

Football.

The English Cup.

WATFORD v. LUTON.

Played at Watford on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	2 goals.
Watford	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Watford—Waller; Cother and Nidd; Wragg, Harding, and Hamilton; Brown, Lyon, Harvey, Pangborn, and Chalmers.

Luton—Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; Hawkes, White, and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, Tierney, and Colvin.

Referee, Mr. Nat Whittaker.

On several occasions, Luton have managed to knock Watford out of the English Cup Competition, but perhaps the victory on Saturday was the most noteworthy of the series. The fact that Watford had choice of ground seemed to balance matters so nicely that it required a very bold man indeed to predict the result, though the general opinion seemed to be that Luton might just get home.

Watford have been doing considerably better this year than last, as their victories over Queen's Park Rangers, Bristol Rovers, and Northampton sufficiently prove, and therefore had very good reason for fancying their chances, whilst the beating given them by Luton in the first game of the season had been replied to by a draw at Watford. And if Watford could draw in a friendly, why should they not at least do the same in a Cup-tie?

At mid-day on Saturday, at Luton, the prospects did not look very brilliant from an atmospheric point of view, for a dense fog hung over some parts of the town, and was particularly thick in the vicinity of the railway stations. Nevertheless, a large number of people patronised the L. and N. W. excursion, and happily their optimism was justified by the event, Watford being almost entirely free from fog.

In addition to the excursionists from Luton, several hundred people went from St. Albans, and the crush at some of the entrances to the ground was so great that considerable difficulty was experienced in gaining admission. At one gate, at any rate, the arrangements broke down, and I believe that some people succeeded in getting in for nothing. The spectators altogether numbered fully five thousand.

The kick off took place at half-past two, Luton having choice of ends—a choice which gave little or no advantage. The opening play was of a tolerably even character, but once within the first ten minutes, Brown had a fine opening from a centre by Durrant, but the shot was a tame one, and Waller easily saved. Watford replied with a corner, off White, but Sharp cleared.

Durrant, after being given offside when in a rather dangerous position, got away nicely from a lovely pass by Brown, and then, working his way close in, disappointed expectations by sky-ing the ball.

Watford went to the other end, where Pangborn shot over, and then Luton replied, Brown receiving from Tierney and putting in a wonderfully smart shot, which Waller just saved by turning round the post. Colvin placed the corner, and Durrant sent a little wide. Offside twice against Brown and once against Colvin, spoiled further efforts, and then the Luton outside left, in endeavouring to convert a centre from Durrant, came into collision with the custodian, receiving such a shaking that he did not recover from it until long after the interval.

Still, Luton were having the better of the play, and from a middle by Durrant, Brown headed just over the bar. Two or three attempts by Watford had a look of smartness about them, and then the homeaters had a rather lucky escape, Nidd, in trying to clear, dropping the ball into his own goal, and Waller having to keep his wits about him in order to save.

Several of Mr. Whittaker's offside decisions at this stage of the game were decidedly open to question, but eventually Luton became dangerous from a free kick by Lindsay, Waller giving a corner. This was splendidly placed by Durrant, but Watford cleared, and cleared again when Durrant, being placed in possession by Blessington, raced down the field and put in a fine centre.

This was the last thing of note before the interval, and the teams changed ends with honours easy. So far, the game had been a very good one, though on the run of the play, Luton ought to have obtained the lead, having had several chances, whereas Watford had never looked really dangerous.

The second half opened with free kicks, one for a foul by Lyons, and the other for hands against White, and then Durrant got away, but was given offside. The Watford backs were now more than a trifle shaky, and Cother on several occasions, remained up the field in order to put the Luton forwards offside. At length, Durrant got the ball from a bad kick by Cother, and sent in a hot shot, which Waller saved at the expense of a corner. Colvin placed, and Durrant hit the upright. A little later, Brown experienced terribly hard luck with a shot which just shaved the post.

Then disaster overtook Luton in an extraordinary manner. Watford went away on the left, and Chalmers, sending the ball forward, found himself with Lindsay to beat. Ord ran out, and Lindsay left it to him, but Roger stopped dead, and Chalmers, just taking the ball by him, had nothing to do but to touch it into an empty goal.

