

ENGLISH CUP COMPETITION.

LUTON TOWN v. ST. ALBANS.

Played at St. Albans on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town.....	6 goals.
St. Albans.....	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

RIGHT. LUTON TOWN. LEFT.

Bee (goal).

Chester.

McEwen.

Watkins.

M'Crindle.

Howe.

Brown. Finlayson. Galbraith. Prentice. Dimmock.



F. B. Gresham.

J. J. Heath. W. Giddins. M. R. Laughton. E. N. Sharpe.

J. W. Sharpe.

A. Taylor.

F. Mardall.

W. A. Sargent.

C. H. Ayles.

J. Dickerson (goal).

LEFT.

ST. ALBANS.

RIGHT.

Referee, Mr. E. R. Carr, E.A.; linesmen, Messrs. H. Shane (Luton), and W. Payne (St. Albans).

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I feel tolerably happy now. During the fortnight preceding Saturday I had heard so much of what the Saints were going to do to the team with which my interest is so largely bound up, that I really began to fear lest the fortunes of war should furnish the modest young men of the Hertfordshire town with some justification for the crowing in which they had been indulging.

Not that I for a moment entertained any doubt as to the ability of Luton to lick St. Albans. But then as the day for the all-important match drew near, a lot of uncertainty was felt as to the way in which the two teams would be constituted. On the one hand, we did not know who would appear for Luton, and on the other, we were not sure whether any St. Albans men at all, bar the goal-keeper, would figure in the eleven representing the city.

Here in Luton the question was whether Galbraith and Gallacher would be able to take part in the match, and great was the satisfaction when it was found that the former would turn out, and equally great was the disappointment when it became known that the right-winger would not.

By an amalgamation with Crouch End, the Saints were able to get together what on paper appeared to be a very decent team, and the time of the football enthusiasts in the city was taken up to a very large extent in expatiating on the powers of the different players who would appear in the St. Albans colours.

But taken altogether, the one great point on which the Albanians relied was speed. Most of the men were regarded as champion sprinters, and it was said that when once they got away the Luton professionals would never be able to catch them. The prognostication was not borne out by the event, which again showed how dangerous it is to count the chickens before they are hatched.

For the purpose of transferring the Bedfordshire nobility into Hertfordshire, an excursion was run on the Midland Railway, and the truly aristocratic fare of a shilling return was charged. It ought to have been only half. Notwithstanding the want of consideration shown by the Company, however, nearly a thousand Lutonians went over to St. Albans.

Among these was no less a personage than the Secretary of the Town Club, and it quite did my heart good to see him enjoying himself on the City ground. During the three years I have travelled about with the Reds, this is the first time, I think, that I have seen Mr. Smith take the luxury of a trip. He has generally preferred duty to pleasure, but on this occasion, duty did not call at Luton.

The match took place on the Clarence Park ground, where the accommodation for football is not yet as complete as might be desired. The stretch of turf is in very good condition, and when the Albanians get their new pavilion, which is to be erected at a cost of £300, little room will be left for complaint.

Nearly three thousand persons assembled to witness the encounter, and the period of waiting, previous to the kick-off, was enlivened by the strains of the City Brass Band, in which, it was interesting to note, Mr. Horace Paul—the "good old Paul" of days gone by—played the flute. I wonder which he likes best—blowing or kicking?

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Whatever failures football players may meet with, they can rely on the fact that if they purchase boots or shoes from Freeman, Hardy, and Willis, Limited, 38, George-street, Luton, they never fail to secure a thorough good boot at a low price, which they can wear with confidence themselves, and recommend to their friends. F. H. and W. challenge the trade to deny that they are the largest retailers in the kingdom, and give best value for money.—[ANVT.]

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About five minutes after the advertised time, the genial Mr. Carr whistled the men into position, and St. Albans having won the toss, Galbraith set the ball in motion. Then for a moment all was still, and the three thousand spectators anxiously awaited developments.

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Would the Saints—I must for charity's sake call them by that name, as it would be invidious to distinguish between St. Albans and Crouch End—would the Saints, with their marvellous speed, give Luton the go by, or would science more than hold its own.

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Alas, there was no opportunity of judging, for it was soon seen that while the Reds possessed all the science, they were also able to start with their rivals on the scratch mark and beat them in the matter of speed. Again I say, what a dangerous thing it is to count the chickens before they're hatched.

