

# FOOTBALL.

## LUTON AND THE LEAGUE.

### TOTTENHAM 'SPURS DEFEATED.

#### ANOTHER STEP UP THE LADDER.

On Saturday the Lutonians played another game in the United League competition, when their opponents were Tottenham Hotspur and the match was decided at Northumberland Park. The contest had been looked forward to with a good deal of interest in this locality, for it was conceded that the 'Spurs were the most formidable lot the Lutonians had yet had to meet away in the League, and there was in some quarters doubt expressed as to whether the local champions would be equal to the task set them. The prevailing feeling was, however, one of confidence in their ability. For the sake of completeness it may be said that the rival teams had met four times this season, the results of three of these encounters being victories for Luton while the fourth game (which was decided at Tottenham) terminated in a pointless draw. On Saturday the local team journeyed by the 12.25 Midland train and they were followed some hour and a half later by a special excursion train which conveyed several hundreds of eager partisans to South Tottenham. The 'Spurs' executive had hit upon an excellent plan for ensuring an early attendance, a match between West Ham and Tottenham boys having been arranged. This, it may incidentally be said, ended after a splendid contest in which great skill was displayed by the juveniles in a win for West Ham by four goals to three. The Luton visitors who had not hurried to the ground found the covered and uncovered stands crowded to excess and the ropes thickly lined with spectators. This was half an hour before the time announced for starting the great game, and those who arrived later were badly off. It was computed that there were something like 6,000 or 7,000 persons present.

The teams, who were generously cheered on emerging from the dressing-rooms, lined up in the following order:—

**Tottenham Hotspur:** Goal, Ambler; (backs), Burrows and Montgomery; half-backs, Devlin, Almond and Crump; forwards, McElheney and Milliken (right wing), Allen (centre), Clement and Payne (left wing).

**Luton:** Goal, Williams; backs, McCartney and McEwen; half-backs, Davies, Stewart and Docherty; forwards, Coupar and Gallacher (right wing), Galbraith (centre), McInnes and Ekins (left wing).

**Referee:** Mr. A. G. Kingscott; Luton linesman, Mr. E. Birch.

Mr. E. Birch.

Some difficulty was experienced in persuading the Walthamstow Silver Band to leave the centre of the ground, where they had been discoursing more or less sweet strains for a quarter of an hour. This was at length accomplished, however, and the sides ranged up. The Lutonians had lost the toss and they faced the sun. Galbraith started operations punctually, and the 'Spurs' went off with great dash and at a splendid pace. Stewart conceded a corner to McElheney in the first minute, this being led up to by a grand kick by Burrows. On the other side of the field McCartney gave another flag-kick, and while the Lutonians were appealing for hands after this had been placed Devlin pounced on the ball and lowered Williams's colours. This success was obtained in about a couple of minutes from the start, and the supporters of the homesters cheered themselves hoarse. They were fully entitled to feel jubilation, for the point was very smartly obtained. Following hands against Docherty McElheney got right in and looked dangerous; but he weakly sent over the line. Ekins dashed away splendidly, but was fouled by Devlin, the ball being well headed away by Crump when the free-kick brought danger. A splendid attempt by Stewart from a distance was fisted away by Ambler, and a second effort by the visiting captain immediately after was equally well disposed of. Williams fisted away from the home front rank, and in a trice the ball was headed through by Payne from a pass by McElheney. Mr. Kingscott was of opinion, though, that the left-winger was off-side, and so the point was not suffered to count. The Luton custodian effected a further neat clearance, and the home outside-right, who was playing an especially fine game, was penalised for lying off-side. "Mac" was not deterred by this, though, for in very little time he was perceived to test Williams with another beauty. Milliken was less accurate in his kicking, a shot from his foot soaring over the bar. Hands against Coupar barred the progress of the Lutonians for a minute; but lovely passing (the best in the game) by the visitors' forwards enabled Stewart to send in well, the outcome being that McInnes steered the ball behind the line. Clement got off at a rare pace and after beating McEwen sent over the bar. Hands against the leaders presented the Lutonians with a chance which they were not slow in accepting. Gallacher eventually winding up a neat sample of passing by sending out. Docherty was fouled by the homesters and a strong attack ensued on the part of the "whites," this being put an end to by Stewart indulging in fouling. The local spectators were hugely delighted when the referee over-ruled a decision by the Luton linesman. Following this throw in Williams was called upon to fist away twice in rapid succession, once being from a very hot one by McElheney. Galbraith was punished for a foul and McEwen presented a corner to McElheney, while a brief period of pressure by Tottenham was terminated by the outside right shooting erratically. Allen, who had not been very conspicuous up to now, sent wide. McInnes broke away cleverly and passed to Gallacher, who sent behind with a good kick from the line. Davies placed so accurately that McInnes found it possible to test Ambler with a header, this leading to a corner. The kick was splendidly taken, and Ambler was afforded plenty of opportunity of displaying his ability, Gallacher ultimately miscalculating the height of the bar. Stewart was unlucky with a capital overhead kick, and just after Galbraith missed a splendid opening, while Payne struck the bar with a good one from a distance. McElheney secured after hands against Stewart and dispatched a beauty at Williams's charge, this leading to a tight scrimmage in front of goal, the result of which was that McElheney struck the post with the ball. This was a very narrow escape indeed, and the locals cheered their favourites to the echo. Ekins failed to accurately locate the 'Spurs' goal, though he was unlucky with one beautiful shot in particular. Clement was accidentally kicked by Davies, and then Stewart was yelled at for putting his hands on an opponent's shoulder. McCartney kicked finely just now, and at one period he placed a free-kick so well that Stewart had hard luck in not heading through, Burrows jumping in in the nick of time. Ekins and Coupar rendered themselves conspicuous by good efforts, while Stewart was unfortunate with a try that deserved a better fate; it was only the extraordinarily smart defence of the leaders just now, indeed, that preserved their charge from capture. Free-kicks against both sides in turn were noted, the most interesting features in the next minute or two being good centres by Ekins and valuable play by Stewart. Three fouls in quick succession were awarded, two of these being against the 'Spurs'; from the last McCartney placed grandly and Ambler had hard work in saving. A lovely shy by Docherty was saved at the expense of a corner, and a big struggle which ensued was brought to an end by Ambler tipping the ball over the bar at the cost of another flag-kick. This was not very accurately placed by Docherty, the result being that the ball found its way over the line ere it reached the goal. Coupar spoiled a good chance by handling when well up, and a tremendous shot by Gallacher travelled just above the bar. Payne was once more adjudged off-side, and effective play by McCartney and Coupar was duly taken cognisance of subsequently. McInnes and Ekins tried hard to score just after, but without avail. Williams saved a "daisy-cutter" from Clement, and Almond in the next minute sent ridiculously wide. Luton had had somewhat the best of the exchanges of the first half but they had been prevented from scoring, and when the charge of ends came the positions were:

