

The Cup Competition.

LUTON v. SOUTHEND.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 1 goal.
Southend 1 goal.

Teams:—

Luton—Platt; McCurdy and Gregory; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. Hawkes; Stansfield, Haycock, Bradley, Moody, and Johnson.

Southend—Cotton; Thompson and Molyneux; Emery, Owen, and Blott; Birnie, Frost, Ronaldson, Wright, and Jack.

Referee, Mr. Burgess (Surrey).

Although the Cup-tie between Luton and Southend had been eagerly looked forward to, the attendance was hardly so large as at the Northampton match a week or two ago. There were probably as many Luton people on the ground on Saturday as on the previous occasion, but then Northampton brought about one thousand supporters, while Southend only brought a hundred.

Southend were at full strength, but Luton were dogged by the ill-fortune which has ever been their lot in connection with the national competition. Brown was unable to play on account of a kick over his ankle received in the mid-week match at Croydon. Menzies was suffering from a gathered toe, which kept him out of the team, and Haycock, although he turned out, was not in the best of health.

Stansfield was transferred from the left wing to the right, and Johnson, who had not played in the first team for about two months, was included at outside-left. Bradley occupied the centre-forward position, but he did not keep the line together well, and the changes had much to do with the result. Luton had the greater part of the play, and with more combination on the part of the forwards would have been victorious.

The Southend captain won the toss, and Ronaldson was the first player to get dangerous, a hard shot going wide. Moody then forced a corner for Luton, and Cotton fisted out in fine style. After Birnie had been given offside, Bradley forced the play, and the ball went out to Stansfield. He put across the mouth of goal, and Johnson kicked the ball on to the post, from which it rolled into the net.

This early success pleased the supporters of the home team—only five minutes had elapsed. Southend were soon acting on the aggressive, and Wright looked like getting through, but he was too well marked to have time to shoot properly, and the ball went wide. For the other side Stansfield made a good run, but he found a worthy opponent in Molyneux. The Luton outside-right came again, however, and Cotton saved, although he was fouled by Bradley.

Birnie next made the running, and Gregory kicked out. Then Thompson almost gave a corner in trying to clear a centre by Stansfield, the ball going out near the flag. From a corner conceded by Gregory and taken by Birnie, Ronaldson obtained possession and sent the ball rolling along the crossbar. Jack tried to improve the occasion, but after some exciting play the scene once more changed.

Johnson caught the eye with a fast run and passed to Bradley. Molyneux was close at hand, but his kick went in the wrong direction. Cotton, however, met the ball and cleared, although he might have been forgiven if he had been taken unawares. Wright equalised for Southend from a free kick for a foul by Jones. The Southend inside-left was dispossessed once but regained possession, and the ball glanced in off the bar.

Up to the present the exchanges had been fairly even, although Luton had had the better of matters in the first few minutes. Play was very fast, and neither side showed much science, the players sharing to some extent the excitement which prevailed among the spectators. The Luton backs were playing in grand style, and every one of the twenty-two men was doing his hardest for his side.

A free kick for Luton was taken by R. Hawkes, and Bradley sent over. Then Jack got away, but Gregory kicked out. A free kick for Southend was followed by a fine attempt by R. Hawkes, and Cotton cleared by putting well up the field. The visiting custodian also showed considerable smartness in punching away a minute later, when two or three forwards were in close attendance.

Hands by Gregory gave Southend another free kick, and a shot by Frost was saved by Platt when on the ground. Moody got in a good run, and finished by kicking wide. Ronaldson was making tracks for the home goal when he was tackled by Gregory. Both fell on the penalty line, but the referee evidently did not think a foul had been committed, for he allowed play to continue.

A minute later the spectators appealed for a penalty on account of what seemed to be a foul on Haycock. The referee, after consulting a linesman, gave a goal kick. Neither side was playing a rough game, but with all the men in real earnest it was hardly surprising that there was a fair number of free kicks. Luton were doing more attacking than Southend, but the home forwards did not combine so well as usual.

The best shot during this part of the game was made by McCurdy from long range, and the ball would have gone in if Cotton had not reached it near the post. A centre by Jack was well cleared by Platt. A good centre was put in by Stansfield for Luton, and Cotton just managed to punch away before he and Bradley fell in the goal.

At the interval the teams were on level terms, and although the spectators expected the home club to score again, it was recognised that the Southend players were out to win if it was humanly possible. As a matter of fact, the play in the second half resolved itself into a struggle between the Luton attack and the Southend defence, with an occasional breakaway on the part of the seashiders.

Luton sadly missed Menzies at centre-forward, Bradley failing to keep the forwards together properly, and at times paying much more attention to his opponents than the ball. The fact that the other forwards were not thoroughly used to each other also had something to do with their failure to press the attacks home, but chief credit went to Cotton and the two backs. Cotton, in particular, gave a splendid exhibition, his huge kicks being quite a feature of the match.

On one occasion, however, he only just managed to save a free kick taken by R. Hawkes. After Platt had saved from Birnie, Bradley looked like getting through. He made a fine run, and finished up with a hard cross shot. But Cotton's left hand met the ball, and the situation was saved. Within the next minute R. Hawkes hit the bar with a terrific drive, and Haycock shot over.

A corner taken by Birnie was not turned to account, but the Seashiders came again, and Gregory had to kick out. Then Moody hit the bar, and Molyneux almost put the ball through his own goal, but a corner resulted. From this Cotton brought off a magnificent save after Jones had headed in. Southend next got away, and both wings had a share in the attack, which ended in Platt saving from Frost.

A little later the most remarkable incident of the match occurred. Hesitation by Gregory let in the attack, and Platt rushing out failed to clear properly. With three Southend forwards close in, it seemed that one of them must score,

but Gregory got in the way and kicked the ball up the field, although precisely how he managed to save the situation probably Gregory himself did not know.

Following a corner for Luton, Bradley found himself with the ball in front of an open goal, but he could not turn round in time to take advantage of the opportunity. A shot by Johnson went across the mouth of goal and out of play at the far side; it was only a few inches too far forward to take effect.

In the closing stages Southend concentrated to defend their goal, Jack being the only forward who occasionally acted on the aggressive. Cotton only just saved one ground shot by giving a corner, and when Haycock and Bradley appeared likely to rush the ball through, one of the South end backs kicked out.