

FROM The Football Field.

FIRST FENCE FATAL.

Luton Out of the F.A. Cup Competition.

Plucky Fight Against a Superior Side.

Blues' First Goals against a First League Team.

Bob Hawkes' Brilliance.

With professional football clubs a poor League record often spells a remarkable run of success in the F.A. Cup-ties, but Luton Town on Saturday failed to break from their English Cup traditions. This year they had what is for them the rather unusual experience of being favoured with choice of ground, but for all that they met with what may be described as their usual fate in being discharged from the competition at an early stage. Unlike the two preceding seasons the Blues were this season excused from the cup-ties until the competition proper, and in being drawn against Notts County they provided their supporters with the most attractive cup-tie Luton has witnessed since Sunderland came, and played a goalless draw five years ago. For this, however, they had to pay the penalty of failing at the first obstacle because the Lacemen's team justified their reputation of being one of the most improved teams in the First League this season, and the Strawhatters were not a bit disgraced in their failure to overcome such doughty opponents.

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Four goals to two was the result in favour of Notts County. As I left the ground, writes "Vigilant," I heard one of the Luton Directors asked if he was satisfied. He paused, and then with what appeared to be a sigh, made reply, "Well, yes, I think so—only I think there ought to have been but one goal in it." The view of that Director is one that can hardly be quarrelled with. It is not to Luton's discredit to admit that they knocked up against a better team, and I do not think the most pronounced of the Blues' supporters will, for one moment, contest the suggestion that the better team of the two won on Saturday. Many of us, I suppose, feared they would prove the better team, for one could hardly contrast the performances of the two clubs and feel optimistic about Luton's chances. Our only hope was that by one of those freaks which frequently characterise cup fights the visitors would, on a totally strange ground, fail to find their form and, of course, that the Blues would find theirs. But, as a matter of fact both sides found their form, and the visitors' form was the better of the two. At the same time Lutonians are, I consider, entitled to hold that the score flattered the visitors just a wee bit. They certainly looked the smarter side, and they were the smarter side without a doubt, smarter both in attack and in defence, but, for all that, it is indisputable that, taking the game right through, the balance of the exchanges was decidedly in favour of the homesters. The main factor in the visitors' success was the magnificent object lesson they gave our forwards of the way to make opportunities, and, even more so, the way to take them. It is a lesson in the learning of which the home front line have been lacking in most of their games this season, and if it had not been for this Notts would never at any time possessed the four-goal lead they once gained, and indeed the whole complexion of the game would probably have been changed.

Still, vague conjectures can serve no good purpose after the event. Luton for this season have no direct interest in the F.A. Cup, and under the circumstances perhaps the most interesting piece of information is

THE FINANCIAL RESULT

of Saturday's cup-tie. Considering that there were more than ten thousand spectators when Luton last had a First League team as visitors in the Cup competition, I imagine there were hopes that, with a minimum shilling gate, with prices ranging up to half-a-crown, the Club would realise almost, if not quite, as much as the £300 guaranteed to them if they had changed the venue of the tie to Nottingham. These hopes, of course, depended to a very large extent upon the weather, and the weather probably had a great deal to do with their not being realised. Rain certainly held off while the game was in progress, but it was quite a wretched day for such an event. It rained most of the morning, and continued at intervals right up to the start of the match, and though the ground began to fill much earlier than usual the attendance never looked like exceeding a really good holiday crowd at Luton. The open seats and standing room on the grand stand side were only thinly filled, and other parts of the ground were far from being full. As a matter of fact, it was given out officially that the approximate attendance was 8,200. The "gate" takings amounted to £443 13s. 6d., and it may be taken for granted that the share of the net proceeds which the Luton Club will receive is hardly likely to exceed £200.

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The invasion from Nottingham was rather a feeble affair. Bedecked with their smart favours, the County's supporters did their best to paint the town "black and white," but there were only between two and three hundred of them. This was said to be due to the fact that the special train which was run from Nottingham left at an awkward time for the operatives, while, of course, there is also the fact that Notts Forest were drawn at home. The enthusiasts who came left Nottingham soon after ten o'clock, and they had two hours in which to kick their heels about Luton before the match. They made good use of their time, too, in letting the townspeople know why they were here, and on the football ground itself the cup-tie spirit was early in evidence. Luton favours were fairly extensively worn, and bells and rattles were much in evidence, and even before the teams turned out there was any amount of enthusiasm displayed, some of it excited by the playing of the Luton Red Cross Band, and much more by the photographing of a Notts section and three or four Luton sections of the crowd by the Picture Palace operator.

