

NEWCASTLE UNITED DEFEATED.

A MERITORIOUS VICTORY.

When Luton Town defeated Manchester City in the League Second Division on the first day of the present year it was observed that this was doing a good turn to Newcastle United, who were making a bold bid for second place on the League table, and subsequent events have proved this to be correct. On Saturday morning the United were but a single point behind the Mancunians with a game in hand, and the encounter accordingly gained in importance from the bearing it might be expected to have upon the competitors for the honour of figuring in the test matches, and it was fully anticipated hereabouts that the "stripes" would do a good turn to the City by defeating the Newcastle lot. This formed the first meeting of the rival sides and there was little reliable evidence on which to form a judgment as to the probable outcome. It was remembered, however, that the United had failed at Southampton in the English Cup tie a week previously, and it was felt that what the "seasiders" could accomplish the Lutonians ought also to be able to manage. The contending clubs had called upon their strongest available sides. For the United the names finally selected were those of the players who had performed at Southampton, while the Lutonians had McCartney and Davies back in their customary positions and Birch figuring on the left wing in lieu of Little, whose recent displays have not been giving anything like satisfaction. The Newcastle team journeyed southwards on Friday and put up for the night in London, proceeding to Luton on Saturday forenoon. They were reported by Mr. Watt (the Secretary) to be in first-rate trim. It had been thought that there would be a large "gate" and excursion trains from London had been arranged; but for some reasons unexplained the attendance did not realise expectations. There were not, indeed, more than about 3,000 present. The conditions were regarded as being favourable to the Lutonians, for the ground was distinctly on the soft side as the result of rain and frost.

The sides were constituted thus:—

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

Newcastle United: Goal, Watts; backs, White and Jackson; half-backs, Ghee, Ostler and Stott; forwards, Allan and Harvie (right), Peddie (centre), Smith and Campbell (left).

Referee, Mr. J. Stark; neutral linesmen, Messrs. J. H. Taylor (Aspley Guise) and A. Peters (Kettering).