I have seen a good many soft things scored, but I cannot remember one quite so soft as this. It seemed entirely due to an error of judgment, or rather two errors, on the part of Ord, who ought not to have run out in the first instance, but who, having made the plunge, certainly should not have stopped midway. Of course, the home spectators were highly delighted, and began already to see visions of passing into the next round.

Only seven minutes of the second half had elapsed, and the Luton men in the brief interval for reflection, evidently made up their minds that there was plenty of time to save the position, for they went at it hammer and tongs, giving their opponents a rare chiveying. A foul against Hawkes gave Watford momentary relief, but Luton returned to the attack, and Blessington, receiving from a throw-in, dribbled the ball through, and scored with a grand shot, which went in at the top corner, quite out of Waller's reach.

The equalising goal came three minutes after the first, and this time the cheering came only from the Luton portion of the spectators, and the St. Albans people, who, owing to old rivalry, are never so pleased as when seeing Watford's number taken down. Again, play was started, again Luton swept up the field, and once more the Watford backs were seen to be a bit reckless, one of them giving a corner. This was placed by Colvin, Durrant returned the ball to the mouth of goal, and Brown screwed it in, scoring what proved to be the winning point.

Really, one never knows what is going to happen in football. Here were two teams who had been striving ineffectually for the mastery during the three-quarters of an hour of the first half, and then within less than twelve minutes of changing ends each obtained the lead in turn.

After the return to the half-way line, Watford attacked, and Ord had to kick away. Luton retaliated, and Durrant, with an open goal, was chagrined to hear the whistle go for offside, but he could not resist taking his shot, and struck the bar. Following upon some delay caused by the bursting of the ball and the securing of another, Colvin obtained a corner, and this led to another, which was placed behind.

Lindsay next conceded Watford a similar luxury, and Chalmers placing nicely, the ball went out to Nidd, who shot over, the leather

just touching one of the Luton players in transit and involving another corner, but this Roland Brown placed behind. A foul by White for pushing gave Watford a further chance, and Chalmers got in a beautiful shot, which Ord kicked out.

Colvin showed up at the other end, but only to be given offside, and quite a series of free kicks enabled Watford to hover in the neighbourhood of the Luton goal. Nothing came of their efforts, however, and Luton, making a vigorous response, practically monopolised the play to the end, but the only outcome was an offside goal, scored by Brown. Once during the closing stages of the game, Watford had an opening, Harvey and Lyons threatening to run clean through, but at the very moment when a flying shot might have done the trick, Harvey passed out to the right, the Luton defenders were able to get back, and the opportunity was lost.

The game all through was of a pretty interesting character, and thanks in some measure, perhaps, to the excellent behaviour of the crowd, there was a pleasing absence of roughness, which has characterised some previous encounters. Luton were decidedly the better team, and had their efforts been rewarded by one or two more goals, it would have been no more than they deserved.

The Luton team, by the way, are entitled to the very greatest credit for their strenuous work, be it in friendly, in League match, or in Cup-tie. There has never been a period in the history of the Club when the players have worked more enthusiastically, and seeing that there are now no bonuses, I think it speaks volumes in the men's favour.

On Saturday, there was not a weak spot in the team. Ord, apart from his one mistake, did the little that was required of him in good style, and the backs were both sound, though the bulk of the work fell to Lindsay, the Watford left wing requiring much more looking after than the right. All three halves did well, White showing very marked improvement upon his form of the previous week. He rendered capital service on this occasion. Hawkes, as usual, played a wonderfully cool and effective game, and Williams, after a little want of success at the start, settled down to hard and useful work.

All the forwards were in first-rate trim, and I was very glad indeed to see Brown score, for he went out every ounce. But the whole five were in fine fettle, and were all equally deserving of praise. Tierney and Blessington have not played a better game this season. Colvin, of course, suffered from his shaking up, but he contrived to do some capital work nevertheless.

