

FOOTBALL.

THE ENGLISH CUP COMPETITION.

LUTON v. SHEPHERD'S BUSH.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 4 goals.

Shepherd's Bush 3 goals.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Perkins, goal; Dow and Moore, backs; C. Ford, Williams, and Hewitt, half-backs; Durrant, McInnes, Kemplay, Brock and Crump, forwards.

Shepherd's Bush: Heapy, goal; Williams and Powell, backs; Moffat, Mayer and Julian, half-backs; Murray, Chadwick, McDavid, Ide and Mann, forwards.

Luton just managed to scape through into the final of the preliminary rounds of the English Cup Competition by the narrow margin of one goal over Shepherd's Bush. It was not a great game as those who were not present can imagine. Last year we should have winked the other eye and walked home. It would only have been a matter of goals, but in these days things are different. For instance, the gate at the utmost could not have been more than 1,500, which is decidedly poor for a Cup-tie fixture.

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By the way Luton started it looked as if the team were going to win easily. In the first ten minutes they had matters all their own way, and luck was with them. Play had not been in progress half that time before a goal fell to the home side from a well-aimed venture by Crump, who appeared in a new role, Ekins being indisposed. Though it was well directed, the shot did not seem to be a very difficult one to save, but Heapy made no apparent effort to meet it, and the spectators could hardly believe their eyes when they saw the ball roll into the net, and the teams return to the half-way line.

Play had no sooner re-started than Luton were down again in the vicinity of the Bushites' goal, Williams being noticeable in forcing matters, and Crump getting possession, sent across to the middle, Kemplay dribbling through and scoring No. 2 with a clean shot. This state of things looked extremely hopeful for Luton, and the Club's supporters were in good spirits and began to anticipate an easy win. The home lot upon resuming still made for goal, but Brock was pulled up for offside.

The left wing continued to make things dangerous, Hewitt ably backing up Crump, who was playing a surprisingly good game. From one of his centres McInnes got possession but could not get through, and then Brock put out. Following this, the visitors made several runs, but found Williams, Dow and Moore more than they could manage.

Kemplay and McInnes next got away prettily, but upon the former passing out, Durrant was given offside. Upon several occasions later the same thing occurred to Luton's outside-right through lying up a little too far. A run by the right wing and the ball was transferred to Kemplay, but Powell stepped in and spoilt matters. Tricky play by Murray took the ball to the other end, where Dow was passed, but Moore stepped in and relieved. Both backs had so far been playing strongly, Moore in particular kicking well.

An uneventful corner which was conceded by Perkins, having been taken by the visitors, Luton again got on the offensive, Heapy coming out successful with a couple of good shots from Durrant and Crump. McInnes just at this time twice found the ball at his feet, but was so hampered that he could not get through, although almost under the bar. Murray on the other side continued to be frequently a source of trouble. On one of these occasions towards the end of the first 45, Dow relieved and ran the ball up the field, but it was quickly returned, and almost before he was back again the centre-man broke away. He eluded both Dow and Moore, who were close on his heels, and getting to within a few yards of Perkins, scored a very good goal.

This success put heart into the score or so of "Bushites" supporters in front of the grand stand, and they were not slow to encourage their favourites to go for another. And the second came quicker than they expected. Murray once more had got down, and he sent across to the extreme right, Mann taking a shot for goal. It was rather a lame attempt, but Moore and Perkins got in one another's way and a complete muddle of things between them allowed Shepherd's Bush to draw level. It was a most unfortunate misunderstanding, and completely took the home supporters by surprise, a pleasing lead of two goals having thus in a few minutes been converted into a level score, and the interval arrived without any further alteration being made.

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The Shepherd's Bush supporters were on very good terms with themselves, and talked sanguinely over the result during lemon-time. With the re-start, Luton opened up the attack. A slight change had been made in positions, Crump taking Hewitt's place, who went to inside-left, Brock being on the outside. For some time play was very indifferent, and though Luton had the best of matters, there was no sting in the attack, the ball time after time being sent behind. After a while, however, the players awoke to the situation, and for some minutes play was very vigorous, kick hard and often seeming to be the rule.

It is astonishing what enthusiasm a little spirit put into the game by the players imparts to the spectators. While they were playing in a lackadaisical sort of way, there was very little noise, but as soon as some energy was put into their efforts, the home supporters began to cheer and encourage the team. Still goals would not come, and non-success led to a relaxation of hostilities, a disappointment in the way of a disallowed goal doing much to take the "go" out of them.

To all appearances the point not given was a good goal. Crump had been backing up well, and after sending up two or three times, placed across to the right wing, Durrant taking the ball right up to the line and centreing, a scrimmage resulting, from which Hewitt put through. There seemed no reason to award Hewitt offside, but this Mr. Whittaker apparently did, for I cannot think of any other breach of the rules which could have suggested itself. Following this decision, the visitors took a run, and a dangerous shot was sent across from the left, Crump rushing in and using his hands to clear.

A penalty followed. This was taken by the visitors' Williams, and was successful. Needless to say, the delight of the Shepherd's Bush people was unbounded. But Luton "bucked up" again. Durrant got in a hot shot which was marvellously saved. Still the homesters worked hard to improve matters, and had the satisfaction of drawing level through a neat shot by Durrant. Following this success, Luton went at it again with renewed vigour, and six minutes from the finish were awarded a penalty, from which Hewitt dropped the ball nicely just under the bar. The penalty given was against our old friend Julian, who declared after the game that he only breasted the ball, but of this I cannot speak, as it occurred in a scrimmage, and I was not in a position to decide the point. I do know, though, that Luton scored from it and so won their Cup-tie.

On the day's play the homesters were the better side, but still a lot of improvement will have to be shown if we are to get through the final of this round. A little more combination and a little more dash among the forwards would do a great deal. Brock and Kemplay were the weakest of the front string. The latter placed the ball very nicely to his wings at times, but I should like to see him work a little harder to get the ball instead of waiting for it to come to him. Williams put in a lot of work, and the backs also were good, though a better understanding would improve them. This, however, will follow if they are able to play together regularly.

Shepherd's Bush as an amateur combination are a very fair team. They put plenty of heart into the game, and believe in going for the ball and kicking strongly. Julian is not so good as of old, but takes some reckoning with. The backs exhibited a good deal of dash, and of the forwards McDavid and Murray were the best. Apart from one decision which could not be understood, Mr. Nat Whittaker refereed up to the average.

In some of the other Cup-ties the form was not a great improvement on that shown at Luton. One of the greatest surprises was the match on the Spotted Dog enclosure, where the great Tottenham team could not do more than make a draw with Clapton at one goal all. But this was almost equalled at Gravesend, where Millwall, with their full team, were handsomely beaten by the Shrimpers by three goals to one. Then Leicester Fosse at home could only beat Rushden by two goals to one, and Glossop could notch but one poor little goal against Crewe Alexandra, whereas Small Heath, still in the good mood in which Luton had placed them, beat the Druids by 10 goals to one.

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The Arsenal were at Plumstead entertaining Southampton, whom they beat by two goals to one, after being on level terms at the interval. There were only two matches in the Second Division of the League, and both resulted in victories for the Manchester teams, the City beating Walsall by two goals to nil, and Newton Heath getting the better of New Brighton by three to nil.