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No sooner were hostilities commenced than the Luton forwards, with some very pretty passing, found their way to the front of the St. Albans goal, and had Brown muddled instead of shooting, it is almost a certainty that the Reds would have had one point to their credit thus early in the game.

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After Dickerson had cleared from a further attack, Galbraith showed to advantage, and the play in the vicinity of the St. Albans goal became of an exciting character, but thanks chiefly to the energetic play of Taylor, the intentions of the Luton men were frustrated. The Albanians then took a turn, but McEwen proved a stumbling-block, and Bee was not interfered with.

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Then the Reds attacked in force, and Dimmock having once sent just by the post, put in again beautifully. Dickerson saved, but the ball dropping at Galbraith's feet, that player registered the first point with a smart shot. The cheering that ensued showed that there were a few Lutonians on the ground.

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A goal in nine minutes was very fair work. So far the Saints had been principally engaged in running after the ball; they had seldom got on it. Subsequently, however, they fared better, and both goals were visited in turn, though the Luton attacks were always the more dangerous. A corner kick fell to either side, but nothing accrued therefrom.

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But after a bit Luton worked their way down again, and Galbraith passing to Brown, the latter centred very nicely, and Prentice scored a pretty goal. I hope Roland took due note of this, because it showed very clearly how much better it was to place the ball in front of goal than to try and put in goal.

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Continuing on the aggressive, Galbraith tested Dickerson, and found the custodian was quite ready. This was followed by more good work by the Luton men, and Dimmock muddling, Galbraith kindly entrusted the ball to Finlayson, who shot miles too high. St. Albans retaliated, and Heath tried hard to put a different complexion on the game, but without avail. A corner which fell to the Saints was placed behind by J. W. Sharpe.

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Soon afterwards M'Crindle got a kick on the face, causing the claret to flow, but it did not cause him to slacken his efforts. From a beautifully placed corner by Brown, there was some desperate fighting round about Dickerson, and once the custodian apparently let the ball go over the line, but no goal was given.

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A foul against Dimmock did not benefit the Albanians, but one against Mardall was nearly turned to account by the Lutonians, M'Crindle placing and Brown heading in. Dickerson saved well, but the Reds kept up the siege, and at length from another corner, placed by Brown, Dickerson attempted to fist out, and not catching the ball fairly, Dimmock was enabled to put on goal number three.

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From now up to the interval, the Reds continued to have all the best of the play, but nothing further was scored, Luton leading at half-time by three goals to nil. During the last few minutes, the rain had begun to fall pretty heavily, and it unfortunately kept on for about half-an-hour. It was appropriate enough in one way, for the dampness of the weather corresponded with the dampness which had come over the spirits of the Albanians.

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When the teams again faced each other, Luton were lucky enough to have the rain at their backs, and it was not surprising that they speedily began to pile it on proper fashion. Dickerson was immediately besieged, and after he had saved from a grand shot, put

in by somebody whose name I will, for an obvious reason, forbear to mention, Prentice added a fourth goal.

Again acting on the offensive, Luton once more showed their extreme partiality for Dickerson's company, and from a beautiful centre by Dimmock, the ball was headed on to Brown, who was responsible for the fifth goal.

Following this, Galbraith forced a corner, which came to nothing, and then St. Albans, for about the first time, began to do a little passing, the result being that they were enabled to visit the Luton end. McEwen once cleared in grand style, but the Saints renewed their overtures and Bee had to save from a smart attempt by Heath.

A splendidly-placed corner by Dimmock next placed the city goal in danger, and a little later Dickerson distinguished himself by saving finely a lovely cross-shot by Brown. Hands against M'Crindle gave the Saints another opening, and Bee repulsed a hot shot by Gresham, but Laughton pounced on the ball, and scored with a clinker.

The success of the Saints was received with frantic cheers by their supporters, and it really seems quite a shame to begrudge them one little crumb of comfort. Truth, however, compels me to say that the goal was absolutely given away, for while Laughton's shot fully deserved to score, there was no earthly reason for allowing Gresham to shoot. The Reds simply stood and looked on as he took deliberate aim, instead of knocking him off the ball as they might easily have done.

