



THE ENGLISH CUP.

QUALIFYING COMPETITION.— DIVISIONAL FINAL.

LUTON TOWN v. QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

LUTON PLAY A GRAND GAME AND GAIN A FINE VICTORY.

The visit of the Rangers from Kensal Rise in the above competition had been looked forward to with a great deal of interest ever since the draw was made, although in local football circles it was confidently expected that Luton would win, especially as the home team had beaten the Rangers at Kensal Rise in the League tournament.

The supporters of the Rangers had great confidence in their favourites, and remembering the experiences of last season's tie—when the result was a draw of 1 goal each at Luton, while in the re-play at Kensal Rise, the Luton eleven suffered defeat by 4-1—had strong hopes that that result would be repeated, but they were doomed to disappointment. A special train had been chartered for the benefit of the Rangers' supporters, and was largely patronised, while numerous contingents also came from the surrounding districts. The Red Cross Band enlivened the proceedings before the kick-off with selections of music, and a crowd of some 3,500 lined the ropes when the teams appeared.

Both teams received an ovation on entering the arena, and they played as advertised. For the Rangers, Bellingham was still absent, while Ronaldson, their new centre-forward, was not eligible. The referee appointed first was Mr. F. H. King, but that gentleman had charge of a First Division League match, and his place was taken by Mr. Nat Whittaker, who whistled the following 22 into order punctually at 2.30:

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.

The Rangers won the toss, and kicked with the wind in their favour. The visitors were the first to get away, and Ord was called upon early to clear from Downing and Skinner, which he did in an able manner. A pretty run by the Rangers' forwards nearly spelt disaster, but the ball was run out. Luton then assumed the aggressive, and McConnell had to clear from Holdstock, and at the other end Clifford did likewise from a fine attempt by Goldie. Taking up the attack again, Luton made a nice run up the field, and Brown dropped a beautiful centre on top of the net. The Rangers were making some dangerous rushes, and Gray put behind a nice centre by Foxall.

A foul against Williams was cleared by McCurdy, and Durrant forced a corner off Keech, but Hitch cleared from the kick. A nice pass by Blessington to Brown was nullified by the latter shooting too high, and, going to the other end, the Rangers' forwards were neatly stopped by Lindsay. Foxall shot behind, and Clifford caused Newlands to clear, while "hands" against Williams was futile. McCurdy stopped Gray just as he was getting dangerous, and Hitch headed behind. The Rangers' supporters were continually cheering on the visiting team with their familiar cry, "Buck up Rangers!" and a good attempt by Humphrey was headed behind by Downing.

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Luton took up the attack again, and Dempsey and Williams made good attempts to score, but the ball went behind. Blessington also put behind, and a fine shot by Holdstock was grandly saved by Clutterbuck. There was a strong opinion among the spectators that the ball had crossed the line, but the referee gave the Rangers the benefit of the doubt. Offside against Goldie spoilt a good opportunity for the visitors, and a foul against Skinner was nullified by Clutterbuck being impeded. Luton were now pressing the Rangers' defenders hard, and some exciting incidents took place in front of their citadel.

Both sets of players were suffering from the excitement, and bad shooting was prevalent among both teams. Dempsey made two attempts to break through, but the ball was sent behind, and McConnell gave a corner to a fine "header" by Durrant, but the visitors cleared from the kick. Hands against Humphrey was fruitless, and a foul against Lindsay was put over the bar by Humphrey from McConnell's place-kick. A free-kick for offside against Goldie was of no avail to Luton, and the referee had occasion to caution Lindsay for kicking at Downing. The Rangers made another run up the field, but Gray shot behind, and the opportunity was lost.

The interval was fast approaching, and the spectators called loudly for a goal, but neither team could make any impression on the defence. Lindsay cleared from Goldie, and Gray forced a corner off McCurdy, but the former put the kick behind. Offside against Gray was futile, and a foul against Dempsey was likewise unavailing. A good try by Williams deserved to score, but the ball went over. Just before the visitors goal had some narrow escapes, but no scoring took place, the interval arriving with the score sheet blank.

NO SCORE.

During the interval, the Red Cross Band gave another selection, which was much appreciated by the London visitors. On resuming, with the wind in their favour, Luton soon began to make things warm for the Rangers' defence, and McConnell neatly blocked a good attempt by Blessington, and Dempsey — who had changed places with Saxton — made a good attempt to get through, but he over-ran the ball, and the chance was lost. Lindsay made a long drive, but the ball dropped behind, and going to the other end, the visitors forced a corner off Lindsay, but the kick was cleared. From the goal-kick, the Luton forwards got away in fine style, and Brown forced a corner off McConnell, and from the kick, Durrant beat Clutterbuck with a beautiful "header," 7 minutes after the start.

This, the opening goal, was greeted with loud cheering. The Rangers' team were now confined chiefly to their own half. Saxton made a good try to break through, but Brown shot behind, and the Rangers' goal had a narrow escape from a fine shot by Durrant, Clutterbuck just managing to divert the ball's course as it was sailing into the net. Newlands cleared

well from Saxton, and a bad foul against Keech on Saxton was fruitless. A chance long shot by Keech just grazed the post, and from the goal-kick, the Luton forwards got away in fine style, and beating all opposition, Brown put across a fine centre, from which Durrant beat the Rangers custodian with a grand shot. This was the signal for another outburst of cheering and the Rangers' supporters began to look very glum. Holdstock blocked a drive from Hitch, and directly after the latter was cautioned for kicking Saxton.

