

FOOTBALL.

OPENING OF THE LUTON GROUND. DUKE OF BEDFORD'S HANDSOME GIFT.

LUTON DEFEAT LOUGHBOROUGH.

So much has already been written concerning the new ground of the Luton Town Football Club that further description would be superfluous in connection with the formal opening ceremony which took place on Saturday. From the time when it was announced that the Duke of Bedford would perform that function public interest had been increasing and on Saturday the Duke met with a reception which must have impressed strongly upon his mind that the sympathy of Luton people is with him. The Mayor (Alderman Hucklesby) readily acceded to the request of the authorities of the Club that he would entertain his Grace, and accordingly the first part of the proceedings took place at the Town Hall. At about half-past 3 a large crowd had assembled, while inside were grouped the following gentlemen: The Mayor of St. Albans (Councillor Symington), Messrs. T. G. Ashton, M.P., J. Cumberland, T. Swarder, G. Oakley, G. Elliott, A. Carruthers, Corser (East Finchley Golf Club), J. W. Green, J.P., J. I. Wright, J.P., F. W. Beck, G. Sell, Dr. Swarder, R. N. Christie, B. Cole, J. G. Roberts, J. O. Kershaw, H. Arnold, H. T. Shackleton, G. H. Barford, &c. The arrival of a number of members of the borough police force signalled the advent of the Duke, and as his carriage made its appearance at the top of Bute-street a great shout of welcome uprose, this being repeated as his Grace (who was accompanied by Mr. F. G. Butler and Mr. J. H. Staddon) entered the Town Hall. Here he was received by the Mayor and entertained in the Mayor's parlour. After a few minutes a procession was formed and, headed by the local bands, the guests made their way to the ground in Dunstable-road where a large crowd had assembled. At the entrance to the field fluttered bunting suspended from a couple of poles while inside the entrance was the new flag of the Club's colours with its monogram. The grand-stand had been gaily bedecked with streamers and the pillars were enreathed with red, white, and black material. Spaces had been reserved for the distinguished guests in the front row, and to do them honour a detachment of the local Volunteers was present under the command of Captain Green with Lieut. S. J. Green second in command. The grand-stand was filled with spectators, while in other parts of the ground were large numbers of interested beings. These united in according a cordial reception to the Duke, whose first act on arriving was to inspect the guard of honour closely. It should be said that amongst those present on the grand-stand were the Mayoress (Mrs. Hucklesby), Mrs. G. Sell, Mrs. A. Carruthers, Coouncillors Dillingham and Wilkinson, the Borough Surveyor (Mr. A. J. L. Evans), Mr. S. G. Wilkinson, and others.

THE OPENING.

The MAYOR, who was well received, said his duty that day was one of a very pleasant character. He was told by the Secretary that it was his pleasure to introduce the Duke of Bedford (applause). He was sure he expressed what was well known to them when he said that his Grace had ever taken an interest in Luton, and the fact that he was there on an interesting occasion of that nature was proof to them all of that interest which he took in everything that tended to the true well-being of the community at Luton (applause). He felt proud as Mayor to welcome his Grace, and he was sure that in the name of those gentlemen who took such deep interest in this wonderful game of football he spoke what they felt when he said they were exceedingly gratified to see the Duke amongst them for the purpose of opening the new ground (applause). The Mayor thereafter introduced

The DUKE OF BEDFORD, who said: I beg to thank you for the very cordial reception and also to thank his Worship for the very kind terms in which he has introduced me to you. I can assure you that I have very great pleasure to come here to-day upon this interesting occasion, one in which the inhabitants of Luton of all classes and all ages and, I think, both sexes alike appear to take the greatest interest (applause). I am very glad to think that the interest which you take in football has been rewarded by such a glorious list of victories (applause). I confess that I am anxious to see the commencement of the game, and I shall, therefore, not detain you for a very long time; but I will formally declare the ground to be opened, and I hope that this splendid ground may be the scene of many a well-fought contest (applause).

