

FOOTBALL

LUTON AND THE CUP.

DEFEAT OF QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS.

ACCIDENT TO COLLINS.

On yet another occasion the Luton players have become champions of the division of the Association Cup competition in which they are included. The victory this year has been obtained at the expense of Queen's Park Rangers, who had been regarded by many as having an excellent chance of emerging from the qualifying contest as divisional champions. The "blues" obtained choice of grounds, however, and to that fact must be attributed the success of Luton. The game was splendidly contested, and was closer than the score appears to indicate, though it must be conceded that on the day's play the winners were the better team all round. The afternoon was fine and there was a very fair attendance. Taking into account the fact that some hundreds of spectators came down from the Metropolis, however, the "gate" cannot be regarded as a good one, for only about £96 was taken. The visitors were understood to be at full strength, there being two changes in the team as compared with that which represented the Rangers in the previous month at Luton—Bowman at right half, and Seeley at outside left. The homesters were deprived by indisposition of the services of Williams, and accordingly R. Hawkes, who has been performing splendidly at half-back for the Reserves this season, was given his chance at left half. That he acquitted himself thoroughly well none who was present will be disposed to deny. It was an interesting coincidence that the half-back trio was composed entirely of local lads.

The teams were:—

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; F. Hawkes, White and R. Hawkes; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, Tierney and Colvin.

Queen's Park Rangers: Collins; Newlands and Aston; Bowman, Freeman and Keech; Stewart Pryce, Miller, McQueen and Seeley.

Referee: Mr. G. Landragin (London).

There was a stiff breeze blowing and the Rangers obtained the assistance of this by winning the toss. The locals went off well at the outset, but were soon driven back, and a foul against White soon afterwards enabled the visitors to advance still further. A free-kick for off-side checked them, and then Colvin put in a capital run which wound up with a well-deserved corner. Durrant was badly tripped hereabouts. It must be confessed that the strangers had settled down earlier than the locals and that they were having the best of the exchanges. There was a good deal of erratic kicking, though the defence on both sides was fairly sound. A first-rate shot from the foot of Pryce was cleverly dealt with by Ord. Following hands against the Rangers, the Lutonians advanced and a soft attempt by Tierney was easily saved, the home keeper shortly afterwards disposing of a good long one at the other end. A beauty from Durrant just skimmed the bar. First-rate passing was exhibited on the visitor's right, and then fouls in rapid succession against both sets of rivals were duly punished. By this time the contestants were thoroughly on their mettle and they were encouraged by the enthusiastic shouts of their supporters. Excitement ruled high and the visiting spectators did plenty in the way of shouting. When danger threatened at the home end White came to the rescue in first-rate style. Durrant was pulled up for off-side when the home forwards had worked their way into a good position, following which Tierney sent high over the bar. The visitors subsequently indulged in a very hot attack, but they were unable to beat the home defenders, who were in capital fettle. Following good attempts by Pryce, White and Brown, a grand exhibition was given by Ord. He stopped a very hot one from Seeley and fell, but recovered quickly enough to deal with the return shot, a corner being all the advantage that the Rangers secured. Once again Ord was stoutly tested, and Lindsay came to the rescue and headed away in capital style. Colvin only just failed with a long-range effort, and it was somewhat of a pity that Blessington got in the way of a long, fast shot just afterwards, for the inside right was off-side and the attempt might have proved successful had he not intercepted the ball. The "blues" were now having a good deal the best of matters, and shortly before the interval Durrant became responsible for a shot that gave Collins no chance whatever. It is true that the custodian touched the ball and so deflected it from its course a trifle; but the outside right had put plenty of powder into his kick and the ball curled into the net. This success of the homesters was the signal for the customary demonstration, the delight of the on-lookers being signified by a more than usual ear-splitting yell of triumph. This manifestation of delight was renewed just afterwards, when the arrival of the interval found the teams in these positions:

LUTON, 1; RANGERS, 0.

With the wind in their favour after the resumption and with a goal in hand, the chances of Luton were regarded as very good when the game was recommenced. The home forwards early indicated that they had made up their mind to win, and for a space their midfield play was unexceptionable. Brown went through well on one occasion and a corner ensued; from this the ball was splendidly placed and Tierney headed over. The Rangers' supporters on the grandstand became a bit obstreperous at this stage and varied their speeches to the players by addressing an observation to one of the linesmen which he resented. The referee stopped the game and admonished the offenders. The "blues" attacked strongly and after a little time Durrant raised the siege by sending wide of the mark. The outside right was again in evidence shortly afterwards, and, following a well-judged shot by his comrade, Blessington tested Collins with a beauty. Then a suspension of the game was necessitated by an unfortunate but purely accidental mishap to Collins, the Rangers' goalkeeper. That player was endeavouring to clear from a very determined attack when Brown charged him. The custodian managed to get rid of the ball, but he fell against the goalpost and appeared to be slightly stunned. He was carried from the field and was medically attended, but after about a quarter of an hour he was able to resume, though it was evident that he had not fully recovered. Of course the Rangers' supporters talked in the usual way about "dirty Luton" and the rest of the libellous stuff we are accustomed to, and, equally of course, there was no foundation for the statement, for the affair was a sheer accident. During Collins's absence his place in goal was taken by Aston, and the Rangers played the one back game. This necessarily militated against the "blues," whose forwards were frequently pulled up for getting off-side; indeed, it seemed impossible for them to get away. To speak perfectly frankly, it seemed a good thing for Luton that Collins came out again, for there was at one time a prospect of the visitors equalising at least. Play during the remainder of the game was marred by fouling, and that the Rangers were the principal offenders is not open to doubt. A good deal of opprobrium was undeservedly heaped upon Lindsay and the referee came in for plenty of adverse criticism—because he could not see eye to eye with supporters of the losers and acted fairly towards the Lutonians. The fouling by the Rangers found one of its early victims in Brown, this offence being especially nasty. Aston dealt splendidly with a good attempt by Durrant, and when the corner-kick had been accurately placed by the locals the deputy "goalie" gave a further sample of his quality. With the return of Collins there came a cessation of the monotonous succession of decisions for off-side, and the leaders were enabled to display to advantage. A dreadful miss was blamed to Durrant, who when the ball was passed to him in front of an open goal sent yards above the bar. Next Brown received from Tierney and, going right through, scored in clever fashion with a shot that gave Collins no chance whatever of saving. This was regarded as the winning point, and so it proved. Brown had a point disallowed. In the course of another sturdy assault Colvin, Durrant and Blessington were responsible for good attempts. Towards the end the Rangers struggled gamely to retrieve their fortunes and the game became very rough. The end came, however, with the totals still standing thus:

LUTON, 2; RANGERS, 0.