

The Cup.

COMPETITION PROPER.—FIRST ROUND.

LUTON v. MILLWALL.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Millwall	2 goals.
Luton	1 goal.

The teams were:—

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

Millwall—Joyce; Stevenson and Jeffrey; Riley, Comrie, and Blythe; Dean, Shand, Twigg, Jones, and Tellum.

Referee, Mr. C. C. Fallowfield (London).

In cup-ties most of us are partisans. It may not always be the height of sportsmanship to want your own club to win, but still you want them to get there. Unfortunately, Luton did not do that on Saturday, for after struggling gamely all through, they were robbed of victory in the last two minutes. Most of the spectators were decidedly of opinion that Tellum was offside when he scored the winning goal. Mr. Fallowfield allowed it to count, however, and so Luton had to say good-bye to cup-ties until another season.

It was hard to be beaten thus. Much as the home crowd wanted Luton to win, they would have been far better satisfied with the result if Millwall had won by means of a goal about which there was no doubt. It all happened very suddenly. Dean sprinted away, and, although tackled by Gregory, managed to centre. The ball went off one of the other forwards to Tellum, who was nearer the goal, and he promptly scored. Mr. Fallowfield pointed to the centre of the field, and some hooting ensued, but everybody realised that the game had been won and lost.

The incident provided a dramatic finish to an exciting cup-tie. Early in the game Luton obtained the lead, and as they kept it to the interval, it was hoped and expected that they would win. Half-an-hour from the finish, however, Millwall equalised. Then it was touch-and-go. The players shared the general excitement, and went in for long kicking. When Millwall scored their winning goal the spectators had reached such a state of strained attention, that the fence at the town end was broken in one place and a number of people fell with it, but fortunately no one was seriously injured.

Luton lost the toss, and the opening play was very much in favour of Millwall, whose forwards were very smart on the ball. At the first run down Tellum shot wide, and then Gregory and McCurdy cleared a hot attack, following on a centre by Dean. The next onslaught was repulsed by Gregory, who kicked the ball well up the field. Stansfield ran half the length of the field, but finished up by sending the ball behind. Millwall were soon attacking again, and Shand almost got through after Gregory had kicked the ball on to him. Twigg had a fine chance after Platt had saved from a centre from the right, but he shot wide.

Luton's one and only goal was scored ten minutes after the start. It was the result of good play on the right wing, a beautiful centre being put in by Haycock. Stevenson tried to head the ball, but Moody charged him, leaving Menzies unmarked. The centre-forward took his time and easily beat Joyce. A minute later Brown tried a hard shot, which Joyce punched away. After good defensive play by Gregory, who cleared three times in succession, Stansfield ran away and Joyce got the ball. Menzies went up to the goalkeeper while he was holding the sphere, but could not get it away from him.

Luton were having more of the play at this period of the game, and when they next attacked Brown reached a centre from Stansfield just a second later than Joyce. On the other side, Dean had some good chances of scoring, but the wind was not altogether favourable, and the ball almost invariably went behind. Platt saved from Jones, who met a centre by Shand, and then McCurdy collided with Jones, having to leave the field for a few minutes. While he was off, Gregory gave a corner, which was cleared, and at the other end Brown got in a centre which Stansfield headed nicely, Joyce clearing.

When Millwall next got away, Dean made his best attempt during the first half, the ball skimming the bar at a very acute angle. The Luton right wing again got through, and Haycock shot wide; he could not pass because the forwards on the other wing were offside. A nice dropping shot by Fred Hawkes was saved by Joyce, and then Havcock was twice ruled offside. Another very near thing happened when Brown put in a centre and Moody headed the ball. It only went a little wide, and it seemed inevitable that Joyce must have been beaten had the ball been better directed.

At the other end Tellum had a good chance following a throw-in on the right. He was standing close in when the ball came across, but shot wide. Just before half-time Jeffrey pushed Brown when in the penalty area, but the referee took no notice. A shot by Menzies went wide, and the score at the interval was 1-0 in favour of the homesters.

Directly after the re-start, Gregory met a centre by Tellum and gave a corner. A minute later Bob Hawkes missed his kick in front of the goal, but Platt saved from Dean. Jones, the Luton centre-half, shone repeatedly in defensive work. A miskick by Gregory about thirty yards out let Dean obtain possession, and he at once let fly with a splendid shot, which Platt, however, saved. A minute later, and 15 minutes from the re-start, Dean was successful in scoring the equalising goal. Receiving from Shand, he put in a low cross shot, which went into the far side of the net.

Millwall were now having the greater part of the play, Luton having to kick against the wind. As time went on the game got very ragged, both sides going in for long kicking. A high shot by Haycock went just over, and a misunderstanding between Jones and Gregory allowed the Millwall inside-right to get away, McCurdy giving a corner. At the other end Menzies was getting dangerous when he was fouled and rolled over in the penalty area, but the referee again took no notice.

Twigg was kicked on the mouth and had to go off the field for a time. When he came back he changed places with Tellum at outside-left. Stansfield then forced a couple of corners, which were cleared. A centre by Stansfield went across the goal, but Brown was too far forward to take advantage of it. Platt next saved from Dean by giving a corner.

