

English Cup Competition.

LUTON TOWN v. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR.

Played at Tufnell Park on Monday. Result:—

Tottenham Hotspur 2 goals.

Luton Town..... nil.

Whatever chances Luton had of winning the re-played match with Tottenham Hotspur were practically destroyed when Hewitt got hurt on Saturday, but if any lingering hopes remained they were altogether dissipated on Monday morning, when it became known to what shifts the directors had been reduced in filling up the front string. Against Galbraith and Draper I have nothing whatever to say; they are all right in their proper places, but their places were not in a Cup-tie team against a lot like Tottenham Hotspur.

Well as Luton played against the Spurs in the first two matches, it did not require very keen insight to show one that they were playing against cleverer men, taken collectively, and that the only possible chance of success lay in those good, honest, straightforward rushes which do so much to break up the combination and pulverise the defence of scientific and well-balanced elevens. When, therefore, the directors decided to include Galbraith they must have known that they were picking the one man who, above all others, was unable to play the rushing game. Smart, tricky, and clever, Galbraith at his best undoubtedly was, but a rusher never. Consequently, in playing him they were putting a square peg into a round hole, and the results of such a proceeding were bound to be disastrous. The same remarks apply in some degree to Draper. He is a promising lad, but how could he be expected to do himself justice, taken from the Reserves, put in a game like Monday's, and in a position to which he is not accustomed?

I know the directors were in very sore straits, but none the more for that I think they might have done better than they did. However, it's no good crying over spilt milk, and I'll say no more about it. The weather on Monday was beautifully fine, but the rain overnight had not improved the condition of the Tufnell Park pitch, which, even under the most favourable circumstances, is anything but one of the best. An hour, or perhaps half-an-hour, before the kick-off, there was nothing to indicate that there would be a big gate, but presently people came streaming in, and at two o'clock the approaches to the ground were completely blocked with persons anxious to gain admission. When these had at last taken up their positions, the attendance was variously estimated at from eight to twelve thousand. Probably ten thousand was somewhere about the mark.

It is almost unnecessary to say that McInnes won the toss, but it may be said that this gave advantages which even the most despondent of us hoped would be turned to account. It conferred upon Luton the privilege of playing down-hill in the first half, with what wind there was behind them, and in addition to that, Tottenham had the sun in their eyes. The Spurs, it should be stated, had practically their full team, McNaught taking his place at centre half, and Erentz went full back, vice Melia, who got hurt at Sheppey on Saturday. The Luton defence was as usual, and in the front string, Galbraith appeared at inside left and Draper at outside right, with McInnes, Kemplay, and Ekins taking their usual positions. Mr. Strawson again refereed, and Messrs. H. D. Casey and E. Gibbs did duty as linesmen.

Those of us who had hoped that Luton, with the advantages before referred to, would go away with a slap-dash and a bang were early doomed to disappointment, for their efforts were of the most elementary description, and there was no force behind any of their attacks. The Spurs were certainly the more dangerous for a time, but at last, from a centre by Ekins, McInnes worked his way through, and then shot high over the bar. The Spurs were soon up the field again, and after Perkins had saved a couple of easy shots, Smith put in a centre which the Luton custodian fisted away, but Bradshaw met the ball and scored with a beautiful shot.

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but Bradshaw met the ball and scored a beautiful shot. It happened at the end of twenty minutes and the Spurs were naturally much enraged thereby. Almost immediately, Perkins gained upon, this time to save a long, long shot from Cain, and he had to concede. No sooner had Luton cleared, than a goal against Williams for jumping—the first bad play he had seen him give—again placed the goal in jeopardy, but the Lutonians got away and placed a corner on their own. Ekings placed, and Tottenham kicked away, Williams returned with nicety, but Sharp sent behind. Several more against Luton and one against Tottenham, and then the Spurs again went away on a high, and the ball going across to Cameron, who registered a second goal with a shot which struck the inside of the post and glanced into the net.

That little steam Luton had had evaporated in the first half of this further disaster, and from now up to the interval, they were all over a beaten team. The Spurs, however, were unable to increase their lead, and the men retired for refreshment. The score standing at two to nil in Tottenham's favour. When they reappeared, it was found that McKay, who had gone off hurt about ten minutes before half-time, had changed places with Smith, whilst for Luton Galbraith took the place of Ekings and Kemplay inside left. It now seemed all odds on the Spurs, who had shown such marked superiority in the first forty-five minutes, and were up to a big score.

Luton were the first to get away, however, and they made a gallant single-handed assault on the Tottenham goal, but was fouled twice, the first time within the twelve yards' line, but no goal was given. The corner which was the outcome was placed behind by Ford. Then followed a little indiscriminate kicking on both sides, but eventually Bradshaw got in a smart shot which Perkins kicked out. Directly afterwards, Bradshaw took another opening, and sent the ball crashing against the bar. Perkins got the ball away, but once more it was sent against the goal, and a great scrimmage ensued in the mouth of goal. The custodian, however, was not so successful, and the cheer which greeted the performance was one of the loudest of the afternoon.

Taken on the whole, the Spurs up to this time had been playing very pretty and very effective football, but the Luton defence lasted a great deal better than the Tottenham attack, and the character of the subsequent play was such as to thoroughly convince every Bedfordshire man watching the spectators that if Luton had only had a full team they would have given the Spurs a good beating. As it was, the Luton forwards several times got in very dangerous proximity to the Tottenham goal, and once from a centre by Ekings, Kemplay had it at his mercy, but he failed when he ought to have shot, and his effort was too tame to take effect.

Viewing the game, one must, of course, readily admit that the better team won, but that Tottenham played much the stronger game in the first half and fully deserved their lead, I should be inclined to say their exhibition in the second half must have been very similar to that which they gave at Sheppey on the Saturday. Their play was simply execrable. McNaught was the best man on their side, and his passes to the forwards straight along the ground, were beautifully judged. Bradshaw was far away the most dangerous of the forwards, but it seemed to me that as it did at Luton on the Wednesday, that he was given a great deal too much latitude.

As to Luton, Perkins and the two backs were conspicuous for the quality and the amount of their work, the custodian saving whenever a goal was possible, and Dow and Williams tackling and kicking and kicking and tackling with a perseverance worthy of a better fate. The halves played a strong defensive game, but were not very successful in backing up the forwards, and could have done with a tremendous lot of help. Galbraith was quite out of his element, but, however, though a passenger in the first half, he showed considerably more promise in the second. The play was not brilliant, but McInnes and Ekings did quite as well as could have been expected under the circumstances.

Understand the gate amounted to about £214, of this sum 20 per cent. goes to the Tufnell authorities, so that Luton's share will come to something like £86. If they had gone to Tottenham, where the game could have been played under much better conditions, they would have had that 20 per cent. Tottenham's offer, so I am told by the man who made it, was a guarantee of £75 and half-gate over £150, but Luton, he wanted £75 and the half-gate, which, supposing the takings had amounted to £200, as was anticipated, would have left Tottenham the handsome sum of £25 for themselves. The Luton supporters, I believe, give a somewhat different opinion, but the one thing certain is that owing to the inability of the two Clubs to agree, Tufnell has had a glorious benefit.

UTON TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB