

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE ENGLISH CUP.

CIVIL SERVICE DEFEATED.

On Saturday the Luton team took part in the semi-finals of Division 7 in connection with the qualifying competition for the English Cup. They were fortunate to be drawn to play on their own ground, their opponents being the Civil Service, an amateur team which has apparently been doing very well. The record of the visitors was as follows:—Civil Service v. Wycombe Wanderers, won 3—1; v. Ilford, won 2—1; v. Willesden Town (E.C.), won 3—1; v. West Hampstead, won 4—1; v. Crouch End Vampires (E.C.), won 1—0; v. Redhill (Amateur Cup), won 3—2; v. Godalming (E.C.), won 2—1; v. Weymouth (Amateur Cup), won 4—0; total number of goals 22—7. The home executive were very unfortunate in experiencing terribly inclement weather, this interfering considerably with the attendance. The teams turned out as follows:—

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy; Clifford, Holdstock and Williams; Brown, Blessington, Burbage, Dempsey, and Saxton.

Civil Service: M. Johnson; Geoffrey W. Robinson and L. O'Brien; F. Ritchie, "D. Fender" and E. Davies; T. E. T. Turner, H. Bedford, F. W. Gocseman, S. A. Bryant and J. J. Scott.

The late arrival of the visitors delayed the start some quarter of an hour. When a commencement was made there was a good muster of spectators present, a good number having accompanied the team from London. The ground was in a terrible condition and a strong wind was blowing from end to end. The Luton captain won the toss and necessarily took advantage of the wind. The homeplayers went off well from the start, and Holdstock sent over the bar in the first minute, and Johnson saved well from the home forwards. A smart exhibition by Dempsey put Brown in a position for shooting, but that player steered wide. Holdstock continued to be conspicuous and again a good one from his foot went very near to scoring when the game was about four minutes old. A penalty kick was awarded against one of the visitors' backs. Lindsay took the kick and smashed the ball into the net, thus drawing first blood for the Lutonians. Lindsay shortly afterwards made one of the finest kicks ever seen on the field, the ball going from his own end over the visitors' line. Of course it must be borne in mind that there was a strong wind behind the player. After a narrow escape to scoring Brown secured a corner from which Holdstock headed through, this bringing up the second goal 10 minutes from the start. Blessington put on the third after a bit and after a couple of misses by his comrades the same player smartly became responsible for another goal. A corner to the home contingent was unproductive, but Blessington soon afterwards made up for this by scoring again. Hands against Saxton was rewarded after a very clever piece by Dempsey, and Lindsay gave away a corner from which Scott managed to beat Ord. This was the first time in the game that the strangers had been dangerous. They had been for the most part confined to their own territory and the fact that they were able to break away at all was explained by a momentary slackness on the part of the homesters. A beauty from McCurdy bounced over the bar and Burbage was shortly afterwards responsible for a big rush. From a corner to Luton the ball went past Johnson off one of his own men and so the sixth goal was chalked up. More corners fell to the locals and Saxton managed to score the seventh point. Before the interval a beauty from Blessington very nearly succeeded; but there was no more scoring before half-time when the positions were:

LUTON, 7; CIVIL SERVICE, 1.

It was thought that after the interval the Civil Service team would improve their position for they now had the wind strongly in their favour. They went off, indeed, as though they were likely to do this, and Ord was at an early stage called upon to deal with a very hard shot, the ball going into his hands at a great pace. It was the Luton men, however, who were the first to score, advancing in irresistible style they forced their way through the Civil Service defence, and Dempsey wound up with a shot that produced the homesters' eighth goal. The "blues" again attacked hotly, and Johnson saved cleverly. Rain was now falling very heavily, and the lot of the spectators on the terraces—to say nothing of that of the players—was not by any means enviable. At this part Luton were having all the best of the exchanges and corners were forced. These were not productive until the end was rapidly approaching when Saxton managed to put on another goal. The end accordingly was a win for Luton with these figures:

LUTON, 9; CIVIL SERVICE, 1.

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

Though the game on Saturday with the Civil Service team resulted in a runaway win for Luton, it was fairly interesting, if only for the contrast which it showed between the methods of the rival sides. It was all over so far as the visitors were concerned when the home captain won the toss.

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The afternoon was a wretchedly unsuitable one and as a consequence the "gate" was not at all good. The ground was in a terrible state, and the heavy rain that fell during the progress of the game must have fairly well saturated the players.

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It was a very pleasant beginning for the locals to see four goals chalked up in about a quarter of an hour. It seemed as though the score was to be an extremely heavy one. After getting half-a-dozen, however, the men seemed to be content to rest on their laurels.

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If the Lutonians had tried their hardest throughout the game they would very likely have equalled if not surpassed the big score piled up in the West of England. Still, nine goals proved sufficient for the Civil Service men.

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Luton's first goal came from a penalty for hands. It was a treat to see the accuracy with which Lindsay banged the ball into the net. The captain is emphatically the man to take penalty kicks.

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The second goal was cleverly gained by Holdstock from a corner kick. It was the result of a very good all-round display, and one that was well worth witnessing.

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It was amusing to note how philosophically the visitors regarded the scoring of the next three goals, all of which came from the foot of Blessington. There was nothing for it but to look pleasant, and the Civil Service men did this as well as their state of glumness would allow.

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The shots with which Blessington succeeded were very good indeed. They were all from a fairly long range and were evidently curlers. The visiting goalkeeper was utterly unable to deal with them.

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It came as somewhat of a relief to see the Civil Service score, though it may at once be said that they would never have got near the home goal had the defenders not become somewhat careless. The point was fairly smartly obtained, and was thoroughly well deserved under the circumstances.

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The sixth point was very kindly presented to the home lot by one of the visitors from a corner; but there was no suspicion about the goal with which Saxton wound up the scoring in the first half. It was a hard drive that beat the custodian easily.

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It had been expected that the strangers would give the local defence some trouble after the interval. The wind was strongly in their favour and they had their laurels to retrieve. They altogether failed, however, and all the scoring that took place was done by Luton.

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There were many slips by the Civil Service men which created intense amusement amongst the spectators, who must have been glad of any pretext for applauding—for it was cold enough looking on in all conscience.

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Though the losers were so far behind they were not at all a bad team, as amateurs go in the general way. They were never downhearted and to the finish they struggled along in a way that must have evoked admiration.

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In O'Brien they possess a very capable back and one or two of the forwards were speedy and clever, while the halves were conspicuous at times. They were not nearly so well balanced as the homesters, however.

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It ought to be said that the men came to Luton with a very good record. They had not been beaten this season, and held a goal record of 22 against 7, so that they must be able to score freely at times.

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On the home side Blessington was in great form. He was practically unstoppable, and his goals were beauties. The more I see of his play the better I like it.

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Dempsey is a very clever player, like McInnes of old. The parallel between Dempsey and Tam also applies in the matter of shooting when near goal. Admirers of both men will know precisely what I mean.

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Saxton is to have a paragraph all to himself. He was repeatedly prominent for first-rate play, and his couple of goals were very smartly obtained. We are all glad to see the outside left succeeding.

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Burbage got in several of his noted rushes; but he was not so successful as usual, and his shooting was very much "off." Brown, too, was not in his best form.

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While Luton were disposing so easily of their opponents, Watford and Queen's Park Rangers were having a capital set-to at Watford. The outcome was a draw of one all, which necessitated a second meeting of the teams on Wednesday.

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There was some very heavy scoring in other ties. Bristol Rovers gave the quietus to Weymouth by 15—1 while Reading trounced the Chesham Generals to the tune of 11—0. Apart from these and the bad defeat of the Civil Service at Luton, 5—0 was the highest score, that being run up by a couple of winning sides.

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There was only one game in the Southern League on Saturday. It was between Bristol City and Millwall.

and the latter bit the dust, the score being 7—1 against them. The game was at Bristol, and the Londoners had to play first against a stiff wind. Still, it was a dreadful thrashing.

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The League table on Monday was as follows:—

	Played.	Won.	Lost.	Dr'n.	Goals For	Goals Agst	Pts
Bristol City	12	9	1	2	32	10	20
Portsmouth	10	8	1	1	23	9	17
Southampton	10	8	1	1	24	12	17
Bristol Rovers	10	7	2	1	23	10	15
Millwall	12	7	4	1	26	19	15
West Ham United ..	10	5	4	1	17	10	11
Reading	10	3	3	4	9	7	10
Tottenham Hotspur	8	3	3	2	12	9	8
Luton	9	4	5	0	13	12	8
Kettering	10	3	5	2	14	20	8
Queen's P'k Rangers	10	3	6	1	15	17	7
New Brompton	10	2	6	2	11	17	6
Watford	10	2	7	1	9	21	5
Chatham	10	2	7	1	7	28	5
Gravesend	9	1	6	2	7	28	4
Swindon Town	10	1	7	2	6	19	4

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To-morrow (Saturday) the "blues" are due at Kettering for a United League fixture. The "Ketts" have always been hard nuts to crack. I hope the Luton forwards will be in good shooting form.

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That reminds me that much has been said lately on that same subject of the shooting of the Luton forwards. They had not up to Saturday been very prolific scorers, and some of us would like a little more equal distribution of the goals. Let the men bear this in mind to-morrow.

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The first eleven have now scored 35 goals against 19. That is not at all a bad average, I admit; but, considering the calibre of the team, it might be better, especially when it is remembered that the 35 goals have been spread over 16 games.

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The *Daily Chronicle*, referring to the results of the cup ties, says: "At a rough calculation, one expects Middlesbrough, Darwen, Crewe Alexandra, Walsall, Barnsley, Burton Swifts, Luton Town, West Ham, Reading, and the Bristol Rovers to represent the Divisions against the ten semi-exempt clubs."

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"Rover," writing in the *Morning Leader* on Monday, referred to the easy victories of Luton and Reading and said he was not in agreement with those who think that victories of this character go to show the fallacy of amateur teams being allowed to compete for the English Cup. He proceeded thus: "They say it results in heavy loss to professional clubs, as if the English Cup was run mainly for the benefit of professional gates. As the competition advances gates must inevitably improve, and under those circumstances it appears to me very ungracious to complain of a soft thing and turn up one's nose at the weakness of the opposition. The ambition of Civil Service, Weymouth, and Chesham Generals, for instance, is a long way in excess of their ability, but professional clubs find them very useful at a pinch, and it is a pleasant change now and again for the modern director to separate his view of the game from the almighty dollar."

FOOTER.