

LUTON v. SUNDERLAND.

TOWN PLAY A FINE GAME.

AND ARE UNLUCKY TO DRAW.

Luton suffered very hard luck in their tie in the second round of the English Cup competition last Saturday with Sunderland. On the play they deserved the lead but had to be content with a draw:—

LUTON NIL.

SUNDERLAND NIL.

The teams turned out as follow:—

LUTON.—Platt, Hogg, McCurdy, F. Hawkes, White, R. Hawkes, Murphy, Gittins, Brown, Fitzpatrick and Barnes.

SUNDERLAND.—Ward, Rhodes, Watson, Tait, McGhie, McConnell, J. E. Raine, Gemmell, Macintosh, Holley and Bridgett.

Referee: Mr. J. MASON (of Burslem).

Linesmen: Messrs. J. T. Rowbottom (Notts.), and H. C. Platt (London).

The draw with one of the premier teams of the North was so popular in Luton and district that the fixture had been the chief topic of conversation for the past fortnight. The decision of the directors to consider their supporters' wishes and decline all offers from the North to waive choice of ground gave very great satisfaction and the followers received the announcement that the gate would be 1s. and the prices for seats on the stand would be increased accordingly without a murmur.

A very large attendance was anticipated, and excursions from places in the whole surrounding district were largely patronised. The result was the numbers reached 10,500, so that the ground was only just comfortably filled and the receipts totalled roughly £570. The spectators assembled long before the time advertised for the kick-off and the Red Cross Band were in evidence, playing popular music before the players turned out.

Both teams had put in some conscientious work in preparation for the match. Sunderland journeyed to Hitchin on Thursday and stayed there until Saturday morning when they were driven into Luton. On Friday evening they were entertained at a smoking concert by the Hitchin F.C. Luton trained quietly at home, but had several walks to Harpenden. On Friday the routine was slackened somewhat and most of the playing members attended the Grand Theatre in the evening in order to witness the performance of the pantomime "Aladdin." In a song Miss Blanche Marion, who filled the title-role, endeavoured to tell the men how to win and, to the delight of the audience, picked out "Sandy" Brown and addressed her advice to him. Luton's colours, light blue, were prominent in the dresses of the performers.

Disappointment and dismay were caused in Luton on Saturday morning when it became known that Warner, the Town's star winger, had hurt his leg while training on the previous day and would be unable to turn out. The formation of the team selected had previously given rise to some criticism, it being felt that McDonald should have been given preference for the inside-right position instead of Gittins, but when the rumour of Warner's injury was confirmed, there were many gloomy faces. No one considered that with a weakened forward line Luton's prospects were at all hopeful.

The Town directors decided to put Murphy, the Irish International, in Warner's vacant place, and the Sunderland club were also unfortunate in having to leave out Hogg, their inside-left, in favour of Holley. The visitors turned out first in their smart red and white jerseys and were heartily cheered. Their reception, however, was eclipsed a minute later when Bob Hawkes appeared at the head of his team. The disparity in weight was very apparent, the muscular Sunderland men being considerably the heavier eleven.

Bob Hawkes was fortunate enough to win the toss, but there was little advantage to be gained either way. Macintosh set the ball rolling a few minutes before time. The Wearsiders set to work at once and at the start they showed up much more prominently than Luton. A mistake by Bob Hawkes looked very dangerous. Raine profited by it to get in a forward pass which Macintosh attempted to snap up, but Mr. Mason, who gave as fine an exhibition of capable refereeing as has ever been seen in Luton, at once pulled him up for offside. Undaunted, the Northerners returned to the attack and Gemmell went near to scoring from a middle by Raine, with a header which scraped the crossbar. The same two players were responsible for another neat piece of work from which the inside man put in a high dropping shot which Platt quickly disposed of.

Bob Hawkes, who was playing a very good game, gave to Brown, who was in a very good position, but the attentions of the Sunderland defence were so effective that he could do no good. The finest chance of the match fell to Luton, who should have scored early in the game. From a free-kick by McCurdy, Barnes received and, working in, appeared likely to put into the net, but to the surprise of most of the spectators, he put the ball across the goalmouth. Near the opposite post both Murphy and Gittins stood unwatched, but the leather flashed past them before they realised how promising was their opportunity.

For a few minutes Sunderland did their best to prove their skill but so well did the halves work that Hogg and McCurdy were never extended until White miskicked and one of the visiting forwards was penalised for fouling Hogg. Luton at once responded and Watson was fortunate to intercept a shot by Gittins. White pounced upon the ball a moment later and dropped it into the goalmouth, where Ward caught and cleared it. Raine, who was working in a lively fashion on the wing, transferred to Holley, who deceived several of his opponents, but shot just over the bar.

