

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE ENGLISH CUP.

DEFEAT OF QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

The divisional final in the qualifying competition for the English Cup saw Luton Town measured against Queen's Park Rangers, the team that knocked them out last season after a close struggle. The idea that the "blues" would emerge successfully this season was borne into the minds of Luton people by the fact that their players managed to defeat the Rangers at Kensal Rise in a League game somewhat easily some weeks since. The critics were pretty unanimous in expressing the idea that the game would be a close one; but it proved nothing of the kind, for the locals had a very easy win. The sides were as strong as the respective clubs could put in the field. The Luton eleven was precisely that which lowered the colours of the Gravesend lot in the previous week. The Rangers did not make a final selection until they reached the ground, when Bellingham stood down from the rear-guard in favour of Newlands. The Londoners travelled by the 10.5 train from St. Pancras and brought a good number of admirers with them, these being followed by a larger contingent who took advantage of the special train run on the Midland Railway. The gates were opened before 2 o'clock, and people began to stream in slowly. The weather was dull, and a drizzling rain fell steadily and served to make matters very unpleasant, while the playing pitch was in a sodden condition. There was a good muster on the grand-stand, double price being charged here. The Red Cross Band turned up and played for some minutes, their performance affording satisfaction to those present. As the time drew near for commencing there was a goodly influx of spectators and the ropes were well lined at the time announced for kicking off. The teams were accorded a capital reception on turning out.

The sides were:—

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

Queen's Park Rangers: Clutterbuck; Newlands and McConnell; Keech, Hitch and Skinner; Gray, Downing, Goldie, Humphrey and Foxall.

Referee: Mr. N. Whittaker.

Linesmen: Messrs. Reed (London) and Chappell (Kettering).

The visitors, by winning the toss, secured the advantage of the wind. At the outset the Lutonians pressed hotly; but they were quickly repelled, and then the Rangers took a turn at attacking. They were quickly sent back, Lindsay coming through in great style. The London contingent were checked by free-kicks, and then Humphrey tested Ord with a good one. Next Holdstock cleared, and in following suit Lindsay bowled an opponent over in a fashion which was hugely relished by the crowd. A foul was awarded against McCurdy, following which Durrant failed to get hold of a well-judged pass by Williams. A corner was awarded to Luton, from which McConnell headed away. Brown steered behind and then Keech was hurt slightly. Hands against Williams was equalised by a free-kick against the visitors, from which Williams sent wide. Blessington followed with a good one, which unhappily also proved ineffectual. Following a foul against Luton Downing headed wide. The home forwards had been going great guns and hereabouts they made one of the best attacks of the day. Durrant sent up brilliantly and a tremendous scrimmage ensued. Holdstock shot well and the ball appeared to go through; but by some means it was hooked out, apparently by one of the backs. A penalty was strongly appealed for, but Mr. Whittaker declined to award it. The decision was inexplicable. Holdstock next sent over. At this stage the Lutonians were pressing hard. It was not long ere they broke away and forced a corner. The Rangers managed to get under weigh, only to be checked by off-side. Downing shot high over the bar. Lindsay was spoken to by the referee for some reason, and a corner to the Rangers followed. The "blues" missed a couple of easy chances in a very short space of time and they were materially assisted by free-kicks against their opponents. It was marvellous how the men failed to score. At half-time the totals were:

LUTON, 0; RANGERS, 0.

With the wind in their favour after the interval, it was felt that the chances were distinctly with the Luton players. Williams sent over the line very early in the second half, and this performance was repeated shortly afterwards, this being succeeded by a foul by Lindsay on Foxall. Luton attacked but were repelled; but then from a corner to the homesters which was extremely well placed Durrant headed through. This success served to delight the home spectators and to stimulate the team, while it also depressed the strangers in a corresponding degree. The "blues" maintained the pressure, and when Brown had once more sent behind the goal-line Durrant very nearly succeeded in scoring again, Clutterbuck sending over. A nasty foul on Dempsey was duly punished, and then close to goal the Rangers missed. Blessington next carried the ball up cleverly and transferred to Brown, from whose centre Durrant had no difficulty in scoring a second. The main credit of this display was due to Blessington, whose effort was splendid. Saxton was the recipient of a kick in the stomach, which fortunately was not so serious as it might have been. Just afterwards Dempsey managed to tempt Clutterbuck out some yards and then scored with a long shot. This renewed success for the locals was enthusiastically cheered, and

