

# THE ENGLISH CUP COMPETITION.

## LUTON TOWN v. BOLTON WANDERERS.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

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|------------------------|---------|
| Bolton Wanderers ..... | 1 goal. |
| Luton Town .....       | nil.    |

The teams were as follow:—

Luton = Williams, goal; McCartney and McEwen, backs; Davies, Stewart and Docherty, half-backs; Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, Little, and McInnes, forwards.

Bolton—Sutcliffe, goal; Somerville and Davis, backs; Paton, Brown, and Freebairn, half-backs; Cassidy, Gilligan, Tom Miller, Wright, and Jack, forwards.

Referee, Mr. J. O. Tillotson (Birmingham); linesmen, Messrs. J. W. Wilson and Nat Whitaker (London).

Luton's red-letter day has come and gone, and now we are left to the melancholy pleasure of reflecting upon what might have been had circumstances happened differently. For some days prior to Saturday, there had been nothing else talked of in Luton and the neighbourhood but the coming Cup-tie, and in the places where men do congregate, the chances of one or other of the teams were eagerly canvassed.

After Luton's brilliant win at Grimsby, it was generally thought that they had a very good chance against their more renowned opponent the fact of their playing at home about at for the advantages enjoyed by the visit other respects. Both clubs fully appreciated the importance of the occasion, and in every precaution was taken that should turn out fit and well.

The Bolton Wanderers arrived Friday evening, and put up at the Luton Hotel, whilst the Luton team journeyed over from their training quarters on Saturday morning. The weather had been delightfully fine all the week, and it continued so on the all-important day, the consequence being that there was nothing to deter a large crowd from assembling.

Indeed, but for the shamefully inadequate railway arrangements, it is highly probable that the accommodation afforded by the Dunstable-road en route would have been much more severely tested. Owing to the perversity of the Midland Railway authorities, it was not known until the last moment that cheap tickets could be issued from St. Pancras, or London doubtless would have supplied an almost unlimited number of spectators, there being no match of any importance within the Metropolitan area.

As it was, a great many Londoners came down, and as there were hosts of people to be picked up at St. Albans and Harpenden, the crowded condition of the trains may be imagined. It was quite the usual thing for nineteen or twenty persons to be packed together in a single compartment, and they were naturally in a somewhat limp state when they got out at Luton.

But their troubles were not over even then. The entrances to Bury Park, adequate as they are for all ordinary occasions, were altogether insufficient for Saturday's crush, and the squeezing and pushing which had to be endured before admittance could be obtained to the ground combined to form an experience which one would not willingly go through again.

At two o'clock, there was a crowd of two or three thousand persons present, and when the teams appeared on the field some forty minutes later, the spectators must have numbered seven or eight thousand. The period of waiting was enlivened by a capital selection of music by the Red Cross Band, and when the Bolton team, followed immediately by the Luton men, stepped on to the field, people had forgotten their troubles, and were prepared to settle down to the enjoyment of the game.

Neither side was at quite full strength, Jones, the Bolton skipper, who had burnt his toe in trying to cure a corn, being absent from his place at left back, whilst Ekins, the Luton left-winger, had to be an onlooker, it being thought unsafe to play him for the first time, after his recent injuries, in so momentous a fixture.

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A punctual start was made, and Luton losing the toss, had to kick towards the Workhouse end, but with the wind slightly in their favour, Gallacher got away almost at once, and centred, but the Trotters effected a clearance. A really pretty effort by the Luton forwards followed, but it was brought to a premature conclusion in consequence of McInnes taking Coupar's pass in an offside position.

Very attractive play by the Wanderers' left wing was the next feature, Wright showing up particularly well, but offside neutralised in this case also, and from the free kick Luton went to the other end, where Donaldson almost succeeded in getting through, but was dispossessed at the last moment.

Strangely enough, the first straight shot at goal came from McEwen, who put in a beauty, which Sutcliffe punched away. A miss by Mac directly afterwards enabled Gilligan to force a corner, but pressure was relieved by a foul against the visitors, who, however, had another try, and Williams was tested with an easy shot.

A good deal of long kicking was afterwards indulged in, and then from a centre by Gallacher, Donaldson had hard lines in not bringing about the downfall of the Bolton citadel, Davis just managing to foil him by passing back to Sutcliffe. From a return by McCartney, Gallacher sent in a good shot, but Davis luckily got in the way, and a corner only resulted, from which Stewart headed behind.

Luton followed with another fruitless attack, and then Donaldson putting the ball forward, Gallacher sent across the mouth of goal, and McInnes and Sutcliffe both made a rush at the same moment. Tommy got on the ball first, but Sutcliffe spoiled his shot, which went high over the bar. That was certainly a very fortunate escape for the visitors.

Very little combination was being shown on either side, but whilst the Trotters exhibited greater smartness than Luton, the latter made the more dangerous attacks. Donaldson, who was playing a dashing game, raised the hopes of the spectators more than once, but the Bolton backs always succeeded in preventing any damage, and it is a question whether the Luton centre-forward would not have done better to have played to the right wing instead of going so much on his own.

A grand effort by Gallacher and Coupar threatened danger, but McInnes was again given offside when in a splendid position. The visitors, on the other hand, never became really dangerous, till Paton placed the ball beautifully from a free kick. Williams punted out, and Jack sent behind.