The understanding between Bob Hawkes, Barnes, Fitzpatrick and Brown was excellent, and by some very pretty combination they took the ball to the other end, where "Sandy" found the weight of the Sunderland backs operating against him sufficiently to prevent him from shooting. Disregarding the heaviness of their opponents and their readiness to bring it into play, the homesters' forwards at-

tacked again, but in a moment of excitement the Luton captain drove hard past the opposite post. Bob Hawkes's so-called "wandering" style of play which has caused so much trouble among the newspaper critics, was responsible for some of the finest defensive work of the match, and single-handed he accounted for a dangerous individual effort by the nippy Macintosh when, strictly speaking, he was out of his place. Indeed, either he or Fitzpatrick seemed to be just where they were wanted and delighted the crowd by their usefulness. The ex-soldier was in his finest form and played a very unselfish game with his partner that made the left wing especially dangerous. To Murphy, however, fell the honour of sending in the finest shot of the match—a magnificent attempt of his, right from the wing—being splendidly saved by Ward. The goalie's cleverness was the subject for comment a minute later when he fisted out a fast header by White from a flag-kick entrusted to Murphy. Luton were let off lightly a minute later when Bridgett, Sunderland's crack winger, put in a beautiful centre that Macintosh was just unable to get his foot to. Nothing loath, Bridgett tried again and this time Bob Hawkes managed to save defeat in a rather fluky and risky fashion by diverting the ball into Platt's hands. Fitzpatrick came into collision with a Sunderland player and came down upon the frozen, treacherous surface of the ground with such force that the game had to be halted while he received the attentions of Trainer Lawson. Although the plucky ex-soldier continued to play, he never shone so brilliantly after the accident as before.

Raine was determined to play up to his reputation and after beating McCurdy he essayed a very speedy shot that travelled across the mouth of goal and missed the goalpost by a shade. Still another opening was missed by Murphy, who failed to transfer an accurate centre from the left. Fred Hawkes dashed in and shot well, but found Ward fully alert. An exciting time in the Sunderland goal followed. During a time of very strenuous pressure Brown headed into the goalie's hands and a few moments later over the bar. At the other end Raine passed Bob Hawkes but had his shot intercepted by White. Half-time arrived with the score-sheet clean, but on the play Luton deserved a lead of a couple of goals.

After the restart play was not nearly so interesting or exciting as in the first moiety. Sunderland attacked and Bridgett began to show himself in his best light. Hogg, who was playing a particularly effective game, put paid to Sunderland's accounts twice in quick succession and sent the Luton forwards on a race to the other end. Brown appeared to be likely to get through on his own but Watson risked the disapprobation of the crowd and referee by grassing him in foul fashion. Mr. Mason awarded a free-kick which was easily disposed of by the visitors.

The official in charge did not notice an infringement by handling but the offence did not escape the attention of the nearest linesman, and he promptly communicated with the superior official, who immediately awarded another place-kick that proved ineffectual. Murphy, who was certainly not suffering from any lack of opportunities, missed another promising chance by centreing behind. In fruitless, for Raine spoilt matters for his team by getting offside. Barnes presented Murphy with the ball and the latter looked like retrieving his former mistakes until he came into conflict with one of the Sunderland defence. The Lutonian appeared to have forced a corner, but the referee decided otherwise. The Irish International got in some good work which was the means of the Town becoming aggressive a minute later, but Murphy was fouled. The victim of this ill-treatment gained a corner from the free-kick and took it himself, but the Sunderland forwards carried the ball out of danger.

Bridgett was in this half showing some of the form which gained his inclusion in the international trial match on the previous Monday, and his speedy, nippy work on the wing gave the Luton backs much worry. Platt brought off a marvellous save from Macintosh, who looked as though he had matters all his own way at the time. Luton settled down again and put in some sterling work in which they more than held their own, but the visiting backs allowed the forwards very little rope and tackled very capably. The home eleven deserved a penalty towards the close when McGhie handled just inside the penalty area without attracting the referee's attention. One of Bob Hawkes' favourite drives went wide of the post. A hard hustling game on a ground which spoilt the accuracy of play drew towards its conclusion with both sides working hard to gain the lead but no goals were scored and the result was a pointless draw.

To sum the run of the play up in a few words, it is only necessary to say that Luton should have won. They had more of the play in the neighbourhood of the goal than their opponents and obtained for themselves more and better openings. Had Warner been up to form, there is little doubt but that the home team would have won fairly easily. Of the men themselves, all did very well with the exception of Murphy.