

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

[BY "SPECTATOR".]

FOOTBALL.

THE ENGLISH CUP.

AN INGLORIOUS DISPLAY.

LUTON JUST BEAT HITCHIN.

Hitchin were drawn against Luton in the English Cup and coming first out of the hat had choice of ground. Luton guaranteed them that their half share of the gate, if they consented to play at Luton, should not be less than £25, and the Herta club accepted this arrangement. Accordingly Hitchin figured on the Dunstable-road ground, Luton. The match was considered a foregone conclusion, and it was only a question of how many goals Luton could score. That, at least, was the opinion on Saturday morning, but there was a rude awakening in the afternoon.

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The following is the way the teams lined out:—

LUTON.

Thompson

Bennett

McEwen

F. Hawkes

White

R. Hawkes

Eaton

Turner

Cox

Storey

Allsopp

O

Taylor

Payne

Barker

Cannon

Pearce

Hales

Smith

Stimpson

Allen

Jeakings

Cooper

HITCHIN.

Referee, Mr. A. Avery (London): Luton linesman, Mr. G. Wistow Walker.

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The Hitchin captain had choice of positions, and decided to kick from the railway end. The opening play was rather tame, but Hitchin forced the play and were soon down at the Luton goal. Thompson cleared very finely. The visitors were determined to force matters, and came again in most approved fashion. The Luton defenders, except McEwen, appeared to do little to stop them. Thompson, however, repelled one shot, and then Taylor fastened on the ball and placed it safely in the net. Hitchin were one up after a short time. Without wishing to discount the visitors' performance, whose efforts fully deserved this recognition, I must say that Pearce, before he centred, appeared to be off-side.

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The spectators smiled all round at this early success, for it was considered that Luton had given them this goal and would soon run up a score. They certainly looked like equalising, as from a run down Eaton centred and Cox headed the ball into Cooper's hands. F. Hawkes, in kicking at the ball at the same time as an opponent, got his leg hurt and was for a time a mere looker on. A foul against Luton spoiled a good attempt, for Allsopp shot the ball into the net. From the kick Allsopp broke away and centred, and Eaton put wide. A corner for Luton was devoid of result, and then Cox foolishly fouled Smith. Again Luton went away on the right, but Jeakings came to the rescue very finely and cleared. The ex-Luton player by a subterfuge deceived Storey in first-class style and succeeded in getting the ball and returning it.

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Cox again was prominent with a foul of the most stupid description. Luton forced the play again and Eaton put over. Hitchin came away with a dash and Payne had the hardest of luck in a shot which grazed the post. Jeakings, who was playing a magnificent game, once more relieved matters. On the opposite side of the field a foul was given against Eaton, who threw a Hitchin man over with a whack. Taylor broke away on the right and centred, but McEwen cleared and Allsopp made the pace without effect. Storey was playing a very poor game being robbed by Jeakings several times. Just before half-time F. Hawkes sent in a fine shot, but Storey headed over. At half-time the score stood:

HITCHIN 1, LUTON 0.

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Luton were the first to emerge from the dressing-room after the interval, and they soon made tracks for the Hitchin goal. Bob Hawkes put in a splendid shot but Cooper saved. Storey had a chance but placed over the bar. The ball struck the cross bar of the Hitchin goal and rebounded into play and eventually coming to Bob Hawkes he shot hard and the goalkeeper could only divert the ball over the bar. A corner for Luton followed. This was useless. A moment later Storey had a good chance of equalising but shot very badly. There was general disgust at Luton's performance, and a Hitchin spectator remarked: "We came here to see scientific football; there's a specimen."

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The Luton goal had a very narrow shave just afterwards. Hitchin pressed, and there was no one between one of the Hitchin forwards and Thompson, and a goal must have resulted had not White kicked behind and given a corner. Time wore on, and still the equalising goal did not result. Turner, who was the best and most successful of the forwards, at length put in a fine piece of individual work, and at last scored with a good shot. Before, there was a feeling of anxiety, but now that the goal had been scored there was a spirit of disgust that it had been so long delayed. The play of the Luton men was shocking up to this point, but this success enlivened matters.

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The winning goal was got by Storey, who ran down "on his own" and scored. An exciting incident occurred when Thompson was penalised for holding the ball close on the goal-line. The Luton men crowded round the goal, and successfully kept the ball out, though one shot from Jeakings appeared to be cleared with difficulty. Thompson was forced to give a corner. This was not turned to account, and the whistle signalled time soon afterwards with the following score:—

LUTON, 2; HITCHIN, 1.

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