As to Watford, Chalmers was easily the best of the forwards, and I was sorry to see that our old friend Brown was the weakest. Roland, I am told, has not been giving satisfaction, and there was a question of playing an amateur named Wright in Saturday's match. Harvey proved himself a hard worker in the centre, but he was not brilliant. The half-backs played a useful game, Wragg, perhaps, being the best of the trio, and Cother was as dashing as useful at back. Waller gave a very good account of himself in goal, and made two or three fine saves. The refereeing on the whole was not bad, the only cause for complaint being that offside was given a little too frequently.

The gate on Saturday at Watford realised £144—a very satisfactory result indeed. What a lucky thing the venue was Watford instead of Luton, where fog reigned supreme. Over six hundred persons went from Luton by the L. and N.-W. excursion.

With many sensational headlines, the "Football Evening News" of Saturday last dished up for the benefit of its readers accounts of the behaviour of the crowd at the Southampton match at Luton, and a leading article, under the heading, "More Rowdyism," serves to admonish the crowd, threaten the Club, and expose the enthusiastic ignorance of the writer.

The article is couched in the following terms:—Luton is a place where the fair and manly English sport of football is never likely to flourish. Once upon a time, and that not so very long ago, the game had a firm hold upon the affections of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the little town in Bedfordshire. It still retains its grip, but not for good. Certain

Luton folks who have fallen under the fascinations of this wonderful, rejuvenating game have gone so in a fit of passionate blindness. They have given all of their heart but none of their reason to the sport. Temper and ignorance rule where only experience, wedded to intelligence, ought to away. Football Luton, or at least a certain part of it, has disgraced itself again. This time its offence is peculiarly repugnant, for it has endeavoured to heap insult upon the head of one of the most brilliantly versatile athletes our race has ever produced.

As a type of physical perfectness, grace, and power, Mr. Fry has, by his deeds in the field, earned for himself the right to the respect and homage of his fellows. He is a great athlete—one of the greatest that has ever been—and, as such, one would think that every lover of manliness and physical strength and courage would ungrudgingly do him honour and show respect for his name.

A large number of the followers of football in Luton displayed but scant regard for the great athletic eminence of Mr. Fry on Saturday last. They were dissatisfied with something he did, and they hooted him right heartily, not only while the game was in progress, but afterwards, and almost until the moment he left the town. Mr. Fry bore himself bravely through it all, and of those who witnessed the outburst of churlishness and rowdyism, he was perhaps the least affected. The event constitutes another item on the register of the misdeeds of a certain section of the Luton football crowd, and with the others it may rise up in evidence against them one of these fine days.

There can be no possible justification for an attack upon a gentleman of Mr. Fry's eminence and accomplishments. Apart altogether from our personal knowledge of Mr. Fry, nothing could lead us to believe that a man with such a wonderful reputation to preserve would be guilty of anything unbecoming a gentleman and a player. Had the demonstration against Mr. Fry stopped short on the field of play, the matter might have been passed over with but trifling notice. It was made the pretext for a display of hooliganism long after the match, however, and, as such, words are not sufficiently strong to condemn it. Luton footballers have time and again been warned against this high-handed rowdyism, but apparently they are determined to stick to the foolish and unmanly course. It matters not to them that their town is regarded by a large number of referees as a place to be avoided, or that the penalty for perseverance in their evil ways may ultimately be complete suspension of the game, in its more important aspect, in the district. It would, indeed, be hard if all the precious time, money, and brains that have gone to the upbuilding of the Luton Town Club were to be sacrificed in order to purge away the sin of an ignorant, senseless, passionate few. If ever the Football Association should see fit to interfere once again with the Luton mob, as distinguished from the genuine lovers of the game in the town, it is as certain as day that the punishment will not be lenient. If football is to be a reproach rather than a credit to the real sportsmanship of Luton, it were far better that it died the death without further ado.

The article is clearly based, not upon knowledge, but upon the writer's gratuitous assumptions. "Nothing could lead us to believe," he says, any ill concerning Mr. Fry, and at the same time it is very evident that nothing could lead him to believe any good concerning Luton. Still, I am not disposed to enter into argument with the writer; I simply reproduce the article to show spectators what kind of reputation the Club and the town are saddled with as a consequence of their senseless behaviour.

