraith, the ball hitting the bar and rolling right along it, and a little later the Luton centre-forward followed with a grounder, which gave May some trouble. Then Finlayson sent the leather smack against the bar, and Galbraith and

Allen having figured in another attempt, the former had still one more try, May saving just under the bar.

A further, but ineffectual attack, was made by the homesters, and then a curious thing happened. J. Meggs obtained possession of the ball, and ran through in extraordinary fashion, no one offering to molest him. He finished up by passing to Nolloth, who put in a good shot which Bee tried in vain to save, and thus the Ramblers, to their evident joy, were credited with a goal.

Upon resuming, the Ramblers were given another chance, which was not taken, and Luton replying, Prentice passed beautifully across the ground to Gallacher, who put in such a tremendously fast shot that I very much question if May got a sight of the ball until it was in the net.

This, however, was only an earnest of what was to come, for the last few minutes of the game proved to be full of excitement. Within a very short space of scoring the sixth goal, Luton got down again, and Howe, sending on to Galbraith, the latter, who had his back to goal, turned round with one of those delightful pivot-like movements for which he seems to possess the sole patent, and added a seventh point with a magnificent shot.

Gally, turning round with a movement so fast,
The backs were unable his effort to mar;
And May, with a sigh, as the ball by him passed,
Said of all the goals scored, this was beat by far.

Then there was another surprise. Starting from the half-way line, the visitors went straight away for the Luton goal, and Jimmy Meggs, taking a flying shot, the ball went into the net like a flash of lightning.

Of course, we all thought the end had come, as only a minute remained for play. That minute sufficed, however, for Luton to effect a further alteration in the score, Gallacher getting down and putting in one of his brilliant middles and Prentice completing the job in first-rate style. Then the whistle sounded, and Luton were left the victors by eight goals to two.

Taking the game all through, it was not an uninteresting one by any means, though the certainty that Luton would win robbed the match of any very exciting features. But to give credit where credit is due, it must be admitted that the visitors gave a very fair exhibition, and played for all they were worth during the whole ninety minutes.

The forwards were tolerably smart, Poole and Nolloth striking me as being about the best, and the half-backs played a hard game, Hamer and Bentley dividing the bun between them. McGahey does not usually come off at Luton, but on this occasion he performed excellently, as also did little Ritchie. May, in goal, had plenty to do, and he did it well, for the shots which got by him would have beaten almost any custodian.

On the Luton side, I think I must first of all give a word of credit to Prentice, who was in wonderfully good form, so good indeed that he more than once made the big McGahey feel just a wee bit cross. The little 'un scored three goals, and taking his display all round, I think he would have been difficult to improve upon. Allen also worked hard, but his passing occasionally was not so good as it might have been.

Galbraith was in fine fettle, especially as regards shooting, very few of his efforts in that department being thrown away. He was responsible for a couple of goals, each of which was thoroughly deserved. Gallacher and Finlayson, as usual, gave a first-class performance, and Finny, it is gratifying to find, is rapidly improving as a shot. His first attempt on Saturday was a poor one, but afterwards he put in some real good 'uns. Gallacher was dead on the spot, and his two goals were beauties.

The half-backs now and then showed signs of flagging, but on the whole they played a strong game. M'Crindle gave Nolloth very few opportunities of shining, and Watkins and Howe were similarly attentive to their respective wings. In the second half Howe was a bit erratic with his passes, but perhaps that was the result of his hard work in the first moiety.

During the initial portion of the game the two backs were in champion form, scarcely ever giving their opponents a look in, but Nicholson got his leg so badly damaged that in the last forty-five minutes he was practically incapacitated. It was a great pity, for he had been doing splendid work. McEwen was in the happiest mood, his tackling and kicking being everything that could be desired. Bee also was on his best behaviour, and only stopped short at impossibilities.

As regards the referee, I may say that Mr. Rouse discharged his duties in a very genial manner, and he subsequently told me that, after what he had heard during the preceding week, he was both surprised and pleased at the excellent conduct of the Luton spectators. Certain it was, that he was neither molested on the field, nor followed to the station by a howling mob.

The results of the other matches in the ninth division were pretty much as might have been expected. The Casuals beat Chesham by four goals to one at Chesham, and Clapton continued their victorious career by knocking Old St. Stephens out by five goals to two. At Tottenham, Hotspurs were only just able to dispose of West Herts by three to two. Wolverton made a draw of it, at one goal all, with Old Castle Swifts on the ground of the latter, and at Norbury, St. Albans and Crouch End united went a step higher, beating the Vampires by a goal to nothing.

Of the other matches, perhaps those in which Reading and Southampton St. Mary's were engaged possess most interest for Luton, seeing that we have to meet these clubs shortly in the League competition. Reading entertained Clifton, our opponents of three years ago, and beat them by seven to three, whilst Southampton St. Mary's went to Newbury and defeated the locals by fourteen goals to nil. Only fancy!