

ENGLISH CUP COMPETITION.

LUTON TOWN v. ILFORD.

Played at Ilford on Saturday. Result :—

Luton Town.....	2 goals.
Ilford	nil.

The teams were as follow :—

RIGHT.	LUTON TOWN.		LEFT.	
	Bee (goal).			
	M. D. Nicholson.		McEwen.	
	Watkins.	M'Grindle.	Howe.	
Brown.	Finlayson.	Galbraith.	Allen.	Dimmock
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G. Fry.	J. C. King.	G. Gallon.	A. Porter.	E. Porter.
	F. Markham.	H. G. Watts.	C. D. Regan.	
	E. Markham.	J. C. Drummond.		
	W. R. Cosburn (goal).			

LEFT.	ILFORD.	RIGHT.
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Referee, Mr. H. Chase, R.A.; linesmen, Messrs. G. Worboys (Luton), and A. Liford (Ilford).

"General notice to the players of all football clubs." When you have an important match coming on, look to your boots. If they are not in the best condition, you can, "and ought," to go straight away to Freeman, Hardy and Willis, Limited, 38, George-street, Luton, where for a low price you can get a Good Boot, which will materially assist you to defeat your opponents. For light, ordinary wear, F. H. and W. call attention to their 3s. 11d., 4s. 11d., and 5s. 11d. quality. See their windows.—[ADVT.]

The Midland Railway Company sustained a serious loss on Saturday by reason of the inability of Gallacher and Prentice to take their places in the Luton team. Could those two players have gone to Ilford, there is no doubt that a large contingent of Lutonians would also have made the journey, but when it became known that they would adorn the sick list for another week, the local enthusiasts wisely determined to save their money for another, though not necessarily, a rainy day.

A good number of persons in Strawopolis were faint hearted enough to believe that the Reds had indeed come to the end of their tether in the Cup Competition, but personally I did not share in those fears. The fact of the matter is the Ilfordians are not nearly so strong as they are reputed to be, and were it not for their geographical position, very little would be heard of them.

It is not any exceptional prowess on their part which has brought Ilford to the front, such notoriety as they have achieved being due rather to the accidental circumstance that their potato patch is situated within the charmed circle wherein the Cockney scribes do dwell and carry on their vocation.

The confidence which I felt as to the result of Saturday's game was derived chiefly from the remembrance of the match at Ilford last season, when Luton came off victorious by a goal to nil. I knew perfectly well that Luton could not play a worse game than they did on that occasion, and it was the consciousness of that which made me anticipate a favourable verdict in the present cup-tie.

Oh, but, says someone, that could be no criterion because Ilford have vastly improved since then. Don't you believe it, dear reader; they stand just about where they did. They're no better, and perhaps they're no worse. The improvement is a mere fiction, begotten of the fertile imagination of the aforesaid scribes.

Then, exclaims another, how do you explain the fact that up to Saturday last they had only been once beaten this season? The explanation is simple. They had had for the most part nothing but wretched combinations to play against. Clapton they beat by a fluke, and Royal Ordnance and Swindon were vanquished when those teams were all to pieces, and couldn't play for toffee.

The Ilfordians had beaten a casual lot of Casuals, but for the rest just look at the following as a sample to crow over—Bromley, Woodville, and Chesham Generals. Why, the three rolled into one wouldn't make a decent team. Millwall Athletic have been the only really smart lot antagonised by Ilford this season, and the Dockers proved the conquerors by six goals to nil.

The gates at Ilford are not enormous, the majority of football people down that way showing a decided preference for the Spotted Dog. Although Luton have been so much "sat so" recently by Metropolitan Knights of the Quill, they generally manage to draw a big crowd when they go to London, but on Saturday not more than twelve hundred persons assembled to witness the struggle with Ilford.

But what a crowd to be sure! I don't want always to be harping on the same string, but it seems to me high time, in the interests of sport, that a little candour were shown in the London football journals. They have manifested great anxiety to convert the heathens who frequent provincial grounds, but I think it is about time they set their own house in order. Let them begin at Jerusalem.

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I must say that the remarks I heard on Saturday uttered in the immediate vicinity of the Press-box were not only a disgrace to the persons who made them, but also to the scribes who go there week after week without raising one word of protest. Sitting on a seat in front of the Press-box—a seat, by the way, supposed to be reserved for members of the Committee—were “gentlemen” who assailed Luton players with such choice epithets as “Oh, you dirty cad,” “You butcher,” accompanied by exhortations to “Turn him off,” “Chuck him out,” &c. Hooting, too, appears to be a favourable method of expressing one's feelings at Ilford.

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Now, how is it possible for a game to be conducted in a proper spirit when spectators are allowed to indulge their blackguardism—for it is really nothing better—in this way? Such conduct might not be out of place at a prize fight, or any similar exhibition, but surely it ought not to be tolerated for a moment at a football match.