In one thing the writer of the article referred to is perfectly correct. There is no doubt whatever that should a disturbance arise on any occasion, and lead to a report to the Association, it will inevitably mean the death of the Club, as the directors are certainly not in a position to face a term of suspension. I hope spectators will bear this in mind and keep their feelings under control.

I have received the following letter on the subject:—"Dear Sir,—Pardon my liberty in enclosing a cutting from last Saturday's "Evening News" Football Edition. I think the writer is very partial and one-sided. The tone of his remarks seem to imply that he would be glad if Luton football would go under altogether. He seems to be making a mountain out of a molehill. I don't believe in hooting anybody. I like to see the game played without any inter-

ference at all from spectators. There is certainly a section of the crowd whose language and behaviour would suit a taproom better than a football field. But really, Mr. Editor, the gentleman in the "Evening News and Post" is too severe in his remarks. I thought I must trouble you, Mr. Editor, because I know if you think we deserve it you won't be afraid to say so.—I am, sir, yours respectfully, SPECTATOR."

I notice that Southampton allege that seven of their players were injured in the match at Luton, and that was the reason they had to play so many Reserves in the Western League match at Millwall on Monday. The curious thing is that every one of the injured men was well enough to take part in the Southern League match on Saturday. And, "curiouser and curiouser," is the well-known fact that Southampton takes very little interest in the Western League and a lot in the Southern. Still, it's too bad to throw all the responsibility on Luton.

Dear me. They said ping-pong, and shouted hurrahs at the result of our Town Club's play on Saturday last. But wait until they have all seen the grand show of Boots and Shoes at Freeman, Hardy, and Willis, 38, George-street, Luton; 2 to 1 they will all buy a pair. Their goods are cheaper and wear better than anyone else's in the town.—[ADVT.]

As everybody in the town knows, the atmospheric conditions here on Saturday were not favourable to a display of football, especially from the spectators' point of view. The Reserves had a fixture in the South-Eastern League with Queen's Park Rangers Reserves, and no doubt a very interesting match would have resulted had it not been for the fog fiend.

Both teams turned out, and a little after the appointed time the game was commenced. It was impossible to follow the play, for one could not see more than fifteen yards, and could not catch more than a momentary glimpse of a player as he appeared like a phantom in the distance. After the game had been in progress a few minutes one of the visiting forwards shouted to his comrades that he had scored a goal, and the ball was found in the net, but how it got there neither Goodge nor any of the home players seemed to know.

A goal was awarded, and in the course of subsequent play Dimmock got possession and drove the ball home, but he was adjudged to be offside. After the game had been in progress thirteen minutes the referee decided to stop the play. The Luton team was:—Goodge; Street and Hall; Garrett, Farr, and Sapwell; Plummer, Hawkes, Moody, Everitt, and Dimmock. Next Saturday the Reserves are due at Leyton, Essex, in a guarantee match.

It is worthy of note that Messrs. Sale and Co. had the distinction of making known the result of the Cup match at Watford within seven minutes of the finish of the game, and nearly three-quarters of an hour before telegraphed results arrived in Luton last Saturday. The result was telephoned from the Exchange at Watford direct to Messrs. Sale and Co., and when the result was shown in their George-street window a cheer went up. Needless to say, the window was for some time the centre of attraction. Messrs. Sale and Co. inform us that they have been appointed sole agents for the Humber Co. for Luton next season.

Mr. C. Green, the secretary of the Luton Club, has received a letter from Mr. C. B. Fry, in which that gentleman says: "The courteous expression of regret for the behaviour of the spectators at Luton tendered me by your directors is, as far as I am concerned, quite unnecessary. I don't see how your directors can control the character of the Luton spectators, and I am quite sure they were even more upset than anyone else at the annoyance to which I was subjected."

Mr. Fry adds the very true remark that such conduct is much more likely to do harm to the Luton players than to visiting sides, and personally, I think that on the occasion referred to, the Luton men were greater sufferers than their opponents. The directors, however, are fully determined to put a stop to it, and in future policemen will be on duty with strict orders to make an example of any offenders.