The cheers of the friends of the Saints were soon ironically responded to by the gentlemen of Luton, for J. W. Sharpe fouling Finlayson close in the St. Albans goal, M'Crindle undertook the kick, and sending in hard, the ball glanced off Aylen, and Prentice put through, making the score six to one in Luton's favour.

The rest of the game does not call for description, all, or practically all, the play taking place on the St. Albans territory. No scoring occurred, however, barring an off-side goal by Prentice, the Lutonians contenting themselves for the most part with fooling about.

Prentice especially, seemed to take a delight in making his opponents look silly, always appearing anxious, as a preliminary to shooting, to show the Albanians just one trick more. It was very pretty, and very tantalising, but there are some of us who would rather have seen goals.

Looking at the game all through, I must freely admit that, though Luton did not exhibit their best form, they played a great deal better than I expected, considering the somewhat disorganised state into which the forward string had recently fallen.

The Albanians were quite non-plussed by the short and clean passing of their rivals, and had a great deal of fruitless running about. The Saints, in fighting against Luton, were like a disorganised rabble contending against a disciplined force. The men individually were smart enough, but there was no combination among them.

Dickerson played a startling game in goal, and only in one instance was he found to be at fault. The backs were rather weak, Sargent particularly making a very poor show. He was all right when wound up, but it took him so long to get on the move.

The half backs formed a very decent trio, but while Mardall and Sharpe played up strongly, they were completely eclipsed by Taylor, who was ubiquitous. In the first half, I regret to say the Crouch Ender detracted from his undoubtedly fine performance by indulgence in shady tactics, and he certainly used Galbraith rather unfairly.

Heath was the best of the forwards, and E. N. Sharpe was the weakest. I had been led to expect a great deal from this young gentleman, and was woefully disappointed. He did not even show up well in the matter of speed, which apparently is his only qualification for a place in a football team.

As to the Luton eleven, I am not going into ecstasies over them, as comparatively speaking, they had nothing to play against. Galbraith again showed good form, and was subjected to uncereceremonious attentions from Taylor and two or three others. After he scored the first goal, he was never allowed another opportunity.

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However, he was very fairly supported by the wings. Dimmock was in fine fettle, and although he has disappointed us more than once, I am inclined to think that he would pay well for a thorough good drilling. He has the ability, and it only wants bringing out. Prentice also played well, the left wing being a great improvement on the past two or three weeks.

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Finlayson, as usual, shone in every way except in the shooting department. He missed two or three easy chances there. Poor old Brown was pretty well mad with the toothache, but nevertheless did some very good work. What he needs most is to be taught that there is a time to centre and a time to shoot, the latter occurring much less frequently than the former.

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The half-backs were all sound, Howe fairly astonishing the natives of St. Albans by the ease with which he overtook their speedy men. M'Crindle, notwithstanding his injury, worked hard for the whole ninety minutes. The backs gave a first-rate exhibition, McEwen especially distinguishing himself, but they both seemed to play with a thorough knowledge of each other's movements. Bee had very little to do, but he could not be blamed for the goal that was scored against him.

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Good-natured little Mr. Carr discharged his duties admirably, favouring neither the one side nor the other. Considering the local feeling excited by the match, the position of the referee was not nearly so arduous a one as might have been expected, and as Mr. Carr combines tact with efficiency, players generally acquiesce in his decisions with the greatest good will.

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I understand that Luton's share of the gate amounted to about £32.

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In the other matches in the ninth division, Tottenham Hotspur beat Wolverton by five goals to three, Clapton knocked out the Norwich C.E.Y.M.S. by three to two, and Ilford made a draw of it with the Casuals, not a goal being scored. The Casual cracks were engaged with Preston North End, and the Ilfordians ought to have jumped at their opportunity.

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In the eighth division, Southampton St. Mary's gained an unexpectedly easy victory over Reading by five goals to two, and Marlow beat Swindon by four to two. In the tenth division, Millwall Athletic did not shine very brilliantly, beating the Training Battalion R.E. by four to one after a game in which they did not have all the best of the play. Royal Ordnance beat Dover by six to nil, and New Brompton asserted their superiority over Chatham by three goals to nothing.

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In their re-played tie with the Casuals at Leyton on Wednesday, Ilford came off victorious by three goals to one. Good old Ilford.

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Don't go to a Football match and get wet when you can get a First-class Overcoat or Mackintosh at S. Bassett's, 28, Wellington-street, for 30s., to order.—
[ADVT.]