

THE UNITED LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Tottenham Hotspur	4 goals.
Luton Town	3 goals.

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The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Perkins, goal; Clarke and Williams, backs; W. Ford, Sharp and Hewitt, half-backs; Durrant and McInnes, right; Kemplay, centre; Brock and Ekins, left.

Tottenham: Cullen, goal; Erentz and Cain, backs; Hall, McNaught and Jones, half-backs; Hartley and McKay, right; Joyce, centre; Stormont and Cameron, left.

Referee, Mr. T. W. Saywell; linesmen, Messrs. F. E. Brettell (Tottenham), and E. F. Walsh (Luton).

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Seldom has a more exciting game been witnessed on the Luton ground, or anywhere else for the matter of that, than that which took place on Monday afternoon. From first to last the game was full of go, crammed full of incident, and positively running over with excitement. The work put in on both sides would have been enough to make the play unusually interesting, but the way in which one goal was replied to by another wound the feelings of the spectators up to an extraordinary degree.

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Before the battle commenced matters did not look particularly promising for Luton, as owing to the fact that Crump, Charlie Ford, who wrenched or twisted his knee on Saturday, and Ralley were all on the sick list, the directors found themselves with only one solitary half-back, and the question was who should keep Sharp company. Eventually it was decided to play Hewitt at left-half and let William Ford take his brother's place. Tottenham also had Bradshaw and Smith away, but then they have such a wealth of talent at their disposal that they could almost lose a whole team without suffering any great inconvenience.

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Happily, the weather was a little more favourable to football than had been the case in previous matches, though there had been only just sufficient rain to make the ground a trifle greasy. About two thousand persons turned out to witness the encounter, among them being three or four hundred of the Tottenham followers.

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The visitors won the toss, and started with a slight advantage from the wind. Williams was the first to show up on the Luton side, stopping a dangerous rush on the Tottenham right. Then the homesters went up the field in pretty style, and Kemplay passing out to Ekins, the latter centred beautifully, giving McInnes a splendid chance, but unfortunately Tommy missed the ball, and Durrant carried it behind.

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The Spurs responded very vigorously, but eventually Brook and Ekins took the ball into Tottenham territory, Erentz having to kick out to clear. Brook afterwards got in a good middle, and then gave away the advantage by fouling an opponent. Tottenham quickly went to the other end, and Joyce beating both the Luton backs, put in a screw shot which Perkins let slip out of his hands into the net. Thus the visitors had the satisfaction of drawing first blood.

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A corner for the Spurs was replied to by a strong assault by the Lutonians, McInnes taking a prominent part, and then the Spurs again got in evidence, a bad kick by Perkins being the means of giving them a corner. Nothing came of this, but a miss by Hewitt nearly let McKay through. From another corner, Cameron placed finely and Perkins cleared.

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Still another corner fell to the Spurs, and then Ekins getting away, made a fine run, finishing up with a grand centre, which McInnes converted with a rather soft shot. Still, it answered the purpose, and the equalising goal was hailed with as much enthusiasm by the Luton spectators as the Spurs' success had been greeted by the Tottenham contingent.

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The teams did not remain on an equality for long, however, as a bad kick-off by Williams soon gave the visitors another chance, McNaught stopping the ball and passing out to Hartley. That player centred almost along the goal-line, and Joyce, who was pretty well under the bar, again gave the Spurs the lead.

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A little later, Ekins raised the hopes of the Luton supporters, getting a clear run from a long pass by Kemplay, but he shot terribly wide. McInnes got nearer the mark with a shot which just skimmed the bar, and Ekins being given another opening, middled to a nicety, Cullen having to give a corner from a header by McInnes. The Spurs next did some smart work, and ultimately Joyce netted the ball, but not before he had brought it into position with his hand, and the goal was therefore disallowed. The call of half-time was given soon afterwards, and the teams changed ends with Tottenham leading by two goals to one.