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But, it will be asked, did the Luton players do anything to deserve these execrations? I can truthfully and honestly say they did not. Occasionally, the rules which govern the game were transgressed, but the fouls were about evenly divided between the two teams, and nothing of more than usually reprehensible character transpired.

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While I am on the subject, however, I would appeal to the Luton players to do all that in them lies to avoid giving offence. Judging from experience, the hostile demonstrations are bound to come, but they will lose all their sting if the players have a perfectly clear conscience in the matter. As honesty is the best policy in general life, so honest play is far and away the best in the game of football. I never knew any good yet to come of a foul, and I have known a great deal of harm result.

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Now, on Saturday my notice was attracted by a little incident which quite escaped the referee's eye. One of the younger of the Luton players jumped full at an opponent. What advantage, I ask, could result from such a dodge as that? None whatever. But, on the other hand, to say nothing of possible injury, it might lead to a goal being obtained by the other side, if a free kick were awarded, and such tactics inevitably lead to a deterioration in the character of the play.

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It is not often I preach, and I have done now. As already mentioned, Saturday's game was not a great one, the form on both sides being, with few exceptions, anything but a brilliant nature. It was the forward play which was chiefly at fault. Luton was bad enough in this respect, but, Ilford were a great deal worse. Luton's two outside men were painfully weak, and as regards Ilford, it was a case of Edgar Porter first and all the rest nowhere.

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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.—[ADVT.]

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Luton lost the toss and had to play the first half against the blinding rays of the sun. The Reds were on the field some time before their rivals, and when a start was made, about ten minutes after the advertised time, Ilford were still a Gallon short of their full complement. Their centre forward soon arrived, however, and thus they were brought up to proper measure.

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Luton were the first to attack, and Dimmock secured a corner, from which nothing resulted. A couple of fouls against Galbraith, not bad ones, called forth any amount of jeering and hooting, and then Drummond having cleared from a further assault by the visitors, Ilford got away, King sending in a long shot which Bee easily saved.

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Following this, McEwen was responsible for a couple long 'uns, both of which Drummond headed away, directly after a throw-in for Luton resulted in Ilford retaining possession of the leather, and he scored his first goal with a splendid low shot. This was after quarter of an hour's play.

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A corner off Markham next rewarded Luton's efforts, and Dimmock placing, an overhead shot by Finlayson looked for all the world like scoring, but Cosburn threw out. A foul against McEwen put the Luton goal in danger, and a period of exciting play in that vicinity was terminated by Gallon heading over.

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Bee having negotiated a shot from Regan, Luton went to the other end, and after a fruitless corner,

Galbraith was entrusted with a free kick for hands. He placed in the net, but the ball was not touched in transit, and consequently no damage was done. A foul against Nicholson led to a variety of uncomplimentary things being said about that gentleman, but apparently they took little effect.

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Play now waxed fast and furious, and Brown and Allen having failed to turn openings to account, Ilford retaliated, and Gallon and Porter—strange conjunction of names—got in hot shots, both of which, however, were saved by the Luton backs. From a corner, Bee had to save, and then Luton again took up the running.

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An infringement of the off-side rule by Brown nullified their efforts in the first instance, but the attack being repeated, Drummond gave a corner, and Dimmock undertaking the kick, Galbraith came very near scoring, heading the ball on to the post. Another corner followed a moment later, but Brown placed behind.

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Some splendid work by Galbraith was neutralised by feebleness on the part of Brown and Dimmock respectively, but Luton persisted in their overtures and would undoubtedly have scored, but for the brilliant defence of Drummond, who headed out again and again. Half-time was called with the record standing at one to nil in Luton's favour.

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The play during this half had been fast, but that is the only good thing that can be said about it. Luton had certainly had a little better of the exchanges, but neither of the goalkeepers had been overworked.

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When play was resumed, both ends were visited in turn, though Bee and Cosburn were left unmolested, and then a curious thing happened, three fouls being given against Ilford one after the other, the offence in each instance being the common one of pushing. From the last free kick M'Crindle sent in a shot which almost took effect, but Ilford cleared, and Watkins sent over.

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The ball was for a time kept in the neighbourhood of the Ilford goal, but at last the besieged became the besiegers, and McEwen then defended very bravely. Regan, however, hit the cross-bar with a hot shot, and a foul against the homesters relieving, Luton once more went away, but failed to get through, and Ilford retaliated just as strongly, but with like result.

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It began to look as though there was not going to be any further score, but at length Luton had another try, and Finlayson putting over to Dimmock, that player added a second goal with a beauty. The Ilfordians appealed for off-side, and there appeared to be some ground for the appeal, but it was not allowed.

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The remainder of the play did not produce anything worth chronicling, and thus Luton qualified for the final round of the preliminary competition by a win of two goals to nil. The victory was not much to brag about, it is true, but it served to take us a step further in the competition.

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There was not a great deal to choose between the two teams on the day's play, though it must be admitted that the winners had a little the best of the game all the way through. Galbraith worked desperately hard from beginning to finish, trying all he knew to infuse life into the other forwards. Both by example and precept did he endeavour to keep the outside men up to their duties, but for the most part his efforts were in vain.

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Finlayson also put in a lot of hard work, but was sorely handicapped by Brown, who, I regret to say, did not come within miles of the Brown that ran round Harrison, the Old Westminster, last year. Allen showed distinct improvement, but Dimmock again was off.

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The half-back as usual laboured untiringly, never slackening during the whole ninety minutes, and McEwen again played a grand game at back. Nicholson did not extend himself at any time, taking matters very coolly. Bee had very little to do.

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As to Ilford, honours rested chiefly with Drummond, who gave a splendid exhibition. He is a brilliant little player, there's no mistake about it, and if it were not for him, Ilford would be in a very poor way indeed. Regan was the best of a pretty good half-back line, and Edgar Porter was the only forward to distinguish himself. Fry, the outside left, was the personification of weakness.

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Mr. Chase again discharged his duties with great impartiality, though the duties of a referee are anything but pleasant when they have to be carried out in the presence of such a howling mob as that which disgraced the Ilford ground. The Luton players, it should be said, had some difficulty in making their way to the pavilion after the match, owing to the "friendly" attentions of the crowd.

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The result of the Clapton and the Tottenham Hotspur match was a somewhat sensational one, as very few persons believed the Spurs capable of rubbing it in by four goals to nil. We shall certainly have to go all the way when we meet them in the final. I am told, however, that the state of the play on Saturday was not so one-sided as the score would seem to suggest.

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In the tenth division Millwall managed to get the better of New Brompton by two goals to nil, and the Royal Ordnance beat the Highland Light Infantry by three to nothing.

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John Jack made his first appearance before a Luton audience by assisting the reserve team playing the Kettering Reserves on the Town ground on Saturday afternoon. For the first quarter of an hour Jack's capabilities were fairly well tested, and he shaped very creditably. Up to that time the members of the team had placed the ball frequently to him, but the Kettering fellows began to smell a rat and told men off to watch him; consequently, for the remainder of the first half Jack did little or nothing.

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It was a pity that he could not be given a better partner than Prime. The latter appeared in running costume, but unfortunately he is not a footballer and had not the least idea of where to place the leather. In the second half Prime went to outside right, Taylor inside, and Warren partnered Jack on the left, the two between them working hard for the remainder of the game.

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Another new reserve man was Ashton, who has come to the Grosvenor College. Of fine build he worked at centre half like a Trojan, and was found a very hard nut to crack. A special word of praise is due to Fox, who defended his goal in an almost marvellous fashion. Not only does he kick well, but he is very quick in clearing and is good at both high and low shots. He had plenty of practice on Saturday, and I understand is to be given a trial in the first team against 2nd Royal West Kent on Monday.

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A recognised necessity by all football players, is a good, useful, comfortable fitting boot. These can be procured at all prices and guaranteed qualities from Freeman, Hardy, and Willis, Limited, 38, George-street, Luton. The Rugby and Association Boot, Patented, deserves special mention; the price of these boots is 6s. 11d., we sell many hundreds, and they give universal satisfaction. Gentlemen's Light Sunday Boot from 3s. 11d., special sewn ones at 6s. 11d. Competition defied.—[ADVT.]

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The match on Saturday next, on the Dunstable-road ground, will be against our old friends Wolverton, and I think we may rely upon the following team to atone for the narrow squeak we experienced at the home of the railway lads:—Bee, goal; Nicholson and McEwen, backs; Watkins, M'Crindle and Howe, half-backs; Gallacher, Finlayson, Galbraith, Prentice and Jack, forwards. It will be seen that the whole front string will be composed of Scotchmen.

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On Monday, the 2nd Royal West Kent Regt., Ex-Army Cupholders, will be taken in and done for. On that day, Collins will appear at back in the Luton team, and Fox, of the Reserves, will be given a trial in goal.

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In an interview which Nicholson had with "Linesman," of the *Morning Leader*, the Luton back gave an opinion of the Ilford crowd which amply bears out what I have stated. He said, "I've seen some crowds in my time, but never one like this." He also insinuates that the onlookers did not thoroughly understand the game. What would he have said had he overheard an observation in the Press-box? The referee's whistle put an end to a scrimmage in front of the Ilford goal, whereupon one of the critics asked, innocently enough, "What's that, another foul against Nicholson?"

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¶ HOW TO CENTRE? Why, centre your attention on the well-selected stock of hats, ties, shirts, and under-clothing, at S. Bassett's, 28, Wellington-street.—[ADVT.]

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The Beds County Cup matches in the first round came off on Saturday. Luton Reserves beat Bedford Reserves by six goals to nil; Montrose beat Dunstable by four goals to three; and Powage Albion were successful over Markyate F.C. In regard to the Montrose and Dunstable match, a protest has been lodged by Dunstable against some of the decisions of the referee (Mr. Barber, of Bedford), and this will be considered at the meeting of the Association on Tuesday next.