

FOOTBALL.

LUTON CUP-TIE WIN AT BRIGHTON.

LUTON TOWN 1
BRIGHTON AND HOVE 0

Meeting Ernest Simms and Tom Parker on Thursday, we talked of Plymouth and the "Blues" could reproduce their Plymouth result at Brighton, for it was incredible that the team could have such wretched luck on consecutive Saturdays. Not being able to get down to Brighton myself, we made the usual arrangements, and so the "Saturday Telegraph" gave us full a report of the game as was possible under the circumstances. The expert who phoned the report to the "News" office made one error—crediting the goal to Williams instead of Dodd. He really should have known better, because the Town had to pay Brighton a fee for Dodd's services a few weeks ago, and I daresay the directors of the seaside club were extremely sorry on Saturday that they had not signed the old Notis County man again.

Readers will take it from me that they are not getting any varnished report, so far as the Town team is concerned. As at Plymouth, our correspondent is either impartial or a partisan of the Albion. He is not likely to be a Luton partisan. He does not hesitate to say that Luton were the better side, and this is what he says after the game.

"There can be no doubt that Luton were the better side all round. Their form was a revelation to the home side and the 8,000 spectators. It would not be fair to the Albion to say that they were outplayed, because they were not, but there was a vigour and a finish about the Luton combination which was lacking from the home side, and I should not be surprised to see the Luton team prove a thorough Cup-fighting side. It is a very difficult matter to understand, and would puzzle the student of psychology, to say why there should be any difference between a League match and a cup-tie, but there is, undoubtedly, and the Luton side proved that their lowly position in the League table is no criterion of their capabilities in Cup games. They began like a winning side, and they never lost their hold on the game, and when they retired with the honours they thoroughly deserved the victory.

"We thought we had a Cup-fighting combination at Brighton, for we had youth and experience, but there was not the balance and dash about the Albion that there was in Luton's eleven, and try as the Albion would they could not put the visitors off their game. Jones and Holley, upon whom we relied to a great extent—probably too much—were quite overshadowed, and could not make head or tail of the speedy tackling of the visitors, and the same sort of thing was witnessed at half-back, for the wing halves could not cope with the swinging passes and the speedy dashes of the Luton forwards, and so the Albion backs were often putting the ball into touch. Pugh, who had been very confident of beating his old Luton side, was especially hard pressed, and Hoar was nearly always his master. From the opening we realised that the Albion would have a sore fight, but the fact that they had been in special training and were very keen on winning this game, led all Brighton to hope that they would pull off a victory. It was the best side the Albion have placed in the field this season, and, with the exception of Summers, the visitors had their choice eleven. Let me say at once that Summers was not missed. Whitehead may be a little disposed to take risks, but he is a very promising goalkeeper, and he never lost his head at all. On paper, of course, Brighton should have won because they had two penalties, but they did not deserve even to draw on the general run of the play. With the exception of a short period before the interval, and the last quarter of an hour of the game, they did not frame with anything like the confidence which inspired the Luton team.

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The game opened with a quick dash by the Luton right wing. Hoar showing a clean pair of heels, and after Pugh had conceded a corner, which was placed behind, the visitors came again, and Hoar sent across the goal. Booth got the ball away, and the Albion had a turn, but Holley's aim was faulty. Again Luton swooped down on the Albion goal, and Hayes coolly dealt with Williams' shot. Brighton played up, but the attempts of the inside forwards to get through by close passing were to the liking of Rutherford who was seldom beaten, and when the home left did get through, Elvey tackled superbly and cleared. For a long period the pressure was exerted by the visitors, and only spasmodic efforts came from the home forwards. Frequently the home forwards had to fall back to extricate the defence, and Hayes had to be on his very best behaviour. Considering the close proximity of the Luton men to the home goal, it was extraordinary that they did not shoot oftener, for they were within easy shooting range most of the time, and it should be said here that this was due to the brilliance of their half-backs, who tackled and passed with great cleverness and accuracy, and were very keen on the ball. Parker once got in a magnificent drive, which Hayes saved in marvellous fashion. The keeper also saved shots from Simms, Williams and Hoar, and once the visiting centre-forward headed over the bar. Practically the only effort on the home side worthy of note before the interval was a fine try by Longstaff, which whizzed past the upright, although two or three forwards had a good chance on one occasion when the ball came across from the right-winger. At the change of ends nothing had been scored, and the home players had reason to be thankful.

