

LUTON FOOTBALL NOTES.

By "The Goalie."

THE ENGLISH CUP.

LUTON v. NOTTS. COUNTY.

SOUTHERN LEAGUERS' HONOURABLE EXIT.

In accordance with the time-honoured traditions of the Club, Luton's first cup-tie has also proved to be the last, for on Saturday, on the Ivy-road enclosure, Notts. County administered a defeat of 4-2. The game, however, did not go to show that Luton's ambitions are disproportionate to their capabilities and the team as a whole is to be congratulated on putting up such a worthy opposition to their doughty opponents. The Notts. team excelled Luton in one particular only, and that was finish. They had four openings and scored four goals. Luton had quite as many, if not more, but only netted twice, and thus they realised the lesson which is the fundamental principal of football, that it is goals, and goals only, that count.

Except for during a few isolated intervals the game was a fairly good one. Notts. County had slightly the better of the first half, but they did not deserve a lead of two goals. The first point was a surprise goal, and the second seemed to be the result of the demoralising effect of its predecessor. The same thing happened in the second half, when, after Luton had harassed the visiting defence for about fifteen minutes, the Nottingham forwards dashed away and with a couple of successful shots made victory certain. Many teams would have given up heart under such circumstances, but it was not so with Luton, and Moody and Streeton hugely delighted the crowd by lessening the margin of defeat by two goals. Unless memory plays me false, this is the first occasion on which Luton have scored twice against a First Division club, and on Saturday the Blues were the only losing team to score twice.

There is some amount of consolation in the fact that the best man on the field was a Lutonian. Bob Hawkes, for of course it was he, played brilliantly, and was too good for Matthews and Flint, even though the latter was one of the fastest men in the Nottingham team. The other two halves, Fred Hawkes and Bushell, also worked very hard, the half-back line being the strongest part of the team. The forwards, too, were much above par, except in the matter of shooting. Streeton quite justified his retention in the centre forward position, and kept the line nicely together. He also stage-managed some very promising movements, and was dashing and resourceful in front of goal. Bobby Walker was at his best, and in the second half Brown put in some grand work. The left wing, Moody and Stansfield, opened very quietly, but they also got going in the second moiety, and worked well together.

Although the Luton defenders made no outstanding blunders, their play was by no means convincing. Potts was the best of the trio, combining his old dash with his newly-gotten accuracy with surprising success. Wightman miskicked much less than usual, but was unable to hold Flint, while there is a general consensus of opinion that Naisby might have saved at least one of the goals. The Notts. players were very workmanlike in their methods, without being at all brilliant. The injury to Dean at Sunderland let in Cantrell, who had not played for about two months previously, but this usually dangerous centre was quite off his game. The wing men, Flint and Waterall, however, quite made up for the deficiencies of the others, and all the goals resulted directly or indirectly from their clever centres. The halves and backs were sound, and a noteworthy personality was Iremonger, the tall goalkeeper, whose agility and skill was almost hidden by the bored and apparently lackadaisical manner in which he dealt with the shots that came to him.

The gates were opened at 1.30, one hour before the kick-off, and at once the people began to stream in and seize upon the points of vantage. Favours, blue and white for Luton and black and white for the County, were, of course, very much in evidence and there was an unmistakable air of anticipation and expectancy in the crowd which one always associates with a cup-tie. The inevitable bell ringers were, as usual, to be heard from various parts of the crowd, which did not begin to assume anything like the expected proportions until about two o'clock. When the teams lined up at 2.30 under Mr. C. W. Gillett, who proved a most capable referee, there seemed to be about nine thousand present, but the official returns at the end of the game showed the number to be only 8,200. The number of excursionists from Nottingham was about 250, a much smaller number than anticipated. The comparative smallness of the crowd was apparently due to the shilling gate and the counter attractions which prevented the influx of visitors from Watford and Northampton. The gate receipts amounted to £437, of which Luton's share will be just under £200.

Notts. won the toss, but there was no advantage to be accrued from this as there was practically no wind. The visitors did not take their bearings very rapidly, and for the first twenty minutes, Luton had a fair share of some none-too-exciting mid-field work. Potts had to be very smart to clear from Flint, and later on the back was temporarily injured in stopping the same player. Offside spoilt the next advance of the visitors, and then Luton had a turn, only for Brown to run the ball out. Stansfield showed a nice turn of speed when well fed by Moody, but he landed his centre behind, and Claythorne was just in time to bar Moody's progress, while the inside left was immediately afterwards penalised for unfairly tackling Iremonger.

Later Streeton was allowed to run through from a fine pass from Moody, and as he had a clear course for goal, a score seemed certain. Instead of running right in, however, he shot from about fifteen yards' range, and the ball passed over the top corner. From the goal-kick, the visitors raced away and Cantrell headed Waterall's centre through after twenty-two minutes' play. For the subsequent five minutes Notts. had all the play; then the home team advanced, but Brown finished poorly, and when Moody brought the ball back, West cleared neatly. At the other end Naisby caught a volley from Flint, but Luton were soon attacking hotly, and obtained a free kick just outside the penalty area. This was not improved upon, but a minute later Brown centred into the goal mouth, and Moody headed it over the bar. Just before the interval, Matthews gave Notts County a two goal lead with a good shot.

Luton started off in very business

like fashion, and for the first fifteen minutes, Notts hardly got a look-in. A couple of free kicks were gained, and Iremonger had to dive full length to turn Wightman's first time shot round the post. Two corners were cleared, but Brown brought the ball back, and Streeton volleyed inches too high. The Notts. defence seemed none too safe under the pressure exerted by Luton, but at length the visitors raised the siege, and in the course of a scrimmage, Wightman almost put the ball through his own goal, Naisby bringing off a fine clearance. For a while after this, Notts. were kept in their own half, but Cantrell and Flint broke away, and Waterall scored with a fast cross shot which gave Naisby no chance. Three minutes later Richards added a fourth from twelve yards out with a shot that seemed very simple but must have been equally deceptive.

Morley was injured, but though he remained on the field he was palpably lame. Luton were not discouraged by their recent misfortunes, and Brown put across a splendid centre. Moody was waiting for the ball about four yards out, and his header quite deceived Iremonger and found the net. There were now seventeen minutes to go, and Luton made still further efforts, although the result of the game was practically settled. Seven minutes from time remained, when Iremonger saved a header from Streeton, but the ball glanced out of his hands and hitting the bar, just crossed over the line, and the referee smartly and rightly gave a goal, though Iremonger's expression spoke volumes for his opinion of the decision. Fine runs by Flint and Waterall were loudly applauded, but nothing further of a tangible nature occurred, and time came with the score:—

NOTTS. COUNTY 4, LUTON 2.