Upon resuming, Luton attacked strongly, and the play in the vicinity of the Tottenham goal became of a rather sultry character. At last, the Spurs got away, and Joyce managing to secure a clear passage, he seemed bound to score, but luckily for Luton, the ball hit the upright and rebounded into play. A foul against Stormont jeopardised the Tottenham goal, Clarke placing well, but another foul relieved, and the visitors went up the field, Hartley putting in a centre which was very nearly converted by a Luton man.

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After a corner had been fruitlessly taken, the homesters made the running, and Cullen had to save two or three times, whilst McInnes shot just over the bar. The next moment, Ekins had a grand chance afforded him by Sharp, but fell over at the critical moment. He, however, got in a lovely centre directly afterwards, and Cullen muffing the ball, McInnes equalised.

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Both sides now attacked in turn, but Tottenham were the more dangerous, and McKay especially found himself in a very nice position for scoring. As it happened, he was not destined to get in his shot, Hewitt stepping in and relieving with a big kick. But the Spurs were not to be denied, and at last a very hot shot from McKay proved more than Perkins could get rid of, the visitors once again establishing a lead.

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People had pretty well made up their minds that this was the winning goal, but the enthusiastic way in which the home team went to work soon upset calculations. McInnes, in making tracks for goal, was deliberately fouled by Jones inside the twelve yards' line, but strange to say it was not seen and not appealed for. Luton, however, soon got down again, and a centre from Ekins resulted in a corner. Hewitt placed well, Durrant returned into the mouth of goal, and after Kemplay had missed a rare chance, the ball was bundled into the net, though by whom it would be difficult to say. I hear, however, that Clarke was the person responsible.

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Only about eight minutes remained for play, and it now seemed probable that the game would end in a draw, which would have been a very satisfactory termination to the contest. But Hewitt ordained it otherwise. From the touch-line, he got in a marvellous centre at his own goal—it was in an attempt to kick the other way—and Perkins and Sharp rather muddled it between them, the ball bouncing over the former's head, and Cameron easily tapping it into the net.

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Some of the Luton players contend that this last point ought to have been disallowed, inasmuch as Cameron was standing pretty well on a level with Perkins, and was therefore impeding the custodian. I must say, however, that so far as I could see, Cameron's presence did not affect Perkins at all, and the Spur was placed onside by the goalkeeper handling the ball.

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Although the visitors were decidedly lucky in getting this last goal, there can be no doubt that they were the cleverer team. McNaught put in a tremendous lot of work—and good work, too—at centre-half, and Erentz distinguished himself at back, playing a much stronger game than his more renowned companion, Cain. The two most effective forwards were two of last season's team—Joyce and Hartley. The latter was very tricky, very accurate in his centres, and a great worker withal, whilst Joyce was always on the spot when there was any chance of getting a goal.

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Cullen played a very weak game in goal, and was several degrees worse than Perkins, who was strangely unlike himself. Whether the ball was too slippery to hold I cannot say, but certain it is that both custodians were greatly at fault, and the majority of the goals scored were milky ones.

Both the Luton backs performed well, Williams being the better of the two, but they are apt to lose themselves a bit in a tight place, and not to render the goalkeeper the assistance that he ought to be able to reckon upon. Sharp played smartly at centre-half, and William Ford did a great deal better than could have been expected in his brother's place. Hewitt worked like a nigger, but his fault was that he attempted to do too much, and was thus frequently taken out of his place.

McInnes, of course, was easily the best of the forwards, but Brook played a wonderfully good game until he got hurt—about half-way through the first half. Ekins, though not always successful, was responsible for some effective work on the left wing, and had a hand in at least two of the goals. His inclusion strengthened the team considerably. Kemplay, if not brilliant, was useful at centre, and Durrant took advantage of what came in his way, but never made a single opening for himself. A little dash would make him a brilliant player, but that dash is painfully lacking, and he really does absolutely nothing to force the play. It is a pity he should keep his abilities in check.

With the Luton team altogether, the one thing needed is combination. If they can once get together, they will take a lot of beating. The men are fast, and tremendously hard workers, and they are bound to come off sooner or later. Most outsiders who saw them on Monday were highly pleased with their display, and particularly with the persevering way in which they worked in face of the odds against them.