Keeping up the pressure, the Luton team were giving the visiting defenders an anxious time, and securing from a throw-in, the home forwards again got away and while the visitors were appealing for offside, Dempsey ran in and scored the 3rd goal for Luton. The Rangers tried hard to turn the tide, but they were a beaten team, and could make no impression on the Luton defence, which was impregnable. Ord saved from Downing, and at the other end, Clutterbuck saved three times in succession from the Luton forwards. Keech ran across and stopped Brown and good play by Clifford was nullified by Holdstock kicking behind.

McCurdy cleared a dangerous run by the Rangers' forwards, but directly after they had a fine chance of opening their account when a penalty was awarded against Lindsay for fouling Goldie within the 12 yards' limit, but Humphrey failed miserably at the attempt, the ball going wide. The Luton team now slackened somewhat, and the Rangers took advantage of it, and caused the Luton defenders to be very smart to clear their charge on two or three occasions. A lightning centre by Humphrey was missed by Gray, and Ord had to clear from Goldie and Foxall. A good chance was lost by hesitation on the part of Blessington, and Brown skimmed the bar with a lovely drive.

The end and darkness were both fast approaching. Luton continued to have the best of matters, and several times came very near increasing their lead. A foul against Luton was of no avail to the visitors, and the Rangers forced a corner, from which Hitch sent in a well-directed shot, but Ord saved in masterly fashion. Play from now to the finish was confined to mid-field, and no more scoring taking place, Luton retired with a grand victory to their credit with the score:—

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NOTES.

The game was a fine one throughout, with not a dull moment. A better display of football than that exhibited by the Luton team no one could wish to see. Ord, in goal for the home team, played well. In the first 20 minutes he had a great deal to do, but he never gave anything away and cleared his charge on several occasions in fine style.

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Lindsay, however, was the hero of the afternoon, and his fine display was largely instrumental in deciding the victory. He repeatedly robbed the Rangers' forwards and cleared his lines grandly on several occasions. McCurdy ably assisted, and showed vast improvement on his form of the previous Saturday. The home middle line put in some excellent work, and their combination was good.

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Holdstock was in fine fettle, and watched Goldie incessantly, the latter rarely getting away. Williams also showed capital form, and gave the Rangers' right wing no rest. Clifford, however, was the pick of the trio, and in dashing style he tackled and cleared on several occasions. He had a warm wing to look after in Humphrey and Foxall, but broke up all their attempts at combination.

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Of the forwards, Blessington was best until he got injured, and played a clever and unselfish game throughout. Durrant shaped well, and sprinted up the wing in rattling style. His two goals were good ones, although the second was the outcome of some clever play by "Roland" Brown, who had to beat three men before getting his centre across. The latter showed improvement on previous displays, and put across some well-judged centres. Saxton was not so effective in the centre as against Gravesend, and changed places with Dempsey during the game; however, he played a good game, and troubled the Rangers' defence. Dempsey showed up better than of late, showing up best at centre-forward.

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The Rangers were rather disappointing, especially after their fortnight's special training. They were quite done up in the second half, and could make no effective resistance. They have a fine custodian in Clutterbuck. He had a lot of work to do on Saturday, and on several occasions made some marvellous saves. McConnell, the old Arsenal man, is a defender of much merit, and kicks and clears well. He had ample assistance from Newlands, who also put in good work, and they did not give the home forwards much latitude.

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The half-back line is supposed to be the strongest in the South, but they didn't shine much on Saturday against the fine play exhibited by the Luton forwards. Keech was the pick of the trio. Hitch played a good game, but rather too vigorous. Skinner also showed decent form, but was inclined to wander. A feature of the Rangers' team is the fine head work shown, which the Luton spectators applauded.

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The forwards are very quick, and with a less reliable defence, would do a lot of damage. The right wing was the strongest, Gray, the old New Brompton man, and Downing, who hails from Walsall, combining well together, and caused the Luton defence much trouble. Goldie, in the centre, was too well watched to do much, and Humphrey, from Cambridge, and Foxall, late of Liverpool, played a decent game on the left, but could not make much headway against Clifford and Lindsay.

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The referee was very fair, and gave satisfaction, while the "gate" was also satisfactory, despite the dullness of the weather. The draw for the extra round takes place on Monday next, December 17th.

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Commenting on the match, the "Daily Mail" says:—"The winners were clearly the better team. Few Southern League clubs play such pretty football. That it is not more effective is a mystery that puzzles most people. The Luton forwards were especially taking 'n their work, and at times they made the Rangers' defence look rather clumsy and weak. It was not really so; the exceptional smartness of the Luton forwards only gave it that appearance."

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"Observer" writes in a Hitchin paper:—"I think it is a great pity that the two chief football clubs in Hitchin cannot be at peace with one another. Is it getting impossible nowadays