"There had been no lack of vigour in the first half," but very early on in the second the players went at it hammer and tongs, and the Luton forwards and halves crowded on all sail. Hayes' goal was stormed, but he came through the ordeal successfully for a time. Pugh's rushes could not stop Hoar and Williams, while Simms' cunning passes to the wings after drawing the defence upon himself, resulted in play being waged in the Brighton half, and too near Hayes to be pleasant. When relief came through the keeper being fouled, it was only a temporary respite, for a minute later Simms tested the keeper again, and he did well to get the ball away. Then he pushed out a shot from Williams, and the ball was seized by Hoar and tapped across to Dodd, and before the home defence could realise what had happened, he tapped it into the net, Hayes having no possible chance. This occurred about twelve minutes from the resumption.

Something of a change came over the game after this. The home players strained every nerve to get on equal terms. Longstaffe was the chief source of danger, and Dunn found him an awkward customer, but by a judicious use of his weight he kept the winger fairly well in check, and if a centre came over the odds were that Elvey was first to get it. The Albion had the better of the exchanges now, Luton apparently reserving most of their energies on defence. This was

With the exception of occasional breaks the Luton forwards joined in keeping the Albion forwards at bay, and the visitors prevailed.

Whitehead had not half as much work to do as Hayes, but he showed judgment and resource. The leading figure in the visitors' defence, however, was Elvey, who played a glorious game. His kicking was never at fault, while on the occasions when the home-sters got through he was usually so quick on the ball and his tackling so determined that the forwards could not outmanoeuvre him. Dunn was hefty and very clean in his kicking, but his tackling was not comparable with that of his colleague. Quite a feature of the defensive work was the splendid understanding between Elvey and Urwin, and Holley and March had a very poor day, and were seldom in the picture. Urwin was a very ubiquitous little fellow, but there was no better player on the field than Rutherford, and he had Woodhouse under control from beginning to end. Parker was also very clever, and the line was one of the best seen on the Albion ground this season. Forward, the right wing was the more active part, and Pugh had a gruelling time, quite failing to subdue Hoar, while he met in Williams a player who had no reluctance in accepting his challenge to a personal tussle. Simms was a forceful centre-forward, and would have got no more than his deserts had he scored, and he opened out the game in real Cup-tie style. Dodd played better for Luton than ever he did for Brighton, and his goal was typical of the opportunist. Bookman was very fast and centred accurately, but did not get the ball so frequently as Hoar.

Of the home side, Hayes saved the game from being lost in the opening half. Spencer was the more reliable back, Pugh suffering from anxiety. The halves worked hard against difficult tactics, and as a component part of the team were about the best. The forwards did not adopt the right game until late in the second half, and Longstaffe was easily the best of the five.

"It was an exhilarating game, without a dull moment, and the visitors merited their win on the balance of 'play.'"

Teams:

Luton Town.—Whitehead; Elvey, Dunn; Urwin, Rutherford, Parker; Hoar, Williams, Simms, Dodd, Bookman.

Brighton.—Hayes; Spencer, Pugh; Booth, Coomber, Higham; Longstaffe, Jones, Woodhouse, Holley, March.

On Christmas Day the Town should receive a great welcome when they turn out to tackle Southampton, and they should win. They have a gruelling time ahead, and I am sure they do not share the opinion of some supporters that it was a pity the Brighton result was not a draw. The match would have had to be played quickly, and as there are three matches in three days that is quite enough work for one week—almost too much. They go to Southampton on Boxing Day, and on Saturday are due at —so that they have a tremendous lot of travelling and then very hard games. If they get three points we shall be well satisfied.

The Reserves are similarly placed with their games, and it is certain that some of them will be required for the first eleven by Saturday, and so Mr. Green is giving some local lads a trial in some of the games.

CRUSADER.