Bolton made another spirited attempt after this, but were driven back, and Luton then had all the best of the play up to the interval, Sutcliffe being called upon two or three times. Donaldson made several fine individual efforts to get through, but when half-time arrived, the score-sheet remained a blank.

When play was resumed, Luton went away beautifully, McInnes leading the attack and passing out to the right. Gallacher returned and McInnes put wide. A foul against Freebairn on Bolton territory improved Luton's prospects, but though Docherty placed well, the ball was got away without Sutcliffe being troubled.

Another run by the home forwards was completely upset by Little, who with heaps of time to judge his kick, placed the ball behind instead of in front of his men. Then a disaster overtook Luton, through the medium of a foul by McEwen. Freebairn placed the kick, the ball was headed in from the left, and Williams fisting out somewhat feebly, Cassidy scored with a return shot.

Of course, plenty of time remained to put a different complexion on affairs, as only five minutes of the second half had elapsed, but the goal put a good deal of heart into the visitors, and they played with much more confidence than before. Smartly as they played in mid-field, however, they seldom appeared like adding to their score.

After a period of give-and-take play, McEwen placed well from a foul against Freebairn, and

Gallacher headed behind. Doocherty next got in a grand centre, from which the Wanderers cleared, and at the other end, McEwen was applauded for rushing across and depriving Jack, when the latter was making tracks for the Luton goal.

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Another foul against the visitors led to a scrimmage in front of their goal, and eventually Sutcliffe gave a corner by knocking the ball behind just as it was descending on the bar. Doocherty took the kick, and in the struggle which ensued, one of the Luton men was brought to the ground. The whistle went, and everybody thought it was for a penalty, but a free kick only was given, and from this the Trotters cleared.

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Foul after foul was now given against the visitors, but the free kicks were not turned to account, Little's leisurely movements at this critical period so exasperating some of the spectators that they shouted for him to come off the field. He may have been hurt or ill—I cannot say—but he was certainly performing worse than ever at outside-left, where he had now gone.

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Bolton having had a fruitless corner, Luton once more acted on the aggressive, and a foul against the Wanderers close up looked particularly hopeful. Doocherty placed, and Gallacher headed the ball against the inside of the crossbar, but even then Sutcliffe kept his goal intact.

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The visitors responded, and two or three times got in the vicinity of the home goal, but several free kicks against them brought Luton back, and McCartney landed the ball right in the midst of the players in front of goal, only for Sutcliffe to rush through and clear. Then came the narrowest squeak of the afternoon, Donaldson breaking away and passing out to McInnes, who put in a lovely shot which seemed certain to take effect, as it was going into the opposite side of goal to that at which Sutcliffe stood. The custodian, however, threw himself full length at the ball, and just touched it with the tips of his fingers, turning it round the post.

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It was a marvellous save, and nineteen keepers out of twenty would have failed to bring it off. This seemed to take all the heart out of Luton, and they never afterwards showed any like scoring. The fouling tactics of the visiting team now led to several or two parts of Luton, which perhaps was exactly what the Wanderers wanted, as it not only wasted men but did away with any chance the fowls for the most part, and they were silly one was by McCartney and the only really bad play having to be suffered just before the finish, to recover. Up to that point, McCartney had played a perfectly fair game.

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Two or three free kicks against the visitors kept up the interest to the last moment, as it was just possible they would enable Luton to equalise, but the anxiously-looked-for goal did not come, and the homesters retired beaten by nothing.

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The game all through was of the Cup-tie order, there being very little combination shown, the prettiest of what there was being exhibited by Jack and Wright on the Bolton left wing. The strange thing is, that while the Wanderers' goal had far narrower escapes than the Luton citadel and while on the actual chances Luton might very well have been returned the winners, I cannot get away from the impression that the spoils of war went to the better team.

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The Trotters were very smart, the half-backs and backs showed a wonderful facility for kicking in any position, and altogether the men seemed less cumbersome in their methods than the Second Leaguers. Somerville at back was a host in himself, and Sutcliffe once again proved his title to being one of the best goalkeepers in the kingdom.

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Still, I think Little's feeble display was probably the cause of Luton losing the match. The left wing was practically useless, for all McInnes' activity could not make up for his partner's shortcomings. The whole team played below their best form, the men seeming to be over-weighted with responsibility and overawed by the name of their opponents.

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Williams was less successful than usual, for though he could not be blamed for the shot that scored, he was a trifle weak in negotiating the Boltonian free kicks. The backs played a good game, McEwen especially so, and no fault could be found with the halves, except that they were not so quick in their movements as the trio on the other side. Gallacher and Coupar soon discovered that they were unable to take liberties with the men opposed to them, but perhaps they would have been seen to greater advantage had Donaldson played to them more freely. The centre-forward failed a little in this respect, but otherwise he was the best individual performer on the Luton side.

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On the whole, I don't think Luton came out of the ordeal with quite such distinction as they did against West Bromwich Albion, but possibly that was because more was expected from them. They were certainly not disgraced, for with a little luck they might have secured a precisely opposite verdict to that which was arrived at. I ought not to finish without saying that Mr. Tillotson refereed with great impartiality, and showed himself alive to every move on the board.

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I hear that Little was very badly kicked on the muscles of the leg soon after the game began on Saturday, and that that was the cause of his indifferent display.

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The gate in the Cup-tie at Luton on Saturday amounted to just over £270, or nearly a hundred pounds better than last year. This, of course, is a record for Luton. It is estimated that the spectators numbered about 9,000, as fully a thousand boys were admitted at threepence per head.