



SECOND LEAGUE.

LUTON v. NEWCASTLE UNITED.

A GRAND VICTORY.

The first visit of Newcastle United to Luton on Saturday was a rather critical event for both teams. The home club was anxious to recoup the loss at Small Heath and get on better terms with their Woolwich rivals in the League table, while Newcastle were desperately anxious to win, or even draw, in view of the test matches. The United had only lost three matches away from home before coming to Luton (viz. Burnley, Burton, and Grimsby) and had, in addition, knocked Preston North End out of the English Cup, though they succumbed at Southampton a fortnight afterwards.

They undertook their journey from the far North on Friday, staying in London over-night, and brought their best possible team to Luton. An experiment was made on the left wing by putting Smith, a new player from Edinburgh Hibernians, who was only signed on a few weeks ago, with Campbell, in place of the usual pair, Wardrop and Aitken. The local eleven included McCartney and Davies for the first time since their unpleasant experience at Tottenham, and Birch was put on the left wing instead of Little. Mr. J. Starke, of London, refereed with the following 22 in position—

Luton: Williams; McCartney and McEwen; Davies, Stewart, and Docherty; Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, McInnes, and Birch.

Newcastle: Watts; White and Jackson; Ghee, Ostler, and Stott; Allan, Harvey, Peddie, Smith and Campbell.

The Linesmen were Messrs. West and Taylor (Aspley Guise).

It was a dull, cold day, with the turf on the heavy side and a fresh breeze blew from corner to corner. The "Coalies" came out in black and white stripes, and looked a heavy, powerful eleven. Luton had to kick off, having lost the toss, and Donaldson gave the first kick in a hard fought and exciting game. The United, helped by the breeze, first got away and Peddie made several incursions, but both the home backs were in safe trim. The Luton forwards settled down soon and played a clever game throughout. The right wing had a tough opponent in Jackson, who got into disfavour with the crowd for his rough treatment of Gallacher.

Offside stopped both vanguards in likely positions and, eventually, Luton got the first corner from a bad foul by Smith. This was finely placed by Docherty and Watts fisted out from under the bar. Gallacher tried a terrific shot, which unluckily "cannoned" away, and the backs just got in the way of what seemed a certain goal from Coupar. Following a foul in Luton's favour, Gallacher completely beat Jackson and put in a magnificent centre, which Birch, coming up with a wet sail, breasted through in a trice. Watts was quite taken by surprise, and the crowd roared their delight, for only 12 minutes had passed when Luton thus began the scoring.

For a time Newcastle seemed dispirited, but they soon rallied, Campbell showing up twice. Stott was very rough on Coupar, and the spectators made the usual demonstration against the old Grimsby man. Birch made a good run nearly the whole length of the field, and McEwen did some fine kicking. Another corner falling to Gallacher, Stewart headed in grandly, and the ball was scrimmaged through for No. 2, after just 28 minutes' play. It was a magnificent goal, and Captain Stewart well deserved the ovation accorded him.

After a long absence Newcastle got down to the Luton end, and Williams had his first save from Allan, and another from Harvey, both being fine clearances. Watts was also busy with the home right wing, who were shooting splendidly. A dash was made by Peddie, but Gallacher retaliated, and Jackson luckily cleared a grand attempt. Just on half-time, Davies centred with rare judgment, and McInnes rushed the ball into the net. Everyone shouted "goal," and it seemed fair enough, but Newcastle wildly protested, and after consulting the linesmen, Mr. Starke decided to disallow the score. The interval arrived:

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NEWCASTLE 0

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This was a fairly comfortable lead, but Newcastle had not abandoned their hopes of victory, and on crossing over Peddie and Campbell changed places. This did not help the visitors much, for Luton did most of the pressing for some time. Coupar forced a corner, and McInnes had hard lines in missing, when almost clear. Gradually Newcastle increased the pace, and the forwards improved considerably. Allan got across a hard centre from the wing, and Williams appeared to save it, but the same moment the greasy ball slipped out of his hands into the net. The United thus scored their first goal after 20 minutes' play, and inspired by their success, began to work desperately for a draw.

After Birch had lost a chance from a foul on McInnes, Williams made a couple of wonderful saves from Peddie and Allan, amid the loud applause of the crowd. Then an unexpected event settled the game. Both the Newcastle backs seemed to miss the ball unaccountably, and gave Donaldson a glorious opening, with only Watts to beat. Needless to say, "Bob" did it—"and it didn't take him long." With only 12 minutes to go, Luton were three up, and the delight of the spectators knew no bounds.

