

Luton Badly Beaten at Northampton

Luton Town have once again bidden an early farewell to the English Cup Competition. Their engagement at Northampton, on Saturday, in the first round of the competition proper, proved fatal in the extreme. Such a one-sided result as five goals to one in favour of the home team came as a great surprise to everyone, and even the most optimistic of the 'Cobblers' supporters had their hopes surpassed. Luton cannot claim to have had much luck in the F.A. Cup ever since they joined the Competition, and this season they have been drawn away from home on three occasions, though circumstances have permitted them to play a couple of matches on the Ivy-road enclosure. After two hard struggles with Rochdale, Luton entered the competition proper, but in the first round they found the Cobblers too good for them.

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Once before this season Luton have met the Cobblers in the straw hat metropolis, and the Cobblers happened to be on tip-top form, and had matters all their own way. They broke Luton's home record, and ran out victors by 3—1, though there was a suspicion of offside about one, if not two, of the goals. But still, they thoroughly deserved the victory. In spite of this, about 2,000 supporters of the Blues travelled to Northampton on Saturday by three special trains, full of high hopes that Luton would, if not avenge the Southern League defeat, at least make a draw. During the past week their expectations had been raised a bit, as a result of Plymouth defeating the Cobblers on their own territory, but it was evident that the task before the Blues was a stiff one.

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Luton were at full strength. Right up to the time of starting, Fred Hawkes was an uncertain starter, but although Potts was stripped out ready to take the field, Fred decided to play, and, such is fate, he was the best half-back of the trio throughout the game. The management of Northampton were uncertain as to the formation of their team until Saturday morning, when it was decided that Lessons, despite the fact that at Northampton he is considered one of the finest half-backs in the country, should act as pivot of the forward string, Lloyd Davies taking his place at centre half. The outside-left position has recently been taken by Freeman, but McDiarmid, who has been suffering from sciatica, was able to resume his position.

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When the teams took the field there was an attendance of something between 10,000 and 12,000, and the gate receipts amounted to about £417. The crowd were exceptionally quiet throughout the game, and particularly was this so in the first half.

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Northampton, on their excellent display, thoroughly deserved to pass into the second round of the competition. Without the slightest doubt, the better team won, for the Cobblers' form was as good as when they visited Luton. Naisby played well in goal, and could not be blamed for any of the goals. Chapman was weak, his chief failing being that he was painfully slow, but Wightman played a very consistent game. Fred Hawkes was the best of the halves, though he and Bob were inclined to wander and leave the outside forwards plenty of room to get away. Moody was the pick of the forwards, all the others playing below form. Quinn especially had an off day.

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The teams lined up as follow:—

Northampton:—Thorpe; Brittan and Clipston; Manning, Davies and Hampson; Walden, Bradshaw, Lessons, Lewis and McDiarmid.

Luton.—Naisby; Chapman and Wightman; F. Hawkes, Bushell and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Quinn, Smith, Moody and Stansfield.

Referee:—Lt. W. Clover, of Leicester.

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Luton kicked off, and Chapman, being slow, nearly let in Lewis in the first minute of the game, but the Bedford men just succeeded in clearing. After McDiarmid had sent behind, Stansfield and Moody got away on the left wing, but the outside left failed to get in his centre, and the ball went out of play. The Cobblers again got dangerous, and miskicks by Bob Hawkes and Bushell made matters look rather dull. Wightman came to the rescue with a huge kick, which sent the ball to the other end of the field. The ground was very slippery and heavy, and it was some time before the Luton players seemed able to get a proper footing. Going of this description always seems to present a great difficulty to the Blues' forwards, and it was some time before they became at all dangerous, and the goalkeeper was called upon to save. The first shot came from Fred Hawkes, further attempts by Stansfield, Smith and Quinn failing to reach the goal.

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The game had not been in progress many minutes, however, when Luton came very near scoring. Bob Hawkes took the ball up the field in splendid fashion, and sent out to Brown, who quickly despatched into the centre of the field. Here, Moody headed to Smith, but the ball bounced a little too much, and Smith shot just over the bar. Walden was a constant source of trouble to Bob Hawkes and Wightman, and his play was very useful to the Cobblers. Play ruled in midfield for some time, and neither goalkeeper was troubled, although the homesters had slightly the best of the exchanges. A shot from Lessons went straight at the goalkeeper, and Naisby easily cleared.