Stewart was once more unsuccessful in the toss and the locals started from the railway end. There was little disadvantage in this, however, for there was no wind to speak of. The visiting forwards were first to become prominent, and Davies cleared. From another attack McEwen followed suit, and subsequently Stott pulled up the home right wingers smartly. Donaldson was applauded for a shot at goal which though unsuccessful was a good one. McCartney relieved and the home centre forward again became conspicuous. The operations were already very fast and exciting, both sides exerting themselves well. A dangerous run by the United left wingers was stopped by Smith getting off-side. Gallacher was checked by a similar infraction, McEwen finding it requisite to clear from the free-kick. A foul against Stewart for holding an opponent did not long deter the locals, for in the next minute a corner was forced by Birch. Docherty sent in grandly from this; but Watts fisted away well. McCartney sent into goal excellently, though without the desired result accruing. Off-side stopped the visitors' right, and then the left wingers put in a capital run. Gallacher sent behind with an overhead shot. The home right got under weigh neatly from a well-judged pass by Donaldson; but when Coupar seemed almost certain to score the ball cannoned off an opponent. Just later McCartney effected an admirable clearance at the home end, while following a foul against Jackson, who was unduly vigorous just now, the ball was steered over the Newcastle goal-line. The United right wing pair advanced by means of pretty passing; but they were soon stopped, the Luton defenders playing a fine game. Gallacher managed to get clear and struck the bar with a fast shot, and when the ball rebounded into play Birch had little difficulty in scoring the first goal of the match. This initial success fell to the home lot when play had been in progress about a quarter of an hour, and the spectators expressed their gratification in no half-hearted fashion. The visitors made a clamorous appeal to the referee; but Mr. Stark awarded the point. After the re-start Campbell put in a hot shot which Williams saved well, and a second attempt by the same player was adjudged to have been made from an off-side situation. A nasty foul was committed on Donaldson by Ostler and another on Coupar by Stott, the little right winger being badly charged in the back. The exhibition of roughness by Newcastle led to a demonstration on the part of some grand-stand occupants, whereupon Mr. Staddon sternly cautioned the offenders. An impertinent observation by one of the malcontents drew from the director the outspoken declaration that "We don't mean to have our ground closed." McCartney became prominent on two occasions, Campbell once being pulled up very neatly. Birch was responsible for a good run which led to Stott effecting a good clearance. McEwen gave a capital exhibition, while Jackson conceded a corner to Coupar. From this Gallacher sent well into the mouth of goal and a big struggle ensued. Stewart headed in and Donaldson wound up by sending the ball past Watts. It seemed to most, however, that the goal had to be credited to the home captain, the ball appearing to go over the line from his header. Following the resumption the "stripes" attacked and Watts was called upon to clear. Birch became prominent for some good play, after which Smith fouled Coupar very badly. Birch sent over the goal-line from the free-kick. McCartney was cheered for a splendid clearance and Stott was punished, for a foul on Coupar, the right-winger being badly tripped when he was becoming dangerous. Some exciting play near the Newcastle goal resulted from the free-kick and Jackson presented his opponents with a further corner. Smith was penalised for fouling Davies and a couple of free-kicks were awarded against Ostler for rough play and Peddie for off-side. Allan later on shot splendidly from the extreme wing and the ball appeared to be going in just under the bar when Williams effected a wonderful save. Jackson landed the ball on the net with a long attempt, and Smith steered wide of the mark. After more first-rate work by McCartney Peddie secured and shot finely, Williams making a grand save. Two or three of the United forwards tried their hand at shooting; but the custodian was proof against all their efforts. Stewart next headed into the goal-mouth and Coupar missed what appeared to be an excellent chance of adding to the home total. Gallacher called upon Watts to exert himself, and then Williams had to save from Allan. The Luton right wingers became dangerous once more, the keeper being called upon to clear. Davies rushed up when Gallacher was palpably off-side and sent across to McInnes, who promptly sent into the net, thus scoring what appeared to be a grand goal. The referee at first seemed inclined to concede the point; but after consultation with one of the neutral linesmen (Mr. Peters) he disallowed the appeal, much to the dissatisfaction of the spectators. The point certainly seemed legitimate, McInnes being behind the ball when Davies played it. Nothing further of importance transpired before half-time, which arrived a minute later, and so the positions at the time for crossing over were:

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half-time, which arrived a minute later, and so the positions at the time for crossing over were :

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In the second half Campbell and Peddie exchanged positions, a change which worked extremely well. The first event of importance was a foul by Donaldson on Ostler, this being followed by several throws-in on the Newcastle right. From a foul on Donaldson Docherty sent high over the bar. Next a corner was forced by Luton, Watts clearing. An exciting scrimmage ensued in the Newcastle goal and it seemed certain that a score would accrue; but the danger was averted by the coolness of the visitors' rearguard. The United attacked smartly, Docherty clearing in a manner that was thoroughly appreciated by the onlookers. Jackson became conspicuous for good defensive work, following which Gallacher dashed off at high speed and struck the side of the net with an exceedingly hot shot. Davies centred neatly to McInnes, who sent behind, being bowled over mercilessly as he was steadying himself to shoot. Jackson again distinguished himself, a foul being subsequently awarded against Davies. Gallacher terminated a strong attack by sending out erratically, a performance which was emulated by Harvie when that player had worked his way up well. McInnes made a gallant attempt to score, Stott managing to get in the way in the nick of time. Campbell raced away at high speed, hotly pursued by Davies, and as the forward neared the 12 yards line he was pushed in the back. The resultant free-kick was not productive. More excellent work was credited to Jackson, as the result of which Allan was placed in a position for testing Williams. The keeper seemed to misjudge the ball and it rolled into the net, much to the chagrin of the spectators. Thus the home lead was reduced with a goal which was distinctly lucky. The United were stimulated by this success and they played up so strenuously afterwards as to lead the home supporters to conclude that the result was by no means a certainty for Luton, as they had begun to fondly imagine. An especially sturdy attack was grandly repelled by the Lutonians, Stewart being in the thick of the fray. Gallacher obtained possession and set off at top speed down the wing; by this time the visitors had awoke to the fact that the right-winger was to be watched and the outcome was that "Gally" was too much impeded to become dangerous just now. In the next minute, though, the same player sent across splendidly, this leading to a neat clearance by Watts. A foul against the "black and white" on McInnes was noticed, Birch missing rather badly from the free-kick. From a centre by Peddie Harvie shot swiftly and Williams saved. Donaldson next broke through in characteristic style and the result of a single-handed run was that the home centre man scored a glorious goal. The enthusiastic applause which greeted this feat was thoroughly deserved. This renewed success was regarded as putting the issue beyond doubt, inasmuch as there was but about a quarter of an hour to play. The homesters were now on good terms with themselves, and they continued to give a capable show. The United were by no means done with, however, for on one occasion they managed to get the ball into the net. The whistle had previously blown for off-side, though, and so the notch did not count. Stott dealt unmercifully with McCartney, who had been playing a grand forcing game. McEwen sent up nicely from the free-kick and Watts was required to exert himself. Then Donaldson headed in from an off-side position, and Ghee was penalised for a laughable sample of deliberate handling. From the free-kick Stewart headed over the bar. Williams saved neatly from Smith, while Docherty kicked away finely when Stewart had been

