

The English Cup.

LUTON TOWN v. CIVIL SERVICE.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town	9 goals.
Civil Service	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

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

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

Referee, Mr. A. Milward; linesmen, Messrs. J. McMillan and W. Carter.

It was terribly hard lines on Luton that after a spell of away matches they should get a couple of home gates entirely spoiled by the weather. On Monday, against Tottenham Hotspur, we thought we had got the very worst possible, even for November, but at times on Saturday, wind and rain combined to make matters more unpleasant than ever.

The consequence was that the Club coffers were not so rich by some fifty or sixty pounds as they otherwise would have been. On Monday, the gate was £12 odd instead of £40 or £50, and on Saturday it totalled £45 instead of nearly double that amount. It was cruel luck.

The Civil Service was not altogether an unattractive fixture, for one scarcely knew what their capabilities were when pitted against a good team. In their own class they had done wonders, having vanquished Willesden Town, West Hampstead, Crouch End Vampires, and Godalming in the English Cup, with a total of 12 goals to 3, and Redhill and Weybridge in the Amateur Cup with a record of 7 goals to 2.

But the issue was not long in doubt on Saturday. The game was a quarter of an hour late in starting, owing to the visitors not turning up in time, but when a beginning was made, Luton were simply all over their opponents. The home-sters, winning the toss, had the benefit of wind and weather, and they were soon in the vicinity of the Civilians' goal, where Blessington got in a couple of shots, one, a beauty, just skimming the bar.

Luton were making another attack, when Brown was fouled within the twelve-yards' line, and a penalty being given, Lindsay took the kick and scored. Lindsay directly afterwards, in taking a goal-kick, sent the ball right over the goal-line at the other end. Johnson saved a good shot from Burbage, and Blessington, meeting the ball, put in a hot 'un, which rebounded off the custodian. A corner followed, and Brown placing, Holdstock and Blessington between them rushed the ball through.

The game had scarcely been restarted when Blessington tried the effect of a long shot, and Johnson, in attempting to fist out, assisted into his own goal. In less than a couple of minutes, Blessington scored again with a shot which completely beat the custodian, and before the game was a quarter of an hour old, the Luton man, receiving from McCurdy, registered a fifth.

A little diversion was now created by the visitors, and the Luton defence not taking the matter too seriously, allowed them to get within shooting distance. A good cross shot was put in from the right, and Ord not being able to get it out of danger, Scott had the satisfaction of scoring for his side. Luton replied with two other goals before the interval, Johnson himself converting a beautifully-placed corner by Williams, and Saxton scoring the other, Luton thus crossing over with a lead of seven goals to one.

The second half needs very little description. Luton obtained two more goals, a centre by Williams going through off one of the Service men, and Saxton putting on the other with a splendid shot. The visitors had rather more of the play in this half, but that was not so much due to their own merits as to the slackness of the Lutonians. Two experiments were made with the Luton forwards. Burbage went outside-left, and Dempsey centre, and then Dempsey and Saxton changed places, the latter taking the middle position.

One can hardly say anything as to Burbage's capabilities on the outside-left, because he had so few opportunities, but Saxton certainly did well at centre, putting in a lot of dash and go, and shooting well. It is quite unnecessary to criticise the other players, beyond giving a good word to Holdstock, who was responsible for some capital work, and to Blessington, who adopted quite the correct tactics for Saturday's game, but I should like to say a word about one or two of the Luton men stopping the onward rush for goal by fiddling about with the ball.

The man gets the leather at his feet, makes feint here and a feint there, allows his opponents to close round him, and in nineteen cases out of twenty finishes up by passing the ball direct on to one of the other side. But that is not the worst. He effectually takes all the swing out of the game for the time being, and very often some minutes elapse before his comrades are able to get into their stride again.

Of course, it didn't matter much on Saturday, but the same thing occasionally happens in more important matches. To keep the ball just long enough to attract the opposition and then give a clear pass is one thing, but to merely dance about for no practical purpose whatever, is quite another.