Mr. ASHTON, M.P., felt they wanted at once to get to the game; but he was sure they all wished to pass a hearty vote of thanks to the Duke for coming to open the ground. He dared say a Saturday half-holiday was not so precious to his Grace as it was to some of them, not that the Duke was a less hard-working man than any of them; but he was able to take half-holidays when others could not. Nevertheless they were very grateful to him for giving up his Saturday afternoon to them (applause).

The MAYOR OF ST ALBANS said it afforded him very great pleasure to second. He hoped they might have a very successful time in the future in their favourite game of football (applause).

Mr. H. ARNOLD (Treasurer of the Town Club) said as one of the officers he had been asked on behalf of the Club to express their thanks to the Mayor for the interest he had taken in the opening ceremony. They appreciated his kindness highly and felt it to be one with his general action in regard to all matters which affected the interests of the town (hear, hear and applause). He had ever shown himself thoroughly interested in the welfare of the town and whether it was in sport or other matters he was prepared to lend his patronage and advance the pleasure and welfare of the town. He had very great pleasure, as the representative of the Club, in offering their sincere thanks to the Mayor.

The MAYOR, replying, said it

the Mayor.

The MAYOR, replying, said it was a great pleasure as well as a great honour to be associated with the opening of their magnificent ground.

Mr. J. H. STADDON, who was next introduced, on behalf of the club extended their thanks to the visitors for coming to support them in the great national game—a game which they had endeavoured to carry out to the utmost of their ability and to provide one of the best teams in the South (hear, hear and applause). They were delighted that so many of their friends in Luton had turned out that day to show their sympathy with them in the very difficult task they had on hand—to carry on a good football team in South Bedfordshire. Unfortunately for them they were compelled to leave their old ground through no fault of their own, and they had had to seek pastures new. In so doing it had been necessary for them to spend a sum of about £800 to get a ground in fit condition to carry on the game. It was well-known that in whatever enjoyment was provided—whether secular or sacred—they must have the best talent to make it a success. In providing a football team they had endeavoured to provide the best talent obtainable. It might possibly be too good for the district; but better too good than too bad (applause). They were there to carry on a game which they hoped would end in great success for Luton Town. The Duke of Bedford had kindly promised them a cheque for £50 towards the £800 which they had to raise between now and the end of April for the expenses connected with the Club (applause). Mr. Staddon added that £10 10s. had been given by Mr. J. W. Green, who was a thorough sportsman. They had a number of other gentlemen there and they hoped to raise something like £400 that day. If they could do that they would be satisfied.

Mr. G. ELLIOTT, replying on behalf of the visitors, said he did not know that the latter required anyone to voice their appreciation of having been asked to so pleasant a gathering. If he might illustrate in his own experience why one was pleased to come there it was that one had had an opportunity for some years of reading day after day and week after week of the achievements of the Luton Club. One had longed when the exigencies of daily life would permit to come down and see those gentlemen in the flesh. That pleasure was promised them that afternoon and no greater reward could possibly be given to those who had been asked as visitors. They were all longing, if he might say so in colloquial language, to see them "at it," and on behalf of the visitors he would say it was their ardent wish that that splendid field might indeed be a new centre which might witness fresh victories and that the name and fame of the Luton Club might endure undiminished for all time.

Mr. STADDON said the name of any gentleman who was prepared to give anything would be gladly taken.

The MAYOR intimated that Mr. Ashton, M.P., had promised £5.

This completed the formal proceedings, the only notable feature before play was commenced being that three photographs were taken of the guests in the grand-stand.

THE GAME.

By half-past 4 the match had been commenced. It was one of considerable importance to Luton, for it was a United League encounter and just now League points are welcome to the Lutonians. It had been anticipated that the game would be a closely fought one and so it proved, for the visitors were only beaten by a goal to none. It should be said, however, that a high wind prevailed and that this very materially affected the play.

The sides, who were under the control of Mr. West (Kettering), were:—

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

Loughborough: Goal, Monteith; backs, Blackett and Thompson; half-backs, Mumford, Hamilton, and Shelton; forwards, Roulston and Andrews (right wing), Brailsford (centre), Jones and Ward (left wing).