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THE TEAMS.

A great shout went up from about seven thousand throats when Bob Hawkes led the Blues out four minutes before the time fixed for the kick-off, and the Notts players were given quite a sporting reception a minute later. Luton depended on the same team that set up the record for the season of two consecutive League wins at Watford and against New Brompton at home, Streeton, the local player, being preferred to Stephenson and Shepherd in the centre. Notts were minus one of the team which has recently been doing so well, Dean having been injured in their disastrous game at Sunderland the previous week. This brought into the centre Cantrell, who had been out of the side for two months consequent upon injuries. The change can hardly be said to have weakened the side, for there are many who regard Cantrell as the County's best centre. However, these were the teams that lined out in charge of Mr. C. W. Gillett, of Willesden:—

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Luton:—Naisby; Wightman and Potts; Fred Hawkes, Bushell and R. Hawkes; Brown, Walker, Streeton, Moody and Stansfield.

Notts County:—Iremonger; Morley and West; Emberton, Clamp and Craythorne; Flint, Matthews, Cantrell, Richards, and Waterall.

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THE GAME AT A GLANCE.

- 2.30.—Streeton kicked off for Luton.
- 2.53.—Cantrell scored Notts' first goal.
- 3.14.—Matthews scored No. 2.
- 3.15.—Half-time: Notts 2, Luton 0.
- 3.26.—Cantrell restarted for Notts.
- 3.44.—Waterall scored Notts' No. 3.
- 3.45.—Richards scored No. 4.
- 3.54.—Moody scored Luton's first.
- 4. 5.—Streeton scored Luton's second.
- 4.11.—Time: Notts 4, Luton 2.

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THE PLAY DESCRIBED.

Nicely as the ground had been rolled out, its wretched condition was very apparent. The water hung about, and in places the pitch was a regular quagmire, and even without the "churning" up which was inevitable as the game progressed it presented a severe handicap to players anxious to put forward their very best. It was rather surprising, therefore, to find the game opening at a really hot pace. The Blues, who kicked off towards the Townend against a substantial wind, were evidently anxious to get their heads in front early, for Bob Hawkes sent first Stansfield and then Brown off with swinging passes, and in the first minute the outside-right had a centre cannon off West for a corner. Brown did not do himself justice with the flag kick, and Bob

Hawkes sent wide. Luton continued to set the pace, for the first time the visitors got over the half-way line they sent behind after a free kick had been awarded against the Blues' captain for hands. Walker was responsible for a return to the Notts' goal, and he delighted the crowd with a couple of his best efforts. One of these got Streeton going, but the back snapped up his pass to the right.

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Notts were now balancing the game up nicely, making splendid use of the pace of their wing men. Twice in succession Potts brought Flint to a standstill with exhilarating clearances at close quarters, and then Wightman standing in the goal mouth, kicked cleanly away a centre from Emberton. Flint was giving a good deal of trouble, and Fred Hawkes got across into the goal-mouth to intercept a shot from the winger. His effort left Cantrell with a capital opportunity, but the centre was right wide with his shot. The game had been going only eight minutes when Flint foully brought down Potts, and caused Billy Lawson to appear on the scene. Potts was able to resume in a minute or so, and quickly distinguished himself by heading out of danger a corner conceded by Wightman.

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The Blues were working very hard, with little tangible to show for it, for the Notts' defence was as firm and steady as a rock. Once a long forward pass by Streeton enabled the Blues to get by the backs, but Iremonger was out in an instant, and kicked away just in time to elude Moody's rush. At the other end Wightman and Fred Hawkes behaved splendidly when faced with the Notts forwards in unbroken line. The attacking movement was one which threatened considerable danger, but the defenders cleared in magnificent style. Once more the Notts men bore down on the goal, but this time their efforts resulted in a general laugh, for practically the whole lot of the forwards were offside.

