

Football Notes and News.

[By "GOALPOST."]

LUTON'S "BID" FOR THE ENGLISH CUP.

Luton Town met Southend United in the English Cup competition on the Ivy-road ground on Saturday afternoon, when the result was a draw of one goal each. About 8,000 spectators watched the game.

The locals—who played in chocolate jerseys, as Southend's colours are also blue—had an entirely re-arranged forward line, and no doubt that fact was a formidable handicap to the Blues getting through the fifth round. Owing to an injury to his foot, Menzies was unable to turn out, and his place was filled by Bradley. Brown was also on the sick list; Stansfield was transferred from one wing to the other, and Johnson brought in at outside left. Moody was able to take his usual place, as was also Haycock. The halves were as usual, and Gregory and McCurdy were at back, with Platt in goal.

Southend, whose team is largely composed of "old crocks," brought with them their strongest combination. Cotton kept goal; Thompson and Molyneux were at back, Harrod, Owen, and Blott at half, while the front line was composed of Birnie, Frost, Ronaldson, Wright and Jack.

Southend won the spin, and set Luton to play against a moderate breeze. The first attack was made by Southend, Ronaldson shooting wide after a good run. A corner to Luton looked promising, but Cotton jumped up and fisted clear. After another Southend attack the Luton forwards got away nicely, and Johnson scored from a square centre by Stansfield. Luton held the upper hand for a few minutes after this, but the visitors at length got up, and some hot exchanges ensued. A corner to Southend gave Ronaldson a chance, but his shot unfortunately hit the cross bar. Southend kept up the pressure, and Wright ultimately equalised with a rising shot at close range.

The subsequent exchanges were in favour of Luton, but the most dangerous shot for a time was taken at the other end, where Platt had great difficulty in clearing from Frost. Luton attacked with more method, but when near goal they failed completely. The few shots which were attempted were very much off the mark, and there was no further scoring before half-time, when the teams crossed over with 1 goal each to their credit.

Luton restarted strongly, and Johnson was given a nice pass by R. Hawkes. The forwards got close to the visitors' goal when a free kick was given against Bradley. Jack forced a corner off Gregory, but placed the flag-kick badly. A free kick to Luton close in nearly brought a goal, Cotton muffing a soft shot; but he ultimately got the ball away. Luton continued to press, but without avail. Play then became of a very scrambling nature. Molyneux and Thompson were prominent at times for their powerful and accurate kicking, but on the whole the game was singularly devoid of interest.

Birnie raised some excitement by giving Platt a teaser, but the home goal keeper saved easily. At the other end Cotton made a marvellous save from Bradley, and a minute later R. Hawkes hit the bar. Play brightened up a bit, and Cotton was called on by Haycock. During the concluding stages Luton pressed strongly, but with little method in their work. Long kicking was indulged in by the backs, and while Platt had nothing to do Cotton's work was of the easiest nature. Just in time Moody lost a great chance, his shot hitting the bar. Result: A draw of one goal each.

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Luton richly deserved to win, and it was extremely hard luck for them in only managing to effect a draw. In the first half, the locals had practically all the play. When Johnson opened the score for them in five minutes, Luton's hopes, of course, were in the ascendant. For the next 20 minutes play was practically confined in Southend's territory. Then once more the unexpected happened. On breaking through Wright equalised. For that, however, the visitors had to thank a defence that bungled a simple situation.

In the second half Cotton had some marvellous shots to save. The game was fairly fast at times, considering the slippery nature of the turf, but on the whole it was nothing approaching a great match.

Had Menzies only been out, Luton would most certainly have won, and won handsomely. Bradley played a bustling game, but there was not an ounce of judgment in his play. The result was that there was not the least combination amongst the home forward line. Moody, too, did not appear as if he had fully recovered from his accident, and he made but a weak show. The halves were moderate, but the two backs showed distinct improvement. Platt had not a great deal to do, but his punching out was generally safe on Saturday.

Being "old crocks," Southend possess some real, hard cup-fighters, but there was no cohesion in their attack, and they were very weak in front of goal. Ten minutes to time, they had the game in their hands. Through an error on the part of the home defence, Platt was quite beaten, and the ball lay in front of an open goal, simply waiting to be tapped into the net. Southend lost the chance of a lifetime.

Many spectators, who are true sportsmen, commented adversely on Bradley's tactics. His bustling in the field partook occasionally of the nature of horse-play. Every time he had the opportunity he "went for" the goal-keeper, with the result that Cotton found himself banged into the net. A footballer who resorts to such tactics as those to justify his inclusion in the team must be terribly hard up for qualifications. More than once on Saturday afternoon, Cotton narrowly missed serious injury. To caution the Luton acting-centre-forward was not enough; it would have taught him a lesson had he been ordered off the field. What would the spectators have said if Ronaldson had been guilty of such conduct on Platt? However, there are still a few sportsmen in the Luton crowd, who can see errors on their own side as well as on that of the visiting team. To say the least, Bradley's play was unworthy of him.