pulled up for fouling Campbell. This was an especially narrow shave for the locals for a score seemed certain when the left half dashed across splendidly. Watts brought down the house with a magnificent save from Donaldson and Coupar while on the ground. More fouls were taken cognisance of by the referee, and an unproductive corner to Luton was the last event of interest in the game. The eventual result was a well-merited victory for the better side on the day's play with the following figures:

LUTON, 3; NEWCASTLE, 1.

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

After the Newcastle match on Saturday I had a brief conversation with Mr. Watt, the United Secretary, and elicited the frank admission that the better side on the day's play had undoubtedly won. This concession ought to suffice to prove that the locals thoroughly deserved their victory.

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That the visitors tried their utmost to snatch a couple of points was unmistakeable, and when their position in the League table is borne in mind it will readily be understood why this should be. The "stripes" wanted the brace of chalks very badly; but they were not nearly so valuable to the locals as they would have been to the wearers of the "black and white."

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For a win would have meant that they would have headed Manchester City, who are now second on the list. The struggle between the two combinations for pride of place is being very keenly fought, and it was somewhat significant that the "coalies" should have been put out of the race—for the time being, at any rate—by the Southerners.

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It was only right that the Lutonians should do this good turn to the Manchester Club, for they had dashed the hopes of the Mancunians very severely on January 1st by piling up three goals to none against them. There would be great rejoicing in the Manchester camp on Saturday night when the intelligence arrived of this fresh achievement of the Luton Leaguers.

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A significant fact is that one of the three defeats sustained by Manchester was administered by Luton, and that prior to Saturday the players from "Coaly Tyne" had succumbed only four times, twice to Burnley. They had not dropped a point at home, except to the League leaders.

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The significance of Luton's performance will be recognised when these facts are pondered upon. It was in the natural order of things unlikely that Luton would succeed in beating the formidable lot from the North; but then the "stripes" are able to boast that they have only tasted the bitterness of defeat on one occasion in the League on their own ground.

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It was the fine victory of Southampton in the previous week that led many of us to think that the local champions would find it possible to secure the coveted League points. The argument used was that if So'ton found it possible to win, Luton—a superior side to the "seaside," as proved by the season's displays—ought not to be outlayed on their own pitch.

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A critic from the North attributed the failure of Newcastle to the weakness of the half-backs, observing that they were bad enough at Southampton but infinitely worse at Luton. We all knew that the half-backs were regarded as the backbone of the team and were surprised that they did not give a better account of themselves.

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At the same time it must not be forgotten that in the Luton quintette the Newcastle halves had to face one of the cleverest and trickiest front ranks in the Second Division. Any half-back might be pardoned for failing against a right wing such as was that of Luton on Saturday or against such a dashing centre forward.

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Let me confess, before proceeding to critically deal with the merits of the respective sides, that I was agreeably surprised with the comparative absence of roughness from the Newcastle display. There was plenty and to spare, one must admit, but nothing to seriously grumble at when one bears in mind the physique of the players and the importance of the game.