The winning goal was scored about a couple of minutes before the finish. Dean received the ball near the half-way line, and although he was on-side, the other forwards who ran up the middle of the field, were palpably offside. Jones, the Luton half, appealed to the referee, but the official allowed them to go on. After beating Gregory, Dean centred, and Tellum had an easy task in scoring. Thus it was that Luton departed for another year from the English Cup Competition.

Looking at the game as a whole, one can only say that Millwall owed victory chiefly to their success in preventing Luton playing good football. The visitors were not nearly so anxious to get and keep the ball themselves as to knock the Luton players off it, and in this part of the business they succeeded admirably. There was also a sprightliness and elasticity about their movements which was altogether absent on the other side, the local men seeming almost stale by comparison.

Indeed, I do not think the Luton players were nearly up to their usual form in this respect, and I doubt if they would not have done better by adhering to their usual course of training. Certainly they seemed quite lethargic sometimes by contrast with their opponents, and attempts at combination were often nipped in the bud by the dashing tactics of opposing players. Taken all round, too, the Millwall team were a lot faster than the homesters.

The home forwards never really got into their stride, and even Brown was not speedy enough to make much ground. They would have played prettily, no doubt, had they been allowed, but the visitors played a spoiling game pure and simple, and the Lutonians failed to adapt themselves to the circumstances. Not a single one of the home forwards could be said to have played up to his form, and if there was a best perhaps Stansfield ought to have the credit.

The halves showed to better advantage, but Jones would be more effective if he did not attempt to do too much. His keenness occasionally leads him to do work which might be better done by one of his colleagues. Bob Hawkes appeared to be one of the speediest men on his side, and for this reason I think he would have done better to have paid more attention to Dean, whose pace enabled him to get round Gregory with almost ridiculous ease.

Bob unquestionably did a great deal of valuable work, and perhaps was the most conspicuous of the three, for Fred was not quite as prominently in the picture as is his wont. The backs played well for the greater part of the game, but in the last half-hour Gregory cracked up badly, and it was that I think that led to Luton's downfall. McCurdy we could hardly expect to be at his best after the injury he met with in the first half, but he was very useful nevertheless. Platt fully upheld his reputation, and made some very smart saves.

The visitors, as has been said, played typical Cup-tie football; that is, they relied upon weight and dash and paid little attention to the niceties of the game. Dean was by far the most conspicuous of the forwards, but in the early part of the proceedings he allowed many fine efforts to go to waste by almost consistently placing the ball behind. For all that, however, he was the principal factor, so far as the attack was concerned, in Luton's defeat.

Tellum, who has only just come into the team in place of Hunter, is a very strenuous player, but the Millwall forwards generally did not cover themselves with glory, and were a far different quintet from that which did duty for Southampton the previous week. The halves were a host in themselves, with Comrie the bright particular star, and the backs also acquitted themselves splendidly, while Joyce performed as effectively as ever in goal.

* * *

The gate receipts amounted to £302, the attendance being just below 10,000.

* * *

Chief honours in the Cup-ties fell to Tottenham Hotspur and Portsmouth, who secured victories away from home against Manchester City (4—3) and Birmingham (5—2) respectively. The most surprising thing was that the Spurs were two goals down twenty minutes from the start. Fulham, who practically bought their match, beat Carlisle United by 4 goals to 1. The gate amounted to £430, and as Carlisle's terms were £220 and half-gate, Fulham had to pay out more than was received.

* * *

Plymouth Argyle just got the better of Swindon by a goal to nil, and Brentford accounted for Gainsborough by 2 goals to nil. Bristol Rovers fared badly on their own ground against Burnley, being beaten by 4 goals to 1, but Brighton put up a good fight at Manchester against the United, who claimed the only goal of the match.

* * *

The draws were numerous, the following being those in which Southern Clubs figured:—Bristol City 1, Southampton 1; Hull City 1, Chelsea 1; Croydon Common 1, Woolwich Arsenal 1; Queen's Park Rangers 0, West Ham 0; Northampton 1, Derby County 1; Norwich City 0, Reading 0; Watford 1, Leicester Fosse 1; Wrexham 1, Exeter City 1; Wolverhampton Wanderers 2, Crystal Palace 2.

* * *

The highest gate was that at Newcastle, where Clapton Orient lost 5 goals and shared £823, and the lowest was at Blackpool, where Hastings lost by a couple of goals and had only a share of £81. The attendances generally were very much affected by the weather, and fell 36,000 short of the total for the corresponding round of last year.

* * *

The letter from "A Spectator" with reference to the Cup-tie is not inserted owing to the nature of the attack made on the referee. I agree with "Spectator" that it was a serious mistake on the part of the official that gave Millwall the winning goal, but I don't think there is the least reason to suppose that it was not a mistake honestly made. Perhaps it was a little unfortunate that the three officials in charge of the match should, like the visiting team, have come from London, but we should not be too ready to attribute motives. I have noticed that supporters can swallow a good deal when mistakes tell in their favour instead of against.