'SPURS, 1; LUTON, 0.

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Soon after the resumption Ekins showed how weak he can be on occasion by spoiling a beautiful pass in the corner. "Monty," who had been playing in first-rate style, gave away a corner rather than allow Gallacher to shoot. Stewart headed in finely from this and Ambler cleared smartly, though at the expense of a second corner. Hands against McInnes spoiled this. Off-side did not long check the 'Spurs, for in a brief space McElheney was observed to beat McEwen and dispatch a particularly hot one at Williams. The keeper was on his guard, though, and saved in excellent fashion. Ekins secured and rushed away at top speed, finishing up by sending into the side of the net. This was one of the left-winger's best exhibitions of the day. A foul against Docherty was balanced by another on Davies by Almond, while McElheney committed a further offence by illegally charging Docherty. Further breaches of the law by the homesters had the effect of keeping them close to their own goal for a time, and during this period Gallacher sent just wide of the post with a shot that was worthy of a better fate. A foul against Docherty was noted, and just after Montgomery was guilty of an execrable foul on Coupar. McCartney placed splendidly and the ball was headed through. The referee appeared to grant the goal; but on being appealed to by the 'Spurs he awarded a goal-kick, the only reason that could be imagined for this being a possible impeding of the custodian. The local spectators were delighted by this refusal to grant a point to the visitors, and the Lutonians present were as much astonished as they were annoyed. Ekins was prominent later on, and McInnes attracted the notice of Mr. Kingscott by indulging in foul tactics. Ekins was deservedly cheered for a very fine run and shot, the latter of which Ambler only just managed to save. Thereafter disaster came to the 'Spurs. Galbraith was hurt and had to be carried from the field with a twisted knee. Fortunately Dr. McArthur was present and attended to the injured part. Meanwhile Ekins had been fouled in front of goal, and Mr. Kingscott conceded a penalty kick to the claimants. Davies took this and so accurate was his aim that Ambler was beaten with ease, and the scores were thus equalised. A free-kick for a foul against Luton was splendidly taken, Stewart heading away prettily. An invasion by the Lutonians was terminated by Coupar getting off-side. The little right-winger was somewhat injured later on. Fouls came in profusion just after, and following these unwelcome passages Galbraith came out and was lavishly applauded. Payne headed wide of the bar and hands was awarded against Coupar, while subsequently Galbraith sent out when the Lutonians had advanced neatly. Again the visitors attacked and the ball was cleared in remarkable fashion, though at the expense of a corner. Following hands against the 'Spurs the ball was scrimmaged through as the result of a smart struggle by the Lutonians, McInnes being last to touch it. A great shout of applause betokened the presence of some hundreds of delighted Lutonians. The game thereafter ruled in favour of the visitors; but towards the close the locals got dangerous more than once. Try as they would, however, they were unable to get on terms and the result of a splendidly fought game was:

LUTON, 2; 'SPURS, 1.

# FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

The game at Tottenham ended, as most of us in Luton anticipated, in a victory for the Lutonians. The margin was not quite so large as some had made up their minds it was going to be; but for all practical purposes it was sufficient, and if the other matches away from home produce such satisfactory outcomes I shall be fully satisfied.

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The special excursion train was well patronised, as the lowness of the fare charged fully entitled it to be. There will, no doubt, be an acceptable balance of profit for the club, and it may be taken as conclusive that the idea of running these cheap trips commends itself to hundreds who would journey with the team were such facilities the rule instead of the exception.

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The weather was brilliantly fine and the ground was in capital condition. The crowd was large and afforded another illustration of the drawing powers of the Lutonians. It is a great pity that the home executive cannot get a few such gates, for then there would not be the difficulties existent which are now to be deplored.

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Judging from the demeanour of the spectators the Tottenham supporters had made up their minds that their champions were to take a step up the League ladder at the expense of the Lutonians. Some ladies who were occupying positions on the grand stand close to where I was standing were particularly demonstrative, and if the cheers of the supporters could have won the game the 'Spurs must have won hands down.

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At the outset "Hope told a flattering tale" to the Tottenham crowd, for the locals went off with that dash which has always characterised them. Their effort was no mere flash in the pan, either, for the contest was more or less strenuously conducted to the close. When the 'Spurs crossed over with the lead some present were prophesying dire results to the visitors.

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Others of us who knew what the Luton men could do and who had faith in their staying ability felt, on the other hand, that the Hotspur had set the pace a whit too strongly and that they would be out-last. It did not surprise me in the least to see the visitors score when they did, or that they had a good deal the best of matters after the interval.

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To speak frankly, it must be confessed that there was not very much in it in the first half. The exchanges were on the whole fairly even, with a slight leaning towards the Lutonians, who though not quite so dashing as their opponents were not a bit less determined.

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To the experienced eye it was patent that the strangers were a good deal the better lot in the second moiety, and it was then that their superiority became most marked. Their forward play was then streets in front of that of their adversaries, while at no period was their defence inferior.

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Of course Luton deserved success; even the 'Spurs' admirers were compelled to concede so much, and thus my opinion that the Lutonians are good enough to beat the Tottenham lot at any time and on any ground was borne out. There is the fact that four of the five meetings of the sides this season have yielded triumphs for the Bedfordshire men and that the other match resulted in a draw. This ought to be accepted as conclusive evidence of the superiority of the winners of Saturday.

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The verdict was that Luton won by two goals to one; but a third goal was actually notched, and what the referee was about when he disallowed it none of us could understand. He appeared first of all to grant the point and then to refuse it, and the only feasible explanation that presented itself was that the custodian may have been impeded.

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The Luton forwards were not at their best on Saturday. Gallacher and Ekins were the pick of the bunch, both doing excellent work along the line and sending in powerful centres. The right-winger had one or two slices of hard luck in failing to score with shots from the line that seemed certain to succeed.

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Galbraith was once more unfortunate, his accident coming at a very awkward time. We all sympathised heartily with "Gally," who was carried off with a damaged knee. Dr. McArthur was fortunately present.

and he quickly bandaged the knee so that the centre-forward could resume. Curiously enough, Galbraith played better after the mishap than before his retirement.



Amongst the halves Stewart was the bright and shining light. He was everywhere where work was to be done in his department and he became a terror to the Hotspur forwards. It amused me to notice the sympathy which was poured out upon the Tottenham men when they were beaten by the visiting captain.



Davies played a clinking game and Docherty was not by any means off colour. Both performed splendidly and brought into play extreme resourcefulness and excellent judgment. So long as the halves play as they are doing just now they ought not to be interfered with.



The backs were presented with a heap of work and for the most part they discharged it admirably. McCartney was the better of the two, for McEwen was beaten by McElheney more often than I cared to see. However, there was not much to grumble at.



Williams for once in a way had plenty to do, and he played in superb style. Clawley, Campbell and the rest are doubtless good men; but the best man I have seen in the South is the Lutonian. The shot which beat him came from a scrimmage and there was no disgrace to him that it scored.



