

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR v. LUTON.

DEFEAT BY THE ODD GOAL.

Played on the Tottenham ground on Saturday.
Result:

Tottenham Hotspur 1 goal.
Luton 0

Teams:—Luton: Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Warner, McDonald, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

Tottenham: Eggett; Tait and Watson; Hughes, Bull, and Morris; Murray, Glen, V. J. Woodward, Kyle, and Walton.

Referee, Mr. F. Bye.

Luton are always a popular team in London and the fact that they had been doing so well this season, that the Spurs were only second to them on the League table, and that the homesters were playing the famous amateur, Vivian Woodward, for the first time this winter, all helped to make the game the most attractive of any played in the Metropolis. A crowd of 20,000 had been expected, but in the end every available place on the stands was occupied, and the crowd were wedged in all round the rails so that it looked as if the utmost capabilities of the place were taxed. There is no doubt that there were fully 25,000 people present.

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The visiting team had brought with them a whole army of supporters, not only from Luton but from the entire district surrounding the Borough. Every excursion train on both Midland and Great Northern Railways was filled, indeed, in some cases uncomfortably crowded, and it is believed that the complement of the visitors' supporters passed the thousand mark. The various routes from the Metropolis to the ground were all freely used for hours previous to the match and the numberless companies of people proceeding towards the 'Spurs headquarters was liberally supplied with straw hat workers from South Bedfordshire and even the neighbouring county of Hertfordshire.

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Tottenham kicked off against a slight breeze. Play opened as it continued during the whole of the first half—in give and take fashion. The 'Spurs worked their way down the field, but White brought them to a momentary standstill by handling. Tait placed the free-kick skilfully and Glen found himself face to face with the first real opportunity of the match, but shot wide. All of the players seemed to be infected with the prevailing excitement and the work in the opening stages was unsteady and undecided. Tottenham were the least affected by the feeling of the crowd, but as the Luton halves began to settle down, their forwards began to appreciate their difficulties. White seemed to be getting the measure of Woodward, but the amateur proved to be biding his time.

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Warner with some good play gave McDonald an opening which he was not slow to perceive, but put in a rattling shot which was a few inches too high. This was the first really good attempt in the match and put the visiting supporters on good terms with themselves, a feeling which was increased next minute when a clever centre by Barnes found Brown off-side. Luton kept up the attack and Brown twice had the misfortune to narrowly miss the goal. But he was being far too well watched to have time to steady himself, and those dangerous shots of his, which were so well-known to the 'Spurs followers, were not quite so surely aimed as they might have been.

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Luton were undoubtedly having the better of matters just now, and were subjecting the home backs to a trying ordeal. One of "Bob" Hawkes' terrific long drives appeared to be travelling straight into the net, but shaved the post. But that portion of the crowd which favoured the visitors were quite satisfied, for it was evident to the greenest novice in the game that if Luton could only keep up their present tactics a victory was certain. But, alas for their hopes, Tottenham began to settle down and in a smart breakaway, McCurdy resorted to the dangerous expedient of kicking the ball to Platt, to avert defeat from the foot of the determined Kyle.

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A short period of pressure by Tottenham was succeeded by some aggression by Luton, but the home defence seemed to possess an intuition which gave them the opportunity of intercepting the visitors' passes, and play was gradually sent back into the neighbourhood of the Luton goal, where Glen put in a hot shot which was just sailing beneath the bar when Platt knocked it behind. A capitally-placed flag-kick was successfully negotiated, but Tait returned and an epidemic of miskicking almost spelt defeat for the Lutonians, until a sturdy clearance by Blackett saved the situation.

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Just before the interval Woodward bored his way through the defence in very dangerous fashion, but was brought down in front of the Luton goal by McCurdy. It appeared as if the amateur was sent to the ground by means of legitimate hustling, but the referee thought he had been tripped up and awarded a penalty. Tait took the kick and shot hard and straight, but Platt's movements were as quick as a cat's and he saved close to the post in clever fashion. This was an appropriately exciting finish to an even half, and the players returned to the dressing-rooms for their well-earned rest with no score against either team.

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The play of the second period was not so level, but was more interesting and speedy. Luton gave every indication at the outset of being possessed of a determination to gain the lead, but the 'Spurs' tactics were more scientific and finished and were almost brilliant by contrast with the more ordinary work of the visitors. But the defence of the Town was as certain as ever, and the trend each movement of the opposition seemed to be known to them even before its initiation. Every breakaway by the home eleven looked very dangerous.

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A capital shot by "Bob" Hawkes was saved by the goalie just beneath the cross-bar and a minute after Watson presented Barnes with an abortive corner. In the last stages of the game Kyle and Woodward changed places though for what reason it is hard to guess. Their comrades made desperate efforts to pierce Luton's stone-wall defence and during the last quarter-of-an-hour they held the upper hand almost incessantly. The change in the forward-line, seemed to bring them nearer the desired end.

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Their pressure on the Luton goal, however, was hotter than ever, and play was very exciting. Kyle on one occasion forced his way past the backs but when within a few yards of the goal Platt came out, collared him by the shoulders, and fell over with him, while McCurdy cleared. There were immediate appeals for a penalty-kick, but the referee, fortunately for Luton, had not seen the offence, and play proceeded. But the crowd was by this time incensed with Platt and hooted him vigorously.

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One spectator was cowardly enough to throw a stone at the custodian, and the referee, on his attention being called to the matter, stopped the game and addressed a few words of advice to the spectators standing on the back of the goal in general and the missile-thrower in particular. Glen forced a corner off White, and Murray took the flag-kick. He placed it well in the goal-mouth and Woodward's head sent it into goal amid a scene of the wildest excitement. A minute later the whistle brought play to a conclusion, with Tottenham deservedly winners.

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The result was a fair indication of the play. In the first-half neither team could claim any superiority, but in the second period Tottenham's superior science and finished combination won them the upper-hand. It was certainly unlucky for Luton that their opponents should score only a minute before time, after the defence had stood such hard pressure unyieldingly, but Luton were somewhat to blame, for some of the forwards in the final stages did the work of halves, rather than endeavour to breakaway.

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On the Luton side Blackett gave an especially fine exhibition. His play was cool, clean and calculating and he excellently covered any of the mistakes of his fellows. McCurdy was also good, but not so brilliant as his companion. Platt's work was on the whole excellent although he misjudged the header from Woodward which scored. The halves were fairly safe, but "Bob" Hawkes played finely. Of the forwards McDonald played the hardest. Brown's tactics were lackadaisical, and several times it ap-

peared as though he might have forced his way up to goal if he had exerted himself. Neither Barnes, Pickering, nor Warner were in their usual fettle.

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On the Tottenham side the players were uniformly good, though Woodward was the mainstay of the team. It is doubtful whether he has ever given a more excellent exhibition. The halves were untiring, Bull being especially prominent. The backs left nothing to chance and tackled and cleared very coolly. Eggett accomplished some good work in goal.

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