

THE ENGLISH CUP.

LUTON'S USUAL LUCK.

TEAM DEFEATED AND THE CENTRE-FORWARD INJURED.

Luton experienced their usual cup-tie luck at Selhurst on Saturday, when they were defeated by Croydon Common by 2-0. It was hard lines to begin with to have to play away from home, but when near the interval Luton lost the services of Stephenson owing to a twisted knee the fates were even more unkind than usual. The most serious side is perhaps the fact that Luton may have to dispense with the services of Stephenson during the Christmas matches, and as Cardiff pay a visit on Boxing Day, and Luton go to Pontypridd on the following Saturday, every effort must be made to secure such important promotion points. The gate on Saturday amounted to £112.

On the day's play, Croydon fully deserved their victory. They treated the 4,000 spectators to a splendid exhibition; in fact, the opinion was generally expressed that it was the finest game put up by Croydon this season. It was a typical Cup-tie, and from start to finish the teams fought desperately. A very hot pace was maintained, but so well had the players been trained that neither side showed any sign of distress. Seldom have Croydon showed such unison in their methods. The rearguard put up a splendid defence, Little and Hutchins, the backs, being judicious in their kicking and tackling, a remark which applies to the half-backs, who also attended to the wants of the men in front of them with precision and judicious passes. Ably led by Upex, the forwards combined grandly, and there was not a weak spot anywhere.

In addition to the loss of Stephenson, Luton were put off their game by the dashing tactics adopted by the Common. The forwards were never allowed to settle down. R. Hawkes was the most conspicuous of the line, and got through any amount of good work. Worth also shone, but Streeton and Wileman were unable to time the speedy dashes of Pace. Up to the time that he had to retire, Stephenson played a meritorious game, and he was naturally much missed. The Luton half backs were not in the same street as those of Croydon. All their time was taken up in attending to the home forwards, and as a consequence their own attack suffered. Henderson and Potts, the backs, were only moderate, the latter being all at sea on several occasions.

Croydon obtained their first point twenty-five minutes from the start. The forwards had been continually calling on Bateman, who had cleared fine centres from Chester and Barnfather, and who had also saved shots from Allman, Jex, and Upex, the latter only missing by the proverbial coat of paint. On the other hand, Luton's serious attempts at scoring were represented by three good shots from Wileman, Bob Hawkes, and Stephenson, which were nullified by Newton. Upex, who had been worrying his opponents by his Corinthian-like dashes in the centre, had a big share in the first goal, as, following good work by Barnfather, Jex, and Yenson, his quick following prevented the ball from going over the line, and he put it back for Allman to beat Bateman with an unstoppable shot.

This was the only goal of the first half, but Upex would probably have had another but for a deliberate trip on the edge of the penalty area. Chester, indeed, had scored as the whistle went for a foul. The free kick proved to Luton's advantage, and then came Stephenson's breakdown. The second half was well advanced before Upex got the second goal. It came from a goal kick in this way: Potts tapped the ball back to Bateman, who failed to gather, and Upex scored with the custodian on the floor. Luton were top dog for one period in this half, Bob Hawkes getting the most out of his team. Result:—

CROYDON 2, LUTON 0.