Harvey broke away, but was stopped for off-side, and Williams had to transact some smart business with Smith. A foul was given against Stewart—one of the few decisions Mr. Stark gave against Luton—but Birch cleared with a good run, and the locals seemed certain to add to their score. Donaldson and Gallacher took aim in quick succession at very short range, and Watts saved magnificently from a scrimmage, with half a dozen men on top of him. The exchanges continued to be exciting to the end, but Luton had the game well in hand, and had taken a corner when the end arrived :

LUTON 3
NEWCASTLE 1

NOTES.

Considering the importance of the game, there was only a fair gate at Luton on Saturday, but the extreme modesty of the club authorities about advertising accounts for much. We ought to get "bumping" gates for the visits of Newton Heath and Burnley (especially), but even when special arrangements are made for outside visitors—and there have been some lamentable failures in this direction—the announcement is made either too late or on too limited a scale. Surely, here is an opportunity for enriching the club's coffers, which should not be lost.

Having disposed of this preliminary grumble. I hasten to express unbounded delight over the Town's great victory. As the United had drawn at Manchester and Woolwich and defeated Newton Heath at Clayton, the Luton men accomplished an exceptionnally fine performance. If they had only played with equal determination against Bolton Wanderers, we should almost certainly have had the wild joy of entering the English Cup semi-final.

For excitement and interest, the game was the best seen in Luton this season, though, of course, from the stand-point of scientific football, it was inferior to other games. The feature of the afternoon was the grim earnestness and stubborn determination with which both clubs contested every inch of ground. It was a thorough English struggle, in which decidedly the best team won.

The two goals' lead Luton held for some time was rudely disturbed, when Newcastle scored their first and only goal. "Go on, United, they're done now!" shouted a Newcastle partisan, and for a time the result was certainly open to doubt, for the "Coalies" bucked up wonderfully. The glorious goal registered by Donaldson's single-handed dash came at a critical moment and decided the game, for which all honour to "Bob"!

The visitors played a vigorous game at times and having a great advantage in weight—the left wing accounted for 27 stone—were inclined to use it with undue advantage. The referee, however, had made up his mind to stand no nonsense, and, if anything, I thought Mr. Starke was rather partial to the home team, except when he disallowed McInnes' goal. I only noticed one solitary decision against Luton in the whole of the first 45.

Until a few minutes before the game, Coupar was indisposed to play, but at the request of the Directors, turned out, as he said, "to do my best." And "Jimmy" fulfilled his word, for we saw some delightfully clever and effective play, which often baffled the visiting backs. Gallacher was also in great form and walked round Jackson, a very powerful but unscrupulous back, with beautiful finesse. Every match, Donaldson creates a record for untiring work, and McInnes very little behind, while Birch was very useful.

The back division all had "a day on," McCartney, Docherty, and Stewart being particularly successful, and they deserve every credit for keeping out the formidable Newcastle vanguard. Williams distinguished himself at the anxious time when the visitors seemed likely to get on terms.

The Newcastle forwards included an entirely new League player in Smith, but his partner, Campbell, did much better in the centre during the second half, than on the wing. Harvey, another Sunderland man, made a few dangerous shots, and I should say he shares Jimmy Whitehead's distinction of being the smallest forward in the Football League.

The new centre-forward the United captured from 3rd Lanark just before Christmas is a tall and fast player, but I fancy Stewart was too "sultry" for him. All the halves, who are said to be the strongest part of the team, played a vigorous game, especially Stott, of Grimsby, while Ostler, who hails from Motherwell, spoilt his football in the same way. Some grand back play was shown by Jackson, a recruit from Glasgow Rangers, but he was palpably rough. Just before coming to Luton, Newcastle signed on Lindsay, of Grimsby, and I am afraid he will not prove a refined, drawing-room partner for Jackson. No fault could be found with Watts, though, I suppose, he is now joining the ranks of the veterans.

"Northumbrian" writes: "Newcastle United's journey to Luton was regarded with misgiving, and therefore their defeat did not come as a surprise, like their downfall in the English Cup tie against Southampton. Only last Monday Luton vanquished Southampton pointlessly by a couple of goals, and this smart performance, combined with their brilliant record against such powerful clubs as Grimsby, Gainsborough, Walsall, and Manchester, pointed to a warm reception for the Tynesiders. There can be no doubt that the long distance railway travelling in the English Cup ties has had its effect on United, and the management were fully justified in placing Johnny Campbell and W. Smith on the left wing in place of Aitken and Wardrope, who have done an immense amount of work this season. Although this change did not lead to success against the almost invincible "Straw-plaiters" on their own ground, there is some consolation in the fact that they did not succumb in such an ignominious fashion as several other leading Second Division clubs, notably Grimsby and Walsall, who were each beaten by 6 goals, whilst Manchester City also had to acknowledge defeat by three clear goals. Saturday's reverse, however, throws a dark shadow over United's prospects for a place amongst the senior clubs in the League, as Manchester City are now a point ahead of their Northern rivals, and the finish between the pair in the race for the Test Games promises to be of a most exciting character."