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Northampton took the lead about seventeen minutes from the start, the goal being rather a peculiar one. Lewis received a centre from the right wing with his head, and the ball just bounced inside the post. Chapman, with a little more smartness, should have cleared before Lewis had a chance to get to the ball. Naisby appeared to be standing a little way out of his goal, because, being off the sawdust when he made an attempt to get to the ball, he slipped in the mud and was a second too late to prevent the leather entering the net.

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Brown and Quinn did not make the most of the opportunities, and were quite beaten by the dashing play of the Cobblers' defence. Davies, sending well up the field, Lessons took the play into the Luton goal, and, beating Wightman, passed to Bradshaw, from whom Naisby had to save a stinging shot. After Moody had shot some yards

past the post at long range, Lessons drove with a magnificent first-timer, and Naisby brought off another good save. An attempt at long range by Bradshaw followed, and Naisby easily got rid of it.

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Luton then had a look in, and Smith, being placed nicely by Quinn, gave Thorpe a shot to save. A centre from Moody was relieved by Brittan heading behind. The corner was only partially cleared, and Bushell brought Thorpe out of his goal to clear a dropping shot. At the other end, a very easy chance was missed, when Bradshaw sent across the goal-mouth, and Lewis and Lessons were left with only the goalkeeper to beat. Both were so eager to score that they got in each other's way, and the ball rolled harmlessly out to the other wing. McDiarmid took up the play, and Fred Hawkes conceded a fruitless corner.

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This was followed by another narrow escape. Lewis had a couple of "pots" at goal, but they hit Chapman and Fred Hawkes respectively, and Lewis, again gaining possession, hit the cross bar with a lightning shot, Naisby helping the ball over. The resultant corner was abortive. At the other end, Moody cleverly hooked the ball over his head into the goal, but the custodian was on the alert, and cleared. Walden took the play into the Luton goal, and from a corner which he forced Fred Hawkes robbed Lewis of a splendid chance. Luton returned to the attack, and were pressing when the whistle went for half-time, the score standing:—

NORTHAMPTON	1
LUTON	0

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In the second half, Luton at once got away, and Clipston took the ball off Smith's foot and conceded a corner, which was unproductive. A free kick for a foul on Brown led to some exciting play, but Brittan relieved, and six minutes after the re-start, the Cobblers increased their lead. McDiarmid got away on the left, and, taking the ball up to the goal line, he centred, but Wightman got in the way. Mac had a second try. This time he was successful in eluding the left back, and, giving to Bradshaw, who coolly netted with a low shot, which gave Naisby no chance.

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Luton then went away with much dash, and, in saving from Brown, the goalkeeper was rushed on by Smith and Stansfield. Although they dispossessed the custodian, they failed to get the ball between the posts, it relaying behind for a corner, from which Moody made a brilliant attempt with his head, but Thorpe, running across the goal-mouth, brought off a marvellous save. After Quinn had sent a little wide, Walden ran away along the wing, and, with the help of Bradshaw, beat Bob Hawkes and Wightman, and kicked into the centre, where Lessons, a yard or two from the goal, had no difficulty in touching past Naisby.

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Luton's hopes were now shattered. Even expectations of a draw had vanished, but hopes were revived a little when immediately following the re-start Luton made tracks for the goal on the right, and Moody turned to account a centre from Brown. But they never looked like improving on this position. Northampton quite held the upper hand, and Naisby had to save shots from McDiarmid and Hampson, and subsequently fisted away from the outside left. Bradshaw then got through the defence, and gave Lessons a comparatively easy chance of scoring. He took plenty of time, and made no mistake in registering the fourth goal. At the other end, Thorpe was tested by F. Hawkes, and later by Smith, but the Cobblers again became aggressive, and Bradshaw allowed the ball to go out of his reach when nicely placed, and Naisby kicked away.

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Quinn had the chance of a lifetime to add to the score when placed almost under the cross bar. It seemed impossible for him to miss such an opportunity, but he got his head right under the ball and headed it over the bar. Towards the close of the game, the homesters had matters nearly all their own way, and the Luton defence were absolutely non-plussed. In spite of the pressure, it was thought that all goal-scoring was at an end, when Bradshaw cleverly worked through the defence, and, tricking Naisby, touched the ball so that it would go just inside the post, but Lessons ran up and put on the finishing touch. The game thus ended with the score:—

NORTHAMPTON	5
LUTON	1