

Football.

THE ENGLISH CUP COMPETITION.

KING'S LYNN v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at King's Lynn on Saturday. Result:

Luton Town 4 goals.

King's Lynn 1 goal.

It cannot be said that Dame Fortune has smiled on Luton in the English Cup Competition this last two years. Our outing to Lowestoft twelve months ago was a complete farce from a monetary point of view, and one journey of this character ought to content the ordinary man for a lifetime. I am sure it would have been quite sufficient for Luton if they had had a voice in the matter, but they hadn't, and the English Cup drawers were unkind enough to pull out the name of another team in the same district, viz., King's Lynn, followed by Luton, in the competition this year.

It was for this reason, and this reason alone, that I packed up my goods and chattels as early as half-past seven last Saturday morning en route for the Fen district. A more monotonous journey one could not wish for. The country is uninteresting, and, as everyone knows, as flat as flounder. It was just about half-past twelve when we reached Lynn. The outward journey hadn't been so bad, but the coming back was just about the last straw. We left before half-past five, and we got home just before twelve o'clock. We had an hour's wait at Cambridge, which was all right, for we could get tea, but the two hours' wait at Hatfield was the longest 120 minutes I ever remember. The name of Hatfield will live for years in the players' memories, I'm sure.

The glory and honour of the Luton team had preceded us, for when we got to Lynn we met people who know more about us than we knew ourselves. We were advertised as the "Great Midland and Southern League team," whilst one of the local papers had gone to the trouble of finding out or guessing all sorts of things about us. For instance, about seven of the Luton players were just 20 years old. Next we read that Lindsay is 15½ stone. Not a bad weight. Roger Ord said he was advertised as being 39 years old, but that I didn't see (neither did he). Later on a strong argument went on among some Lynn supporters about Blessington. Some said he was the old Celtic player, others said he wasn't, but when the "book of words" was turned up, and I could see clearly in black and white that he was only twenty—well, I couldn't dispute it then.

The match had created a lot of interest in the district, and undoubtedly Lynn people were more than satisfied with the gate, but Luton were not. The gate realised £40, and out of this there was about £20 expenses, which left another £20 to be divided between the clubs. It will therefore be seen that Luton lost badly over the encounter, and it makes one feel inclined to write strongly about amateur clubs competing in the Cup Competition with the idea of getting a bit of luck and having a good professional team come down to play them. The likelihood is that if Lynn had been drawn at Luton, they would have scratched, and then again Luton would have been losers, for they might have been without a game altogether.

The Lynn people think they have a capital ground, and when I casually mentioned about it being a trifle "humpty dumpty," they rather resented the idea. Any way, in my opinion it was a poor ground. It was fairly flat, but lumpy in places, whilst the grass was four or five inches long—perhaps more. The recent rains had made it muddy, and as it was naturally inclined to be "beggy," one has an idea of what the players had to put up with.

Now to the game. The teams were:—

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy; Clifford, Holdstock, and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Barker, Dempsey, and Saxton.

King's Lynn: Gay; Pearman and Girton; Reed, Stevens, and Haylock; Orvis, Spaulding, Hornigold, Horsley, and Smith.

The game itself reminded me very much of the Lowestoft match last year. King's Lynn are certainly a better team than their neighbours, and they play a very decent game in their own particular class, but of course they never showed the slightest pretensions of being able to keep alongside Luton. One thing I liked about their players, they didn't suffer from swelled heads. They knew they were meeting a better side, they never expected to win, and they took their defeat in a capital manner, although their past record is worth repeating. They hadn't been beaten before this season, and for eighteen months they had defied all comers on their own ground. Their previous defeat was twelve months last Easter by Aston Villa.

Immediately the ball was started rolling Luton made tracks for their opponents' goal, and twice offside was given in the first minute. Luton seemed quite serious about the match, and I know the players intended making the game sure before they relaxed any efforts. We had only been playing three minutes when a nasty accident happened. Durrant was making a nice run with Blessington on the right, and had just got his centre across, when one of the Lynn defenders stepped right on Durrant's ankle—the one that got injured at Portsmouth. The result was that Durrant had to be carried off the field with a bruised and twisted ankle, and was not able to take any further part in the game.

To be handicapped with ten men in a Cup-tie so early in the game was serious, and it was lucky that we were not meeting a team of our own class. Immediately play was re-started the locals put on a great rush, and eventually the left wing put in a shot that just went by the post only by inches—a very near thing. This was only a temporary attack, for Luton were hovering around their opponents' quarters practically all the time. Half-an-hour, though, had passed before any scoring was done, and then Blessington put across prettily to Saxton, who, with a swinging cross shot, scored the first goal. It was a magnificent shot, and was well applauded. A little later on Luton got their second goal and Saxton again did the trick with a clever kick. To a certain extent it was a lucky goal, for it was gained from a corner that was not too well placed, and one of the opposing backs miskicking, Saxton quickly took advantage of it, and the trick was done. Just before the interval, Lynn broke away and Orvis scored, so we crossed over—Luton, 2 goals; Lynn, 1 goal.

Within two minutes of the re-start Blessington scored a magnificent goal—although one of our Luton friends didn't know anything about it, for at the time he was busily arguing about the age of Blessington with some Lynn supporters, and—dare I tell it in a whisper—he didn't know that Luton had won by 4 goals to one until we got to Cambridge. To make it worse, he was the man who was entrusted with the sending off of the telegrams. The Luton goal had a lucky escape soon after the re-start, for Hornigold hit the bar, and Ord eventually cleared at the expense of a corner. Midway in the half Saxton scored again with a trimmer from a pass from the right. With the game well in hand, Lindsay went outside-right for a time, and with one shot had particularly hard lines. Nothing further was scored, and Luton retired easy winners by 4 goals to 1.

When Luton saw they held the master-card all through they were inclined to ease up a bit at times, and this they could hardly be blamed for. Every man had a bit extra up his sleeve if it was wanted, therefore criticism on the players is needless. Every man had a win in view, and this was brought off quite easily. What more could they do?