now that half the second period had elapsed it was felt that the result was a foregone conclusion. It was then that the homesters fell off, evidently feeling that they were justified in relaxing their efforts. The visitors stuck to their guns, however, and showed to better advantage than they had hitherto done. In the hot attack which was initiated by the Rangers Lindsay and Ord became responsible for good clearances, and the home captain headed away. Next Clutterbuck saved well, following which Dempsey sent in a high shot which was exceedingly well saved. A corner to Luton led to Durrant sending behind. For some reason not altogether clear Mr. Whittaker awarded a penalty against Luton. The kick was entrusted to Humphrey, who to the chagrin of the visitors missed badly. Five minutes from the finish the Rangers had a very narrow escape of scoring, the wonder being how the men could miss. Towards the close another corner was awarded to Luton; but it was just as unprofitable as those that had gone before. A closely contested and good game terminated in a well-deserved win for the locals with these scores:

LUTON, 3; RANGERS, 0.

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

There were a good many football lovers in Luton who were far from thinking that Saturday's cup match would produce such an easy win. So far as London was concerned the prophets all predicted a close game. But it was not.

★

The Lutonians for once in a way had their share of the luck in a cup match. Apart from this, however, they thoroughly deserved to win, for they were unmistakeably the better side by a good deal.

★

The final selection of the visitors' rearguard was postponed until the side came upon the ground, and then Bellingham was left out, Newlands being given the preference. The explanation is that the turf was in better order than the Rangers expected to find it.

★

There was a very good crowd, though I confess that it was not so large as I had expected it would be. The "gate" was a wee bit disappointing, considering that a shilling was charged for admission to the stand. The total worked out at £100 or a little less.

★

The contingent of Rangers' supporters was neither so large nor so demonstrative as on a former occasion. The battle-cry of the Kensal Rise people was not heard frequently in the second half, especially after the locals had begun to score.

★

The weather was not by any means inviting. A steady drizzle prevailed, and the concluding operations were conducted in gathering darkness. The time of starting was a bit too late.

★

When the visitors won the toss it was quite expected that they would soon give the locals plenty of work to keep them out. It was soon seen that the boot was on the other foot, for it was the "blues" who did most of the pressing.

★

The Luton forwards were early prominent, the wingers putting in some fine work. The Rangers' rearguard men were sorely pressed repeatedly, and some fine defensive play was witnessed from them.

★

According to the play the home lot ought to have been leading by a couple of goals at half-time. The shooting was not of the best, however, and in the early stages of the game the men were too excited to steer straight.

★

What Mr. Whittaker was about when he declined to concede the demand of the locals for a penalty I am at a loss to imagine. It was the opinion of many that the ball went through. If it did not, it was fisted out by a player who in my opinion was not the goalkeeper. Fortunately the team won without this point, or there would have been some rude things said.

★

It was not until the game had been re-started for some time that the scoring was opened, the initial goal proceeding from a corner. The ball found its way out to Durrant, who drove hard and straight, the shot beating Clutterbuck completely.

★

The credit for the second notch is due to Blessington, who put in a grand run and then transferred to Brown. The outside right sent across to Durrant, who again lowered the Rangers' colours. This was by far the best goal of the day.

★

When Dempsey put on the third there was a curious slackness about the Rangers difficult to explain. The left-winger tempted the visitors' custodian from his post and then scored with a long shot, the ball describing a curve into the net.

★

The Rangers, though necessarily a trifle disappointed at this turn of affairs, did not abandon all hops. Far from it. They pulled themselves together and played a bold and dashing game that deserved to have been rewarded by a goal.

★

The explanation of this shining on the part of the Rangers was partly to be found in the home contingent relaxing their efforts and playing to the gallery somewhat. This is always a mistake, and had the strangers scored some of the men would have been sorry for it.

★

The Rangers came close to scoring, for on one occasion they were awarded a penalty kick. This was entrusted to Humphrey, who made a sad mess of it, the ball going very wide.

★

Though it may be that the margin between the sides would not, perhaps, be so wide, I am confident that with equal luck the "blues" would always manage to come out on top. Certainly on Saturday's form the winners were by far the more workmanlike team.

★

I notice that one paper gives Newlands as the best back on the field. That writer could surely not have been watching Lindsay. The home captain played a dashing, determined game that commended itself to the onlookers—save the contingent from Kensal Rise.

★

For the most part Lindsay was scrupulously fair and he did not resort to heavy charging until it had been tried on him. The ex-Newcastle player can always be depended upon to keep up his own end.

★

Not that I wish to withhold from Newlands a particle of credit. He played splendidly, as also did his companion. They had plenty of work to do, and they performed their task very creditably.

★

To deal first with the home forwards, when one comes to detailed criticism, let me say that the front string men played a fine game all round. Saxton was not so conspicuous in the centre as could have been

wished, but he was very closely watched and did not get many chances.