Linesmen, Messrs. E. A. Barford and E. Gibbs.

The home captain won the toss and the Duke of Bedford kicked off, his Grace being loudly cheered on making his appearance on the centre line. Soon after the start the "Luffs," who went off in splendid style, tested the home defence severely and McEwen effected a wonderful clearance. Minor decisions against the visitors were unproductive, Docherty later on sending in magnificently and Coupar heading away. It seemed to most present that the half-back's shot would have taken effect had it not been interfered with, despite the cleverness of Monteith. A corner to Luton was not improved upon, Ekins sending over the bar when the keeper had effected a partial clearance. Gallacher put in an admirable run after another good sample of play by McEwen, but the right winger's terminal shot was not effective. Williams was very severely tested when both Luton backs had been beaten; but the home custodian was equal to the emergency and cleared in a fashion that evoked hearty cheers. Free-kicks enabled the "stripes" to advance and while they were attacking vigorously Ekins steered over the line, a capital try by McInnes being finely saved just after. One of Gallacher's best centres was spoiled by Ekins heading behind the line, and some time afterwards Docherty landed the ball on the net. The left half followed this up by a further

acceptable effort, Monteith experiencing considerable difficulty in dealing with it. A good pass by Stewart put Gallacher in a position to have another shy and the outside man missed by inches with a beautiful shot. Free kicks came to either side and later on Gallacher, receiving from Galbraith, kicked over the Loughborough goal-line. The home centre forward distinguished himself by dispatching a beauty at Monteith, who behaved splendidly. The visitors indulged in foul tactics when Luton pressed strongly and a good centre by McEwen led to a corner being conceded. Stewart missed what was apparently an easy chance and McEwen kicked right over the bar. Coupar and Galbraith were conspicuous for gallant efforts in the next few minutes, and a capable header by Gallacher was worthy of note. McCartney placed well from a free-kick close to goal; but Monteith was on the alert. A couple of corners fell to Luton but neither was improved upon; one was secured by Gallacher and the other came from McInnes. More free-kicks were awarded against Loughborough. One of these was taken by McCartney, who drove the ball through the legs of his opponents into the net, the success being received with enthusiasm. Before the interval Coupar sent through from a pass by Gallacher, and Mr. West disallowed the point on the score of off-side, though there were many who were of opinion that the goal was perfectly legitimate. Nothing further in the way of scoring was done before half-time, when the positions were:

LUTON, 1; LOUGHBOROUGH, 0.

After the resumption the strangers had the wind in their favour; but they did not make so much use of this advantage as had been expected. As a matter of fact the locals had almost as much of the play as their opponents, and the wonder was they did not increase their lead. Early in the second half Williams went down on his knees to a long shot, which he saved excellently. Ekins failed to head through from a neat centre by Gallacher, this failure being unaccountable. Hamilton was somewhat injured by colliding with Docherty, though fortunately the hurt was but slight. A tricky display by Coupar was applauded, this being followed by a series of free-kicks, the visitors being too prone to indulge in foul play. Following one of these McEwen sent into the net, though unfortunately without the ball touching the necessary second player. Ekins put in one of his brilliant bursts and centred accurately, Galbraith failing to get through. A corner to Luton was unfruitful, following which Ekins was credited with another failure, this being from a good pass by McCartney. More fouling was indulged in, Loughborough being the principal offenders. Unpleasantness between a pair of antagonists led Mr. West to intervene and matters became more pleasant subsequently. A grand run by Gallacher ended in that player striking the bar with a first-rate effort. Brailsford managed to get through later on but Williams was too much for him, though the save cost Luton a corner. For a time fouls by the visitors were more noticeable than was the good play of either side. McInness was at one stage fallen foul of near the Loughborough goal; but Mr. West declined to allow a penalty-kick, and the free-kick was resultless. The game continued to be interesting to the end, when the relative positions were:

LUTON, 1; LOUGHBOROUGH, 0.