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Of course Jackson and Stott were guilty of some very reprehensible offences. The former, however, improved vastly after a time and he played a magnificent game to the end, his kicking being superb. Stott was more deserving of censure, for he endeavoured to make up by brutality what he lacked in cleverness. Both he and Jackson had all their work cut out by the home right wing.

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Proceeding in a discursive fashion which may be excused for once in a way, let me say that I was disappointed at the comparative smallness of the "gate." Despite the excursions from London, the attractiveness of the fixture and the suitability of the weather there was only a very moderate attendance. Supporters ought to attend good matches much better than they are doing, for nobody is entitled to find fault with the recent performances of the team.

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Now for the game. I was delighted with the exposition given by the "stripes," who deserved to the full all the success they obtained—and a little more. It has been hinted to me that Newcastle had hard luck. They had, certainly; but then did not Luton?

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I cannot yet understand why the referee disallowed the goal scored by McInnes just before the interval. If it was on the ground of off-side—as I must suppose—the decision was manifestly incorrect, for McInnes was certainly on side when Davies played the ball.

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Talking about goals, let me present hearty congratulations to Donaldson on his magnificent play which led to the third notch being registered. His was a smart score at Small Heath; but this was smarter and every cheer that greeted it was thoroughly deserved. It was a superb triumph of individualism—and under the circumstances which applied nothing but a single-handed dash could have succeeded.

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Whilst alluding to Donaldson I must be permitted to make a digression and compliment him upon his pluck in turning out at all. It was stated to me that he was not by any means fit; and yet he gave a sterling show. More power to him, say I.

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We were all glad to see McCartney do himself justice on his resumption. "Mac" did quite the right thing by infusing plenty of dash into his play, and repeatedly he succeeded where many another back would have been beaten owing to over-cautiousness. Such exhibitions as Saturday's are of great value, no matter what some would-be clever people may opine.

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The splendid performance of the right wingers has already been touched upon; but amplification may be desirable. Gallacher's centres were infinitely more dangerous than in the previous week, and Coupar's tricky methods succeeded, despite some very heavy charging.

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The left wingers must be considered as having given a successful display. Birch worked untiringly and was ready to put up with hard knocks—and to return them—whilst Little "Tommy" was always to be relied upon. I am certain that the inside position is the right place for McInnes, and am hoping to see him played there often now that it has dawned upon the authorities that the previous occupant of the post is by no means a success.

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The halves were not to be found fault with. Stewart was in great form, and the way in which he shadowed Peddie was a treat. In Campbell he had a bigger handful; but he did not suffer the old Sunderland man to do much useful work. Stewart's supporters were also dependable, Docherty putting in some splendid centres.

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McCartney has had his meed of praise, and now a word is due to McEwen, who was almost impassable. Williams was in capital fettle, and one at least of his saves was good enough for an international.

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The Newcastle forwards were not so dangerous as were the opposing quintette; yet they were a useful lot. It will be admitted that they ought to be when it is stated that two had played for "the team of all the talents," one for 3rd Lanark and a fourth for Preston North End. Even with these credentials they did not frighten the home defenders, who paid no respect to their record but pulled them up without scruple.

The performance of the United halves has been inferentially referred to. Stott (the captain) is an old Grimsby player, and had it not been for his nasty fouls his game would have been admirable. The others were a burly pair; but they were unable to cope with the speedy front rankers opposed to them.



Apart from his proneness for attracting the attention of the referee by his reprehensible tactics, Jackson gave a very fine exposition indeed; and it is my judgment that he is one of the best left backs who have yet visited Luton. White was overshadowed. Watts did well in goal and effected some very smart clearances.



As to the refereeing I confess to having been agreeably disappointed. Mr. Stark gave what seemed to me the best exhibition that we have seen from him. I am glad to be in a position to say this, as it has in the past been my unfortunate lot to have to severely criticise him.



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By the way, I was glad to notice that Mr. Jackson, the Luton Secretary, was well enough to be present at the Newcastle match. He had been badly indisposed during the week.

