

The English Cup.

MILLWALL v. LUTON.

Played at Millwall on Saturday. Result:—

Millwall 3 goals.

Luton nil.

Teams:—

Millwall—Sutcliffe; Easton and Storrier; Riley, Bell, and Morris; Moran, Astley, Hulse, Jones, and Watkins.

Luton—Frail; Lindsay and Williams; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Durrant, Blessington, Moody, Gall, and Allsopp.

Referee, G. H. Muir (Southampton).

At last the long-looked-for Cup-tie with Millwall is over. It had been thought that the Dockers had a very good chance of getting into the second round, but they surprised even their most ardent supporters by winning by the decisive margin of three goals to nil. As a matter of fact, Luton had nearly as much of the play as their opponents, who, in my opinion, might have been satisfied, on the run of the game, with a win of something like two goals to one. They really did not deserve more.

The great difference between the teams was among the forwards. The Millwall men played the open game, relying very much on the wingers, and they always showed plenty of bustle and dash. They worked together extremely well, and presented a striking contrast to the opposing quintette, who did not combine at all well and were very weak in front of goal.

Add to this the fact that every man on the Millwall side went about his work with an intense earnestness, and as though he was confident his side would win, and you have the secret of the Dockers' success. Some Luton people who saw the match are of opinion that in the field the Light Blues were as clever as their opponents, but while I hardly agree with that view, I certainly think that on the run of the play during the first half Luton deserved to have crossed over on equal terms.

The first goal of the match was scored by Watkins about nine minutes from the start. The tricky outside-left had just previously centred when it seemed that he had a good chance of scoring, and the ball went out to the opposite wing, from whence, after a little scrambling play, it was returned, and Watkins practically had only Frail to beat. The sphere went across the goal and scraped the inside of the post as it went in.

Soon afterwards both Jones and White attempted to head the ball at the same time, and the result was a collision. The Luton centre-half was able to resume playing, but Jones was carried off the field, returning about ten minutes later. From now until the interval Luton forced the play, and Blessington in particular ought to have scored.

But when the second goal was scored ten minutes after the interval there was no hope for Luton, and the subsequent exchanges were shorn of a certain degree of interest. To make the game perfectly safe, Millwall added a third about a quarter of an hour from the finish. I do not grudge them the victory, for they were the better team, but I do say they were lucky to win in so decisive a fashion.

The best shot of the match was sent in soon after the resumption by Bob Hawkes. It went through a crowd of players, but luckily for Millwall, Sutcliffe's legs happened to be in the way. Luton's fate was sealed almost directly afterwards, Jones putting the ball past Frail. I am strongly of opinion that the inside-left was off-side when he received from Watkins, and a good many Millwall people thought so too.

The third goal might almost be said to have been a gift, for it was the result of a free kick given against Williams for hands. Easton placed nicely, and Hulse jumped up, the ball going off his head into the net. The closing stages were somewhat marred by the bad feeling exhibited by Durrant and Storrier, the Luton man being the more blameable of the two.

If I were asked to name the three best men on the Luton side I should say Allsopp, R. Hawkes, and Lindsay. The outside-left has been showing splendid form in recent matches, and it is a pity that he has not a good inside man to work with. A London paper on Monday credited Bob Hawkes with being the best half on the field, and he certainly got through a large amount of work in fine style. Lindsay performed as well as usual, and it was a treat to witness the tussles between him and Watkins.

Williams was rather weak at left back. Frail's frailty was not apparent, for he only left his goal on one or two occasions, and then it was the best thing he could have done. White was as indefatigable as ever at centre-half. By the way, I have heard that he lost a tooth as the result of his collision with Jones. Somehow or other, I think the right-wingers have been a little bit off colour lately.

There was not much to choose between the Millwall forwards, for every man Jack did his duty and did it well. The half-backs supported them in good style, and the backs were very strong, especially Storrier, who was hurt towards the finish. Sutcliffe was as invincible as ever. This was at least the fourth time Luton have played against him without having scored.

Of course, the most satisfactory thing about the match, looked at from a Luton point of view, was the gate, which amounted to £270, the number of persons who paid for admission being 8,825. It should be mentioned that the Luton Volunteer Band played a selection of music during the interval. I noticed that they had been advertised as "The Luton Band," a description which the Red Cross might not be disposed to agree with. The Great Northern excursion was fairly well patronised, the excursionists probably numbering between three and four hundred.

The result of recent matches generally, and of the Cup-tie in particular, shows that Luton will not do any good until they get an improvement in the forwards, and to do this they can't afford to tamper with their defence. Personally, I believe that if Burbage had been taken in hand six weeks ago, when I suggested it, the position of affairs might have been very different now, because on the form he showed when he played for us previously, he is just the sort of man we want in the front string.

Of course, he may have gone off; that I cannot say, but seeing that his signature had been obtained to a Southern League form, there would have been no harm in giving him a trial. We don't want a very clever man, but one who has an idea that the object of playing is to get goals, and that the best way of getting them is to go for them. A centre-forward with speed, weight, and dash, would do wonders for the Luton team.

In the replayed Cup-ties yesterday, Tottenham Hotspur accomplished a brilliant performance by winning at West Bromwich by 2 goals to nil, Southampton made another draw against Notts County, but at Reading the Biscuiteers were beaten by Notts Forest by 6 goals to 3, after playing extra time.