

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE ENGLISH CUP.

LUCKY VICTORY OVER SHEPHERD'S BUSH.

On Saturday the Shepherd's Bush team visited Luton to decide the semi-final tie in the ninth division of the English Cup. It was generally considered that the locals had an exceptionally easy task set them; but it proved far different, the visitors making such a bold bid for victory that they managed to score three goals against the four which were registered for Luton. The local team lacked Ekins and W. Ford, while the "Bush" lot included Julian, the ex-Luton captain, who received a cordial greeting on entering the field. Though the afternoon was magnificent there was only a moderate attendance, a good number journeying from Shepherd's Bush to cheer on their favourites.

The teams were constituted thus:—

Luton Town: Goal, Perkins; backs, Dow and Moore; half-backs, C. Ford, Williams, and Hewitt; forwards, Durrant and M'Innes (right), Kemplay (centre), Brock and Crump (left).

Shepherd's Bush: Goal, E. H. Heapy; backs, E. Powell and T. A. Williams; half-backs, J. W. Julian, J. Meyer, and A. Everest; forwards, H. S. Mann and W. Ide (right), R. N. McDavid (centre), J. Chadwick and A. Murray (left).

Referee: Mr. N. Whittaker; Luton linesman, Mr. E. F. Walsh.

McInnes won the toss and played from the railway end. In the first minute Hewitt forced a corner, following which Brock sent over the bar. Barely had the kick-off been made than Crump secured and beat Heapy with a very soft shot indeed. This was a very good start for the home lot. Two or three minutes later Kemplay put on a second with a very pretty shot, and it began to look as though the visitors were in for a big defeat. A good run by the "stripes" resulted in Brock being stopped for off-side right in front of goal. The same player shot execrably on receiving from Crump. A little later McInnes had hard luck in sending too high when he had succeeded in getting clear by means of tricky play; the shot was a beauty and struck the bar. Next Crump centred along the line and Kemplay put through; but the referee disallowed the point on the score that the ball had been over the line. Luton again attacked and the captain missed with a capital "header," Brock following up with another miss. Kemplay's head got in the way of a centre by Durrant and the ball was diverted over the line. Corners to the respective sides were noticed, while later on a beauty from Durrant brought more danger to the visitors. A long one from Williams travelled just wide, and a similar effort by Crump was followed by a first-rate attempt from McInnes. Following a corner conceded by Moore, McDavid broke away and scored neatly. The home spectators had scarcely recovered from their surprise at this when a stiff tussle took place near the home goal and the ball was scrimmaged past Perkins. The interval arrived shortly after with the score standing thus:—

LUTON, 2; SHEPHERD'S BUSH, 2.

Immediately after the resumption Heapy was called upon to save and a corner ensued, Crump winding up by sending out. The strangers forced a corner with the same result. Julian's men maintained the pressure and Meyer barely missed with a good attempt from a long range. Hewitt amazed everybody by shooting too high when he had the goal at his mercy. Another corner to the Luton contingent was awarded, and afterwards Brock failed once more from a grand middle by the outside right. Heapy brought off a wonderful save subsequently at the cost of a corner, and then Brock got through; but the point was disallowed on the ground that the keeper had been impeded. Just after Crump knocked the ball down with his hands when within the 12 yards line and a penalty was given. From this the visitors scored and thus captured the lead. The home spectators were now very glum, and it was not to be wondered at, for the locals were playing in a style far from creditable. Heapy saved splendidly from Durrant, but the outside right shortly afterwards broke loose and brought the scores level with a superb shot which gave the custodian no possible chance. The end was not far off now, and the question was asked whether the "stripes" would find it possible to notch the winning goal. Well, they did; but it was a very fluky affair. A penalty kick was awarded against Julian for handling near goal and Hewitt put his side ahead with ease. Time arrived shortly after, when the Lutonians had qualified for the divisional final in very lucky fashion with the following score:

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

In commenting on the forthcoming cup-tie last week I said I did not believe that Shepherd's Bush had a very good chance of ousting Luton. My apologies are due to the visitors for underrating their ability, and they are accordingly awarded.

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Who in Luton would have thought it possible that in a match with a team of so little prominence the issue should have been in doubt until the last few minutes of the game? The answer necessarily is "Nobody." The idea is too absurd.

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Yet the plain fact is that when the visitors scored their third goal it looked all over bar the shouting. To snatch the game out of the fire in the way they did was exceedingly lucky on the part of the locals, and it would not have happened in the majority of matches.

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Only think what a horrible business it would have been had this happened! To be eliminated by a despised amateur combination. It is too dreadful to think about; but it *very nearly happened!*

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My feelings towards the losers are the kindest possible. They made a gallant fight and were unlucky to lose. Though their style was not very high class, there was plenty of dash and pluck about the men, and they combined very well indeed.