★

Blessington's successful dash has already been referred to. Apart from that I am not sure that he was not the best of the forwards on the day's play. He fed his comrades capitally and was quite unselfish.

★

Durrant's shots with which the first two goals were scored were beauties, and the left-winger came close to notching a third. Dempsey surprised us all by the clever way in which he secured the third point.

★

Brown was repeatedly prominent, and the game that he played was of great service to his side. Taking the forwards in a bunch, let me present hearty congratulations on a very good display.

★

Holdstock was best of the halves. He was always to be found when wanted, and he fed his forwards with excellent judgment. His heading was particularly effective, and he very nearly succeeded in shooting a goal at one stage.

★

As to the other halves there was no room for adverse criticism. Clifford played a first-rate game, and Williams was as sturdy a defender as ever. The last-named was very ably supported by McCurdy, who was in capital form.

★

Ord did well in goal. He was not very often tested; but when he was he performed very efficiently. One save in particular was remarkably good.

★

Clutterbuck and his backs were in excellent fettle, and the Rangers' halves were in good form, though the cleverness of the home forwards was a bit too much for them. Of the forwards the left wingers appeared to me to be the best, though they had not much chance against Lindsay.

★

Mr. Whittaker roused the ire of a section of the crowd, and it would seem that a certain match will never be forgotten. But on the whole he did well.

★

"Rover," writing on Monday, said: "The defeat of the Rangers was not at all surprising, for the West Londoners are poor value away from home this year, and the miracle of Wolverhampton has never been repeated even in a lesser degree. Then again, Luton have shown great improvement as Southern Leaguers, and in Lindsay they possess one of the best backs in the South."

★

The results of the final matches in the qualifying series were:—Division 1: Middlesbrough beat Bishop Auckland, at Middlesbrough (4-0). Division 2: Southport Central drew Darwen, at Southport (1-1). Division 3: Crewe Alexandra beat Nantwich, at Crewe (5-1). Division 4: Walsall beat Wellington, at Walsall (by arrangement) (6-0). Division 5: Chesterfield beat Barnsley, at Barnsley (5-1). Division 6: Kettering beat Burton Swifts, at Burton (2-1). Division 7: Luton Town beat Queen's Park Rangers, at Luton (3-0). Division 8: West Ham United drew Clapton, at Canning Town (1-1). Division 9: Reading beat Richmond Association, at Reading (2-0). Division 10: Bristol Rovers beat Swindon Town, at Bristol (5-1).

★

This year there is an intermediate round before the competition proper begins. The 10 divisional champions are to play 10 selected clubs for the honour of entering the competition proper.

★

The draw for this extra round will take place on Monday evening next, when the 10 winners of the divisional finals will be drawn against these selected clubs: Bristol City, Grimsby Town, Glossop, Liverpool, Newton Heath, New Brighton Tower, Burslem Port Vale, Portsmouth, Stoke and Woolwich Arsenal. It will be seen that the South will be represented by seven clubs in this stage—the four divisional winners of Saturday, together with Bristol City, Portsmouth and Woolwich Arsenal.

★

In this connection the *Evening News* says: "As far as the South is concerned a good deal will be at stake, for an unfavourable draw may considerably reduce the number of Southern clubs for the competition proper, which will start with the 10 winners of the "intermediate round" and the 22 selected clubs. In the latter the South is represented by Millwall, Southampton, and Tottenham Hotspur."

★

There were only two games in the Southern League on Saturday. Bristol City beat Chatham at Chatham by 4-1, and Southampton defeated Watford by a goal to love.

★

Southern League table on Monday:—

									Goals	
	Played.	Won.	Lost.	Dr'n.	For	Agst	Pts			
Bristol City	15	11	2	2	41	18	24			
Southampton	13	10	2	1	28	15	21			
Portsmouth	12	9	2	1	24	11	19			
Millwall	14	9	4	1	32	20	19			
Bristol Rovers	12	8	3	1	25	11	17			
West Ham United	12	6	5	1	18	12	13			
Reading	12	4	4	4	12	9	12			
Luton	10	5	5	0	18	14	10			
Tottenham Hotspur	10	4	4	2	14	12	10			
New Brompton	12	4	6	2	15	18	10			
Queen's P.K. Rangers	12	4	7	1	19	17	9			
Kettering	11	3	6	2	14	21	8			
Gravesend	11	2	7	2	13	35	6			
Swindon Town	12	2	8	2	8	24	6			
Watford	13	2	10	1	12	28	5			
Chatham	13	2	10	1	8	39	5			

★