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The first real bit of excitement occurred after twenty minutes' play. The visiting halves and backs were very unceremonious in their treatment of the comparatively light Luton forwards when they were anywhere near the danger zone, and the crowd did not quite appreciate fouls on Brown and Streeton passing unpenalised, especially as the latter occurred directly outside the penalty area. Immediately following these Luton did get a free kick award. It was near the centre line, but the backs let Wightman's kick go to the goalkeeper, and before Iremonger could do anything with the ball Streeton was at him. The lengthy custodian promptly had recourse to the ground, and this move proved his saviour, for Moody, in trying to force him through, had the referee whistling him up.

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It was immediately after this that the turning point of the game was decided. A delicious touch by Bert Moody sent Streeton spinning away between the backs. Tommy had no opposition ahead but the goalkeeper, and though there were pursuers on either side he was outdistancing them all the way. Iremonger perceived the situation at a glance, and started to come out. This apparently determined Streeton as to his action. Instead of going on he pelted in at about eighteen yards' range, and, to the dismay of the crowd, his shot rose a few feet over the bar. A goal at this stage would have meant much to Luton, for it was the very next move of the game that gave Notts the first goal of the match. The forwards went down from the goal kick, forced a throw-in near the corner flag, Waterall directed the ball into the goal-mouth, and Cantrell, almost under the bar and unmarked, headed through. It was all done in a flash, and Naisby had no possible chance. A splendid illustration it was of Notts' opportunism.

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This disaster seemed to completely overwhelm the Luton defence for some minutes, and they were all at sixes and sevens until a foul on Potts afforded them relief. Moody and Stansfield were then instrumental in forcing a corner on the left, only for Bert to head outside with quite the reverse of his accustomed accuracy. Still the Blues now began to recover from their temporary lapse, and a series of brilliant pieces of work by Bob Hawkes formed the principal feature of a hot Luton attack. Twice he brought the Notts forwards to a standstill, extricated himself from the opposition with wonderful foot-work, and initiated attacks which placed the Notts goal in jeopardy. But the Notts defence never once "wobbled," and try as they might the Blues seemed to make little or no impression.

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A free kick award against Wightman led to Notts becoming very threatening. Naisby caught and threw away a high shot from Flint. Again the ball was brought back, and in an exciting scrimmage round the goal-mouth Naisby had to push away a header from Richards. Even then a clearance was not effected, and it was not until one of the Notts forwards committed an infringement that the pressure was relieved. From this Luton managed to break away, and gained a couple of corners. From the first of these Iremonger jumped out to save from Brown, and Streeton was so successful in dispossessing him that the custodian had to give away a corner. On the second occasion Bushell headed in, and the backs had hard work to avert another corner. Then Bob Hawkes came into the picture again with more of his brilliant work, and Stansfield got away on the left and shot, and hit the cross bar, only to be ruled offside.

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The Notts men were as clever in making use of their hands as they were in making use of their feet and heads, and the leniency with which the referee gave them the benefit of the doubt time after time was not appreciated by the crowd. They roared their approval when at last a "hands" decision was given against the visitors, but their attitude quickly changed to one of disapproval, for a general appeal was raised for a penalty when Bob Hawkes was suspiciously stopped by one of the Notts players and the referee only shook his head. The visitors, admirably though they withstood the pressure put upon them by the Blues, could not break it up. Once the right wing forced their way through by sheer persistency. Walker did brilliantly in this movement, in spite of being unmercifully hacked, and when at last he was dispossessed Fred Hawkes came to the rescue, and enabled Brown to get in a gem of a centre from the line. Moody got his head to it in brilliant style, but the effort was a shade too high, and a brilliant movement ended without the reward it thoroughly merited.

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Then it was a case of history repeating itself, for Luton's failure to score was again followed by a goal for Notts. It was a very lucky point. Naisby had just saved a hard and true drive from Craythorne when two minutes from the interval the County returned to the attack on the left. Potts seemed to get stuck in the mud and failed to get hold of the centre, and Matthews was left with ample time to score from a very easy position. The whistle sounded directly after the ball had been restarted with the half-time score—

Notts County 2, Luton 0.

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There was nothing disheartening about the tactics of the Blues when they resumed, for they called on Iremonger in the first minute, and for some minutes kept the ball in the Notts half. Iremonger had a very narrow escape from being beaten—by Wightman, of all people. The back took his aim with a free kick from quite forty yards' range, and Iremonger had to make a frantic dive at full length to get the ball round the post. This was the first of five corners gained by the Blues within about ten minutes, but none of them brought any result. Once when Walker was in a fine position for scoring he got mixed up with Brown, and so had his shot spoilt. Bert Moody, snapping up a pass from Bob Hawkes, aimed for the further post, to find that Iremonger had anticipated the move, and directly afterwards when Bert finely negotiated a centre from Brown, Morley effectually barred the way. From this corner Luton were unlucky not to score. The ball came right across out of the reach of the players in the goal-mouth, and Stansfield was so surprised at receiving the ball that he was quite unable to make any use of what, under ordinary circumstances, would have been a capital chance. When the ball came out from the scrimmage Fred Hawkes fired in a shot. It was lovely and low, but a trifle wide.

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For a quarter of an hour the Blues had been attacking almost continuously without result, and yet practically the first time Notts got away the homesters had a narrow escape, for Wightman, in essaying to kick away a centre from Waterall, gave Naisby one of the most trying shots he had to deal with during the game. It was high up and Naisby could only hold on to it just under the bar. As a matter of fact it was afterwards elicited that the referee was rather inclined to the view that the ball was over the line when Tommy collared it. But he did not give it, and by throwing away and following up and clearing Naisby saved an awkward situation. Two minutes later, however, he was again beaten. Richards effected a really stirring run. Wightman, after two futile attempts to check his career, had the satisfaction of spoiling his shot, but the ball was deflected across to the right wing. Flint drew the defence in that direction, and then with a beautiful centre left Waterall with a chance he could hardly have failed to miss. This was enough to take the heart out of any team, considering the way Luton had been controlling the game in mid-

field, and before the Blues could recover they were four down. Naisby once averted danger from the right, but Flint again got well placed, and his centre fell nicely at the foot of Richards, who skilfully found the top corner of the goal, in spite of the efforts of the backs to cover the goal, and Naisby's frantic endeavours to handle the ball out.

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To all intents and purposes the game was now over, but Notts soon found it was not a paying policy to hold their opponents lightly. The Blues never lost heart, and time after time got to shooting range, but the Notts backs seemed to have an aptitude for covering the goal. Walker had a capital shot beaten down. Brown and Fred Hawkes were both just wide of the upright, and from one of Stansfield's corners Walker rushed the goalkeeper, and Iremonger brought off two miraculous saves in succession, the second being quite a stroke of luck. Iremonger always wore a bored look, albeit, he was thrice as hard worked as Naisby, but he was alert enough whenever the occasion called for it.

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A quarter of an hour from the end, however, he was well beaten. Brown followed up a brilliant piece of work on the wing with a centre so accurate that Moody had the goalie at his mercy. Iremonger, for once, did not correctly anticipate. Moody pushed the ball with his head into quite the opposite direction Iremonger expected, and with all his length the goalkeeper could not get to it. Thus to Bert fell the distinction of registering the first goal scored by Luton against a First League team in the Cup, and it acted as a tonic on the team, for, tired out though they must have been after their energetic work on such a heavy pitch, they threw themselves into the contest like giants refreshed. A centre by Brown seemed likely to bring about another goal, but the lengthy Morley was there to aid his goalkeeper, and an exciting time was brought to an end by an offside decision against Streeton. It was an anxious time through which the Notts defence passed, and three minutes from time they were beaten again. Going on from Moody's inaugural work Stansfield centred with fine judgment, and, back to the goal, Streeton headed in. The ball slipped over Iremonger's hands and hit the bar. The goalkeeper struck at it as it came down, and it hit the bar again and then fell into his hands. But the whistle had already gone for a goal, and Iremonger stood with the ball dumbfounded. For half a minute he persisted in this attitude as if confident a mistake had been made, and would be rectified. But the referee paid no heed to the Notts protests, and amid Luton cheers the ball was sent up to the centre. It proved, however, to be the last incident of note. Notts played strictly on the defensive, and held their own until the final sound of the whistle was heard with the score—

Notts County 4, Luton 2.