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The outcome of Monday's match with Woolwich leaves the championship practically a certainty for Luton. Had they won it would have been impossible for the Arsenal to displace them from the head of the table; as the matter stands now it is just possible.

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If Luton lose their two remaining fixtures (Arsenal at home and Loughborough away) and the Arsenal win their six (including Luton, Southampton and the Spurs, all away) the "reds" will beat us by a couple of points at the finish. But they are not very likely to do so, and I shall be very greatly surprised if the Luton lead is not by several points when the end of the season comes.

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There is a story going the rounds that some faint-hearted persons tumbled out of the train at Luton when they learned of the alterations in the "stripes" team and declined to go to witness the slaughter which was to take place. These must have regretted their fearsomeness when they learned of the result.

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A well-known supporter of the Luton club whispered to me his idea that we were to be beaten by three goals. I did not agree with him, much as the team had been sifted up, though I confess I regarded the encounter with some apprehension.

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The fact that the men were robbed of victory just at the close is the more annoying to me in that I have persistently throughout this season declared my opinion that the "stripes" are a better side than the "reds." Even as it is, however, a draw at Woolwich points to a win at Luton, and if that should happen I shall feel justified in claiming that my contention has been borne out.

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The hero of the match was undoubtedly Durrant, who was given his opportunity and took full advantage of it. He played a splendid game, being consistently full of dash and absolutely fearless of the sturdy defenders who were opposed to him. His only fault was a tendency to get off-side too frequently.

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Durrant, who is worth retaining by the Town Club, is a Luton lad and is just over 18 years of age. He has played at outside right for the Luton Stanley, and has not previously appeared at outside left. He played at outside right for Bedfordshire recently against Leicestershire and scored the only goal which was obtained by his county.

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It would be absurd to reproduce the idea of the *Morning Leader* that the new outside left was the best forward on the field; but he certainly played in surprisingly good style and deserves the warmest congratulations. It would seem that we have discovered a useful outside left.

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Frankly speaking, I must say that the game was not a great one. Somehow or other teams like Luton and the Arsenal never meet without introducing unnecessary vigour, and that occurred on Monday. Some of the men "went for" each other as though the fate of the country depended upon the game. Mr. Peters was "down upon" this roughness for the most part, however.

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So far as the play was concerned my impression was that Luton were the better side, and that they deserved to win. They were engaged in attacking for almost two-thirds of the game. The Arsenal were tightly penned in during the opening 20 minutes of the second half.

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The "stripes" forwards were far the better lot. McInnes was to my mind the best of the bunch, with Donaldson and Gallacher well in the running. Durrant has had his meed of praise, while one ought to confess that Little shaped better than usual.

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Stewart was thought unfit to play, and it is a singular fact that both Arsenal goals were secured as the results of mistakes on his part. It was a thousand pities that he gave away a corner when the end was so near.

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Docherty was the best of the halves; but Davies performed some useful work. The backs were in fine form, McCartney's rushes succeeding again. Williams effected one grand save and at other times did well.

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My opinion of the Arsenal centre man was not very good; indeed, Hannah and Brock pleased me most in the front rank. The halves were not the equals of those opposed to them; but the backs proved themselves reliable. Ord was trustworthy, though this time he failed to stop the penalty kick.

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There was a good crowd present, and many spectators were to be heard shouting for Luton. I do not accept the statement, however, that those were supporters of the 'Spurs. Upwards of £70 was taken, so that the two meetings at Woolwich have yielded £140. If £100 is taken at Luton, the clubs will have a respectable sum for division.

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The referee was not altogether a success. He pulled Durrant up more than once for off-side when the player was in a perfectly legal position, while he passed several infractions of the other side. On the whole, however, his decisions were satisfactory.

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We shall watch the progress of the Arsenal now with redoubled interest, for a slip on their part means championship honours for Luton. They are pretty certain to come down at least once.

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On Saturday Rushden beat Loughborough, at Loughborough, 1-0; Woolwich and Millwall drew, at Plumstead, 2-2.

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