

THE English Cup Competition

LUTON TOWN v. QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town 1 goal.
Queen's Park Rangers 1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Daw, goal; Dow and McCurdy, backs; Morreton, Stewart, and Ralley, half-backs; Brown, Brock, Fairgriev, McInnes, and Eckford, forwards.

Queen's Park: Clutterbuck, goal; Gaylard and McConnell, backs; Crawford, Hitch, and Skinner, half-backs; Smith, Haywood, Boddingfield, White, and Evans, forwards.

Referee, Mr. J. Tiltonson (Birmingham);
Luton linesman, Mr. E. Gibbs.

Although the weather on Saturday could not have been more favourable, and although the Rangers brought a very large number of supporters from London, the crowd which assembled on the Bury Park ground reached but very moderate dimensions, and never numbered more than three thousand spectators. Evidently those who have in past years constituted the Luton football public are losing their interest in the game, or are not very flush with money.

Possibly, as regarded the issue of the match, the chances were so even, or to put it in another way the prospects of Luton winning were so uncertain, that many lacked the courage to turn out, but whatever the cause, the fact remains that a large number of people who might have been expected to bestow their patronage on the game preferred to stop at home or go elsewhere.

Even those who did go were not altogether happy, for the "powers that be" had ordained that an extra charge should be made for admission to the terraces, and the consequence was that the bulk of the people were huddled together behind the goal-line at the top end of the ground, whilst the terraces presented an extremely desolate appearance. No doubt the directors are in great need of money, but they alone were to blame for putting the stand on the wrong side of the field, and to my mind there is no justification for shutting the sixpenny public out from both sides. Care must be taken not to kill the goose who even now shows a strange reluctance to lay the golden egg.

The kick-off took place at a quarter-past two, the Rangers setting the ball in motion. Play at once became very fast, the leather being transferred from one end of the field to the other with almost bewildering rapidity. Luton were the first to become dangerous, and a splendidly-placed corner by Eckford opened up visions which were rudely dispelled by Clutterbuck, who punched away in fine style. Two or three free kicks next fell to the homesters as a result of vigorous tactics on the part of the visitors, McInnes once, when making a bee-line for goal, being badly fouled by Gaylard. Nothing resulted, however, and it was not until a miss by McConnell, which let in Brown, that expectation became keen, but though Roland and Eckford both got in very good centres, these centres were not turned to account.

From another foul against the Rangers, Daw placed nicely and a corner resulted. This was again beautifully headed by Eckford, but after Clutterbuck had saved, the siege was raised by the ball being sent behind. The visitors next had a corner, through the instrumentality of Evans, and this was well placed. Daw cleared, however, and McInnes making the running to the other end, Brock and Eckford both had chances which they failed to take.

Daw was again called upon as the result of a foul given against Stewart, but he was equal to the occasion, and Brown, beating McConnell, put in a lovely centre, the ball dropping in the mouth of the Rangers' goal, where Fairgriev was waiting to receive it. The centre-forward attempted to head the ball, but clean missed. Directly afterwards, Brown got away again, and put in a grand shot, which most people thought had taken effect, the ball seeming to pass just underneath the bar at the right-hand corner. Great was the disappointment of the Luton portion of the spectators when it was discovered that the ball had gone just over instead of just under.

There could be no doubt that up to this time, the homesters had had the best of the play, three parts of it having taken place on the Rangers' territory, but it was surprising how few really good, or even passable shots had been put in. Then, as so often happens, the Rangers got an opening, and took advantage of it. Dow, in trying to clear, and with plenty of time in which to do it, missed his kick altogether, and Evans sailing in had the easiest job in the world to score. It was terribly tantalising, especially as it was practically the last effort before the interval.

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When the teams changed ends, the visitors, encouraged by the great slice of luck which had befallen them, seemed bent upon increasing their lead, and for some time were buzzing about round the Luton goal, which had several narrow escapes. Then Brown receiving from Morrison, raced away and forced a corner, but immediately neutralised it by placing behind. Then the Rangers came again, and Dow stopped but failed to clear a fine centre from Smith. Thereupon ensued a desperate scrimmage on the goal-line, Dow sticking to the ball like grim death, and it was only when the whistle went for a foul against the visitors that he gave up possession.

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A foul against Morrison gave the visitors another look in, but it came to nothing, and at the other end Fairgrieve, who got clear, might have done some damage had not his heart failed him at the critical moment and caused him to put the ball so far forward that Clutterbuck was easily able to clear. A few minutes later Luton had real hard luck, a terrific shot from Morrison hitting the bar and bouncing over.

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The visitors cleared from a well-judged kick by McCurdy, but soon afterwards came a welcome surprise. Brown getting in a beautiful centre, and McInnes heading it into goal like a streak of greasy lightning. Clutterbuck got hurt in running out and attempting to clear, but was soon able to resume his place. The equalising goal came when the second half was twenty two minutes old, and there was of course still plenty of time to effect a further alteration in the score, but though each side tried hard to get the winning goal it would not come, and the game ended in a draw.

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The Rangers once looked uncommonly like being successful, for after the ball had struck the inside of the post in a melee resulting from a return by Hitch, White obtained possession about a couple of yards from goal, and had absolutely no one to beat, as Daw was at the other side. But White produced feelings of the direst distress amongst the Londoners by kicking wildly and sending the ball high over the crossbar.

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Taking the game all through, the sides appeared to be very evenly balanced, for whereas the Lutonians had all the best of the play in the first half, barring the one unfortunate goal, the Rangers were just as fortunate and unfortunate in the second moiety. If the order of scoring had been reversed, it would have just about represented the play in each forty-five.

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Neither goalkeeper had much to do, and yet each did well. If the Luton forwards could only have improved upon their effectiveness in front of goal, they would easily have made the game safe in the first half, but there seemed to be no sting in the centre. Fairgrieve tried hard, but his efforts generally came too late, and there was seldom any prospect of a centre being converted. McInnes was the best forward on the field, and it was delightful to see the way in which he threaded his way between opposing players. When he got the ball, and he got it often, it could be taken for granted that it would be disposed of to advantage. He found an able partner in Eckford who was responsible for a lot of first-rate work, and it was not their fault that a victory was not secured.

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Brown likewise played a very useful game, some of his centres being very cleverly put in, and Brock performed much better than in some previous matches. All the half-backs worked hard, and I should be inclined to give Morrison the palm, were it not for the fact that he too often got to the centre and left Evans with a clear field. Dow scarcely played with the dash and confidence which usually characterise his efforts, but it was a piece of pure bad luck that he should have given away that goal. McCurdy was seen to great advantage, and though he got somewhat badly damaged in the second half, he continued to show excellent form.

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