On the other side Ambler was in his old form. Had it not been for his splendid ability Luton would have been leading by quite half a dozen at the interval, for the visiting forwards sent in several shots which would have beaten an ordinary custodian all ends up. He, also, had no shadow of a chance with the shots that scored.



There was little to choose between Burrows and Montgomery, who both played in grand form. Almond was not quite so good as on former occasions, both Crump and Devlin giving him a start.



Of the forwards Payne was most to my liking; but he spoiled an otherwise admirable show by shirking McCartney. McElheney on the opposite wing displayed a very fine turn of speed and excellent shooting ability, though some of his efforts were a trifle wide. Allen in the centre did well, though he was not by any means brilliant.



I wonder whether any Red Cross Band men were present. If so, they will agree with me that a certain Luton band could have given a long start and a beating to the aggregation of instrumentalists who amused themselves during the proceedings.



Mr. Kingscott was passable in his decisions and the general opinion was that he was a success. That Luton goal which he declined to allow is still, however, an enigma to me.



After Saturday's match the Luton record read: Played, 52; won, 37; lost, 8; drawn, 7; goals for 182, against 50.

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To-morrow will bring a strong test to bear on the locals, for then the Arsenal are due. The defeat which was inflicted on the Lutonians at Manor Field some weeks since forms no guide to the probable outcome, for they were then very much below their full strength. Nor must we attach too much reliance to the result of the League game at Plumstead, when the teams drew.

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There is no doubt that the Woolwich lot have improved considerably since that time, and the accession of Caie seems to have further strengthened their ranks. The victory over Burton Swifts at Burton was an unmistakeable proof that the "reds" are not a team to be trifled with.

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Bearing all this in mind I am prepared for a stoutly fought game to-morrow; but I shall be vastly surprised if the locals succumb. Their home record this season does not warrant one in thinking that they have much chance of losing if they play up to their usual form, and I refuse to believe that they have fallen off so much as to allow of the Arsenal winning.

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There is one point, though, that I must be permitted to drive home, offend or please. It is not to be denied that the shooting of the Luton forwards is not nearly so deadly as it was before Christmas. I do not suppose anybody will care to dispute this assertion. It is here that the danger lies, and my advice to the front string must be to shoot hard and straight.

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The defence has never been stronger or more reliable than now. The halves are as good a trio as any in the South and the backs and custodian are in first-rate form. My hope is that the whole eleven will work with a will and if the men combine as well as we know they can victory ought to be ours.

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It is better that speculation concerning the chances of the championship should be deferred for a bit. The downfall of Loughborough at Millwall (not forgetting that the Midlanders had but 10 men for a good portion of the game) appears to point to the probability of the fight being between Millwall and Luton. Should the Arsenal be beaten here to-morrow I should be inclined to support the locals for premier honours.

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Should this come off it will be a grand achievement. I suppose we are going to win the Kettering Cup on Monday—anyhow I shall be grievously disappointed if we do not—while the Luton Cup ought to remain in possession of the Town Club authorities. If the championship of the United League can be added to the spoils—but there is much to be done ere that comes to pass.

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The result of the Luton Cup semi-final on Monday was not in accordance with general expectations. The Chesham men early in the game showed themselves to be much smarter than Wolverton, and their victory was popular with the majority of the hundred or so spectators present.

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By far the most interesting part of the proceedings so far as Lutonians are concerned was the state of the ground. This was truly awful, and the club officials were execrated right and left for not having had the pitch properly drained. When the game had been in progress half-an-hour very little grass was to be seen, while the players were either ankle deep in mud or floundering in miniature lakes.

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The weather, too, was not all that could be desired. Rain and wind and a hail-storm thrown in are not at all desirable accompaniments to a football match: but all these things were experienced on Monday, so that it cannot be wondered at that charity did not greatly benefit. Before the game was finished most of the onlookers had had enough, and the ball was apparently also of the same opinion for it "did a bust" and retired from the scene.

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The play was not first-class, and the players were not covered with glory, although they were with mud. When the ball dropped dead in the slush and refused absolutely to bounce or roll, it could not be expected that the teams would give a brilliant exposition of the game—and they did not. One man, however, shone above his fellows and he is an old friend of the Luton crowd. I refer to Giddings, the old St. Albans player, who figured at outside left for Chesham and who was the best man on the field.

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Chesham will appear in the final, but they will not win the cup. That is a safe prophecy, for the pot is a gift for Luton, who really ought not to compete unless stronger clubs enter. As it stands at present the competition is a failure from a football point of view and none too great a success from the stand-point of the institutions it is intended to benefit.