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After the game was over I exchanged a hand-grip and a few words with Julian, the old Luton skipper. A thorough good sportsman "Ju" ever was and on Saturday he accepted congratulation with accustomed modesty.

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Julian frankly conceded that the better team had won. But another of the Shepherd's Bush men interposed with the observation that they had given the locals a holy fright. And I am inclined to believe that he was right.

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It seems that the penalty kick which won the game for Luton was awarded against Julian. That player was loud in his protestation that the ball never touched his hands but only his chest. Whether it was so or not I am unable to state definitely. Anyhow, the point was fluky enough in all conscience.

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The locals? Well, those whose misfortune it was to occupy seats on the grand-stand were assuredly not filled with admiration at the display, and there was a good deal of profanation of a mild type indulged in.

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Fancy a team securing a lead of two goals in the opening ten minutes and then very nearly losing the game! It was a really shocking display, and I am at a loss to account for it.

Some people are saying that the men eased up after they had secured a comfortable lead. But that does not afford a very satisfactory explanation of the wretched display which the "stripes" made in the second half. If we are, however, to accept that statement it makes matters all the worse.

There was such an absolute lack of understanding between the home players that I find it impossible to discriminate further than to say that Perkins, Moore, Williams and the right wingers were the only men who seemed to me to do at all well.

It was heart-breaking to see splendid middles by Durrant thrown away time after time. The local lad must have been heartily sick of it all.

"Rover" says: "Luton are beginning to be the despair of all their friends. To get home by an odd goal—and that only from a penalty-kick—against a club of the standing enjoyed by Shepherd's Bush is a victory which leaves a nasty taste in the mouth. The Bush men made a brave fight of it, and I do really think that if the result had been a draw Luton would have been beaten in a replay at Shepherd's Bush."

That expresses my opinion exactly. The visiting spectators in the second half were loud in their prophecies of a draw and of their promises of what they would do with the Lutonians when they got them at Shepherd's Bush. Fortunately for Luton the necessity did not arise.

Congratulations to Clapton on a splendid fight against the 'Spurs on Saturday. The outcome shows very clearly that the Tottenham cracks are not such wonderful players after all. Let the "stripes" take heart of grace accordingly.

Poor Millwall! They have died the death, so far as the English Cup is concerned, and it was appropriate enough that the quietus should have been administered at Gravesend. But really 3—1! What has come over the "blues"?

The Arsenal accounted for Southampton in the United League on Saturday. Cup-fighting is a quantity difficult to judge; but it looks as though the Southerners are not very likely to figure in the semi-final this season.

In the Second League there were only two matches. Newton Heath beat New Brighton on the ground of the latter by 3—0, while Manchester City defeated Walsall, at Manchester, by 2—0.

On Monday the Second League table stood thus:—

Goals.

Pts.

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The *Sporting Life*, in a brief note upon the Luton-Shepherd's Bush game, says: "Luton won their game with Shepherd's Bush after finding the latter rather rough customers to handle." I should just think they were.

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The *Athletic News* writes as follows of the United League:—"The United League management is a pushing body, and it is a pity that their efforts do not meet with better success, but this can hardly be expected when some of the clubs are so apathetic. The League clubs in the Midlands and in Lancashire once tried to palm off a make-up League, but the result in both instances was a huge failure owing to the prevalence of playing second elevens. The United League, however, seems to get along very well."

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In the light of the experience of past seasons, and bearing in mind what happened recently, I was not surprised at the Kettering result on Monday. It is necessary to point out, however, that it was a very heavy defeat.

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The Arsenal team performed splendidly at Rushden. Their half dozen goals against the "Russians" must have been worth seeing. Would that the Lutonians would show us some form of that description.

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Luton's record to date: Played, 24; won, 8; lost, 13; drawn, 3; goals for 44, against 62.

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The draw for the divisional finals in the English Cup qualifying competition took place on Tuesday night, when in division nine Clapton or Tottenham Hotspur were drawn to play Luton, the Londoners having choice of ground. The tie is to be decided on December 10, and the kick-off is to be not later than 2.15.

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In the Amateur Cup contest Dunstable are to entertain Chesham in the final of the division in the qualifying rounds.

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When the 'Spurs and Clapton met for the second time on Wednesday, this time at Tottenham, a poor game ended in a win for the home lot by 2-1. Accordingly the Lutonians will have to journey to Tottenham on Dec. 10.

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On Wednesday United League games were postponed on account of the boisterous weather as follows: Brighton v. Wellingborough and Southampton v. Bristol.

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The *Daily Chronicle* yesterday (Thursday) said: "The draw in the final tie of Division 9 of the qualifying round of the Association Cup was favourable to the winners at Tottenham yesterday, for Luton will have to travel thither on the 10th. No faith can be placed in the United League champions."

FOOTER.